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Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education

Epistemic Reflexivity

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Matthew Winslade · Tony Loughland ·
Michelle J. Eady
Editors

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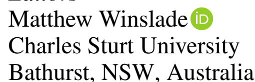
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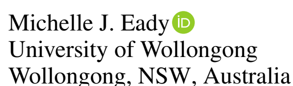
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ISBN 978-981-19-6531-9 ISBN 978-981-19-6532-6 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6

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The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge everyone who took part in the creation of this text. Thank you to the universities involved in this textbook for trusting us with your success stories and challenges. We would like to celebrate with all of the practising teachers who gave their time and energy to willingly share their deep knowledge and understanding of the importance of fostering pre-service teachers. We would like to acknowledge Di Wasson, who initiated the Hub School Project ,and thank Cynthia Wearne for supporting us, and for providing opportunities for the Hub Schools to flourish. Finally, and most importantly, we offer our gratitude to all of the supervising teachers, in-school coordinators, classroom supervising teachers, university PEx coordinators, and pre-service teachers for all of your dedication and work in this very important field of education.

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Part I
Voices From the Work-Integrated Learning Field

Chapter 1
Reflexive Epistemic Communities of Practice: Enabling the Profession Through Sustainable Partnerships

Mary Ryan

1.1 Introduction

Teaching has become increasingly complex in a world signified by diversity, change, and the promulgation of knowledge derived purely from opinion. This complexity means that the preparation of teachers who can hold together multiple, reliable knowledges as they make decisions about effective practice at any moment in time is crucial. Epistemic rigour and intentional, situated practice are not intuitive capabilities; rather, they need to be developed at the intersection of theory, evidence, and practice. Predetermined technical skills and passed-down experiential knowledge are insufficient for the kinds of complex problem-solving that is required for most contemporary teaching contexts (Willegems et al., 2017). Preparation of teachers who have robust, self-aware understandings about quality teaching, reliable knowledge, and diversity, and about how these concepts inform one another in practice, is a shared endeavour.

As highlighted in a review by Darling Hammond et al. (2017), practical experience should be grounded in system-wide support for ongoing professional learning and opportunities for collaboration; this factor was highlighted in the TEMAG Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers report (2014, p. 7). Research in Australia has pointed to the quality of induction and mentor support in professional experience as crucial to initial teacher education students' perceptions of their ability to manage classrooms, teach diverse student cohorts, and apply subject content to plan, assess,

Note for the reader Before you read this book please note that it does not really matter where you start: there are no rules, and as a collective we urge you to explore the book in a way that works for you. Each chapter has been developed to stand alone in its own right while collectively contributing to a growing community of scholarship and practice in teacher-education professional experience. in Chapter Three the editorial team offer suggestions as to some ways you might approach the book to help make the most from the experience. Enjoy!

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_1

and report. In fact, quality relationships during professional experience have been shown to be more important than the number of hours of professional experience (Gray et al., 2019; Reynolds et al., 2016).

I argue in this preamble that it is important to create epistemically reflexive *shared* spaces for novice (and experienced) teacher development and learning. I conclude with some observations about the importance of this book to the teaching and teacher-education professions.

1.2 Recasting Teacher Preparation as a Shared Responsibility

For novice teachers undertaking professional experience, schools are, of course, workplaces, and this "practice" element of teacher-education programs is a form of workplace learning. It is useful, therefore, to turn to the workplace-learning literature for insights about the effectiveness of such a model. While workplace learning is becoming increasingly in demand as a way of learning across employment sectors, a well-established body of research has highlighted several serious limitations to its effectiveness under certain conditions, including: variability in quality participation depending on the workplace supervisor (Billett, 2004); reliance on observation and imitation rather than deeper cognitive engagement in reasoning and judgement (Billett & Choy, 2013); and the capacity to provide an adequate level of structured learning and conceptual development, including an ability to reflect, recontextualise, and apply learning (Tynjala et al., 2020). The ability for workplace learning to effectively integrate the theoretical, practical, self-regulative, and sociocultural knowledge required in professional learning is often limited (Tynjala et al., 2020), particularly within the context of increasingly pressured workplaces (Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2022). Workplace learning in teacher education must inform, and be informed by, opportunities to develop and interrogate professional knowledge and practice drawn from research and theory within the university context (Schmidt & Schneider, 2016).

Teacher education and schools, however, operate in different spaces, sometimes with competing priorities. Unfortunately, many regulatory agendas and media reports cast teacher-education students as "trainees", and so-called "school" knowledge is prioritised over academic education (Brown et al., 2016). This "practice turn" in initial teacher education constructs a widely critiqued, but persistently powerful, artificial binary between theory and practice (Cochrane-Smith et al., 2016). Furthermore, in teacher-education faculties, there are tensions concerning time for research competing with time for teaching and time for collaborating with schools (Gleeson, et al., 2017).

Not only do political agendas and media discourses often pit universities (theory) against schools (practice), but there is also a danger that our daily practices can create a binary between initial teacher education providers and schools. From an initial

teacher education perspective, the challenges of practical experience, including difficulty in finding placements, the variance in the quality of experience across schools, and the high costs of administration and relationship maintenance (Toe et al., 2020; Yeigh & Lynch, 2017), frame university and school relationships as a battleground. From a school perspective, the perception of additional administration or mentoring duties in already busy workloads (OECD, 2020) can be seen as an impost on time. In addition, there is sometimes a sense that university study cannot prepare teacher-education students for the messy, complex spaces of classrooms. Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) indicate that teacher-education programs (including professional experience) are intersected by multiple systems of social inequality, making it difficult to help teacher candidates develop an understanding of those systems. One way of enabling understandings of such complexity is by discomfiting their taken-for-granted beliefs and experiential knowledge (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). This provocation can be approached through epistemic reflexivity and engagement in dialogic, dynamic, and complex communities of practice (Hadar & Brody, 2016).

1.3 Reflexive Epistemic Communities of Practice

Epistemic reflexivity (Rowan et al., 2021) refers to the rigour in knowledge and adaptability of practice necessary for complex and diverse classrooms. Teaching in contemporary classrooms requires teachers to have a critical consciousness of their knowledge base (Ryan et al., 2020). Critical consciousness is underpinned by evaluativist ways of knowing that identify knowledge as necessarily uncertain, and that recognise that any knowledge claim needs to be justified, as there could be alternative explanations (Weinstock, 2016). Evaluativist ways of knowing need to be calibrated with teaching practice in a cycle of reflexive deliberation and action. Epistemic reflexivity invokes a type of epistemic fluency because different ways of knowing are required for different teaching contexts. Unlike the process of *reflection*, where an individual contemplates an idea or an event, *reflexivity* considers the conditions that emerge within and around specific teaching and learning ecologies and leads to informed behaviour or *resolved action* in that context (Archer, 2012; Ryan et al., 2020). Integrating epistemic concerns as part of this reflexive cycle ensures a rigorous interrogation of practice. The goal is to make visible (and thus achievable) the decision-making and pedagogical practices that comprise teaching in diverse classrooms.

Zeichner, et al. (2015) argue that communities of practice are needed to address the complexities of teaching in diverse classrooms. In its simplest sense, a community of practice is a group of people (often from intersecting social learning systems) who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic. The interested parties come together to fulfil both individual and group goals (Pyrko & Henley, 2017); for example, quality preparation for the teaching profession. Central to a social learning system (such as a school or a university) is holding learning and enquiry at its core, fostering a spirit of mutuality and mutual engagement, and

allowing a capacity for critical reflection that enables change and growth (Omidvar & Kislov, 2014; Wenger, 2000). Wenger (2000) proposed that within intersecting social learning systems, members of a community of practice (with shared values, beliefs, and forms of knowledge) learn by increasing their competence within their own system, while aligning themselves with connected learning systems. They develop more-robust knowledge and practice by engaging with multiple perspectives, interpretations, and actions to realise higher goals. A deeper engagement with shared goals can be fostered through boundary interactions between social learning systems that allow for stronger alignment (Wenger, 2000). It is the interplay between individual and collective forms of knowledge and competence within and across organisations (schools and universities) that supports teacher-education students, teacher educators, and teachers to interrogate their knowledge and practice in a cycle of learning and inquiry.

The value of a community of practice is seen in creating a space for purposeful endeavour and professional learning (Wenger & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). Importantly, it emphasises the need for time, dialogue, and resources within the negotiated processes that create relations of mutual accountability between community members and that space, and lend coherence to the group's activities. As Wenger (2000) highlights, the strengths of knowledge-sharing within a community of practice are, first, in the ability for (novice) practitioners to create a direct link between learning and higher performance as they participate across intersecting communities of practice, and, second, in the ability of novice and experienced practitioners to take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need, and recognising that, given the proper structure, they are in the best position to do this.

The discourse concerning quality preparation of teachers needs to be reclaimed by the profession in epistemically reflexive communities of practice. Quality is derived not from a set of tick boxes as standards, but from teachers themselves engaging in epistemically reflexive cycles of practice within their intersecting communities of practice. Teachers should be, and are, concerned with quality, but this must be on their own terms (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). They can interrogate the conditions specific to their context and use evidence-based practice (research-informed) and practice-based evidence (practice-informed) to enable all students to flourish and achieve.

Quality preparation for the teaching profession must value different knowledge from schools, teacher educators, and communities to address the complexities of teaching. According to Prysor and Henley (2017), boundary spanners are useful facilitators to bridge relationships with external stakeholders as well as with internal partners and colleagues, particularly when dealing with complex and multi-layered issues in communities of practice. Boundary spanners sit in the epistemic space between stakeholders: they have knowledge relevant to multiple spaces. They may encompass knowledge transfer and exchange, including the translation of knowledge that might be localised and embedded.

The Hub School model of university-school partnerships (Lemon et al., 2018), currently funded in NSW, is an example of a community of practice in teacher development and education. The Hub model includes identified schools working in close

partnership with a university and a network of other schools. Each Hub School has an in-school Professional Experience Coordinator (PExC) to support the induction of teacher-education students into the school community, and each university has an engagement coordinator that oversees the relationship. These roles should ideally work as boundary spanners in this model and form their own community of practice across hub networks to sustain the model. Hub School networks have the potential to be high performing communities of practice when they maximise the affordances of the Hub model. Each Hub network should encompass a diverse range of schools including rural/regional schools, specialist schools such as STEM-focussed schools, schools for special purpose (SSPs) and hard-to-staff schools. In addition, professional experience should not be our sole agenda in these school partnerships; rather, the professional learning and projects that can be wrapped around these experiences can enable teacher-education students and teachers to form professional learning communities in context.

When schools have dedicated positions that lead both professional experience and whole-staff professional learning, and universities have leaders in professional learning and engagement, they can embody those crucial boundary roles. Boundary spanners can move between these epistemic spaces of social learning systems, creating productive conditions to prepare teachers who are epistemically reflexive in their practice. To borrow Stosich's (2016) term, a process of "joint inquiry" would enable the theory/practice divide to be bridged. Engestrom (2007) refers to this as co-configuration, where state-of-the-art practice is underpinned by research; Lipman (2011) maintains that co-configuration among diverse stakeholders such as teachers, teacher-education students, and teacher educators can set new parameters for possible solutions, transforming—neither reforming nor defending—teacher education.

Close partnerships supported by this kind of model have the potential to improve the quality and consistency of induction, supervision, and assessment (Green et al., 2020), as well as creating epistemically reflexive spaces of inquiry in the profession.

1.4 Why is This Book Important?

This collection signifies the importance of rich, reciprocal partnerships between initial teacher education and schools across NSW for the common good of the teaching profession. Partnerships to create these communities of practice are not one-size-fits-all, nor are they easy to sustain. Every context has different and intersecting knowledge systems, practices and availing "norms", so it is important to work on the partnership, agreeing on the shared goals and understandings. It is also important to share experiences of these partnerships across initial teacher education providers to encourage practices that advance quality teacher preparation. Relationality is a hallmark of effective partnerships, and this volume illustrates it in rich and diverse ways.

Epistemically reflexive communities of practice engender professional judgement, which brings together cognitive dimensions of knowledge, along with the

moral and social purposes of education and the emotional and relational dimensions of teaching (Rowan et al., 2021). In such environments, teachers can commit themselves to being catalysts of change with a focus on teaching and learning, working collaboratively and effectively with each other and the wider community. Teachers should actively engage in public debates about teachers and teaching (Ryan et al., 2020). It is important that we make visible the affordances of these partnerships so that the scholarship of collaboration can inform public discourse about the complexities and opportunities of teacher preparation and development.

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Chapter 2
The Value of Work-Integrated Learning for Preparing the Future Teaching Workforce

Bonnie Amelia Dean

Abstract It is essential that initial teacher education curricula address the pragmatic needs of graduates for professional practice in the school classroom. Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a pedagogical strategy that contributes to supporting the transition into work by engaging students in workspaces and practices during their higher education studies. This chapter takes a broad overview of WIL, tracing its origins and impact, to argue for meaningful integration of WIL into initial teacher education curricula. It explores the strategic development of WIL in Australia across national strategies, research projects, and networks to frame the emergence and governance of WIL in the context of the Australian higher-education landscape. It highlights three important ways WIL can affect student learning: through enhancing employability, career development learning, and reflections on pre-professional identity. The chapter argues that by scaffolding various models of WIL across the initial teacher education degree, educators can foster opportunities for initial teacher education students to contemplate their careers, values, identities, skills, and knowledge, to best prepare them for the future teaching workforce.

Keywords Initial teacher education · Work-integrated learning · Career development learning · Non-placement WIL · Reflection · Employability

2.1 Introduction

In Australia, as in many countries around the world, the preparation of school teachers is largely informed by the learning experienced through the curriculum of their tertiary degree. This degree—which includes the content, learning activities, theories, principles, educators, and peers—significantly shapes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of our future teaching workforce. These teachers will be caring for and educating our children and our grandchildren for years to come. One might imagine

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_2

the invisible thread tracing the lineage of education across generations, across locations, that largely starts with university preparatory programs, before teachers become teachers. The significance of influencing their learning during tertiary studies cannot be understated, as it will shape how they teach and value learning throughout their careers.

However, concerns are raised for the initial teacher education curriculum in Australia, and the extent to which it addresses the pragmatic needs of graduates in preparation for the school classroom. In 2014, a national government review of initial teacher education in Australia expressed an urgent need to improve graduates' "classroom readiness" (TEMAG, 2014, p. viii). The report emphasised that improving initial teacher education programs, and ultimately student outcomes across the country, requires greater collaboration between higher-education institutions and school systems. Enhancing these partnerships places importance on the integration of learning between university curriculum and practice.

There is consensus that engaging university students in practical experiences in a school and classroom setting is valuable for effective teacher preparation (Aprile & Knight, 2020; Bahr & Mellor, 2016; Cohen et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Broadly, in Australian higher-education institutions, this pedagogical approach to student learning is called work-integrated learning (WIL). WIL describes strategies and activities that promote students' learning through engaging with aspects of work. For many institutions, WIL is embedded into strategic goals and directions to prepare graduates for their professions, centralised through careers and employability units or conducted through faculties. Although WIL offers multiple benefits, emphasis is placed on its role as a teaching and learning approach that enhances student learning through rich, authentic learning experiences (Patrick et al., 2009).

This chapter will explore the value of WIL for enhancing graduate readiness, and argue for the uptake of WIL across the initial teacher education curriculum. It will offer a broad discussion of several keys areas relating to the impact of WIL for developing employability skills and employment outcomes, enabling career development learning, and fostering professionalism and professional identities. The chapter will close with a reflection on the changing nature of work by asking a question posed by Winchester-Seeto and Piggott (2020): *What are we preparing our graduates for?* Responding to this question highlights considerations for how WIL is designed into curricula for initial teacher education programs. First, however, the chapter will provide an overview of WIL in the Australian higher-education context to locate and build on scholarly discussion and practices.

2.2 WIL in Australia

Although WIL is well-known as a term and practice in Australia, the origins of work-based activities and programs arguably began with cooperative education, the "integration of classroom work and practical industrial experience in an organised program" (Armsby, 1954, p. 1). Cooperative education is said to have begun in the

late 1800s in the United Kingdom, in the early 1900s in the United States, and in the mid-1900s in Canada (Reeve, 2004). This general timeline, however, has had its critics, with others offering more-specific origins: that cooperative education began in 1906 in the engineering faculty at the University of Cincinnati, later extending across Western countries and other training disciplines (Barbeau & Dubois, 1976).

The ubiquity of WIL is demonstrated by the multiple names it has been called: practicum, professional practice, work-based learning, work-related learning, service learning, authentic experiences, real-world learning, experiential learning, work experience, workplace learning, practice-based learning, sandwich programs, volunteering, industry experience, industry-based learning, fieldwork, internships, cooperative education, and clinical placement, as just a few examples. Different terms are espoused by different countries, universities, networks, or programs, to align with communities and literature, and describe (or differentiate) conceptions of work and learning. Generally, most descriptions of WIL involve student learning linked in some way with work through an organised approach (Billett, 2009; Patrick, 2009). Resisting a unified definition, Patrick et al. (2009, p. vi) offer WIL as an "umbrella concept" for "a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum".

In Australia, WIL is the widely accepted term for activities and programs for learning through work (Orrell, 2011; Patrick et al., 2009). The term emerged in the late 1990s in an attempt to set Australian work-learning initiatives apart from other Western concepts of "work-based learning" (Orrell, 2011). The scope of WIL is contestable. It is debated whether WIL is specific to higher education (Smigel & Harris, 2008) or includes vocational education (Mahlomaholo & Bohloko, 2008), whether it occurs in multiple educational and practical settings (Billett, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Bohloko, 2008) or precludes classroom-based work-based activities. While diverse in approaches and structures, WIL programs share a common purpose: to facilitate student learning experiences through work with industry- or community-partner involvement; for example, practical placements, industry projects, simulations, or other authentic experiences.

In the last three decades, WIL has infiltrated Australian higher-education, emerging in programs, literature, networks, research, and other initiatives (Orrell, 2011). In 2008, at the request of the Australian government, Universities Australia published a position paper on the idea of developing a national internship scheme to address Australia's long-term skills shortage, national economic growth, and international competitiveness. This scheme would "enable more Australian university students to undertake structured work-based learning in industry during their studies" (Universities Australia, 2008, p. 1). It would also encourage partnerships between industry, community, university, and government. Interestingly, however, this idea never took hold. Instead, universities have preferred to develop their own programs tailored to their own needs. The result has led to a diverse, largely unregulated WIL environment in Australia (Orrell, 2011).

Also at the national level, for many years WIL has caught the attention of the national teaching and learning council, in order to attend to ways to develop and promote WIL best practice. Prior to 2012, the Australian Learning and Teaching

Council (ALTC) was the national body responsible for the funding, support, research, and dissemination of innovations and ideas of teaching and learning in Australian higher education (it was then named the Office for Learning and Teaching, OLT, which is now disestablished). For a decade this government division endorsed numerous research initiatives that explored WIL and practice-based education (see Barraket et al., 2009; Billet, 2010; Higgs, 2011; Papadopoulos et al., 2011). The promotion of WIL continues today through the Australian Government's *Job Ready Package and National Industry Priority Linkage Fund* that tasks Australia universities to establish and meet self-determined WIL strategies.

The most widely known and cited cross-institutional research projects supported by the ALTC are those by Patrick et al. (2009) and Orrell (2011). Australia's first large-scale collaborative scoping study, *The WIL Report* by Patrick et al. (2009), reports on government, industry, and community pressures for graduates to demonstrate professional readiness. These authors suggest several strategies for enhancing WIL: implementation of a university-wide commitment (embedded in policy); adoption of a stakeholder approach (employers, institution, students, and government); increased dissemination of curriculum and pedagogical approaches to WIL; and appropriate resourcing. Drawing on 28 WIL reports, Orrell's (2011) *Good Practice Report* recommendations are, not surprisingly, consistent with Patrick and colleagues' (2009). Orrell's (2011) recommendations include: implementation of university-wide WIL agendas; openness of equity and access issues; provision of technology; a focus on industry needs; and support for more sector- and discipline-wide research.

In 2004, a national WIL network, the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN), was established, drawing together like-minded academics, staff, industry personnel, and researchers to share, collaborate, and connect. ACEN has strong associations internationally with the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE) and several affiliated WIL networks overseas, such as the New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education (NZACE). In 2015, ACEN, in partnership with Universities Australia, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ai Group, and the Business Council of Australia, wrote a national strategy for WIL in university education. Much like the national government review of initial teacher education (TEMAG, 2014), the strategy emphasises partnerships between educators, enterprises, and the community. It recommends investment in WIL leadership, policy, support, and resourcing to increase opportunities to participate in WIL in order to achieve workforce capability and competitiveness.

Building on this national agenda, in 2017, University Australia conducted the first WIL audit across all 38 Australian universities to capture the current availability and participation rates of various forms of WIL. The audit revealed that in 2017, almost 500,000 students had had a WIL experience, which is the equivalent of one in three university students enrolled in a higher-education degree in Australia (Universities Australia, 2018). Within this, placement forms of WIL were the most attended (43%), with non-placement modes of WIL comprising the largest engagement (57%). Non-placement activities in this audit included industry projects (23.3%), fieldwork (9.7%), simulation (12.9%), and other (11.2%), such as performances, volunteering

or service learning, and case-based learning. This data was the first large-scale empirical study to suggest that although work placement is the most common type of WIL activity, universities are engaging large numbers of students in other forms of WIL.

In addition to these large national projects, global research into WIL has exploded. Studies range from projects to evaluate local WIL programs to cross-institutional research on particular areas of WIL such as well-being (Grant-Smith et al., 2017), quality (Campbell et al., 2019), and innovative WIL models (Kay et al., 2019). The rise of WIL as a critical area of research, national focus, and institutional strategy demonstrates a serious attempt by the Australian government and higher-education institutions to address the need for work-ready graduates. The following sections draw on the large body of WIL scholarship to highlight how WIL pedagogy affects student learning and graduate readiness.

2.3 Development of Employability Skills

Studies show that students participating in WIL experience growth in a range of employability skills including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, workplace technology, and mastery of critical occupation-specific tasks (Freudenberg et al., 2011; Jackson, 2015). The development of these skills contributes to building students' confidence in their workplace knowledge and capabilities (Billet, 2009). While many of these studies have explored the links between placement-based learning and employability, recent research also suggests that employability skills can effectively be learned through non-placement WIL experiences, such as industry projects (Dean et al., 2020a; Reedy et al., 2020).

Teamwork is a commonly cited employability skill augmented through WIL opportunities. Observing, interacting with, and working alongside industry supervisors, mentors, or co-workers is a critical element for student learning in WIL design and is unique to WIL pedagogies (Campbell et al., 2019; Jackson, 2015). Teamwork skills are essential for school teachers, who need to be "effective colleagues, careful and sensitive in their dealings with the community, guided by precepts of equity and justice" (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015, p. xi). Such sentiments suggest the significance of socialisation processes during WIL experiences to cultivate the complex skills for classroom readiness.

WIL placements provide a platform from which students can build on their discipline knowledge and apply skills with support from a supervisor and peers (Patrick et al., 2009). They are also a chance to identify skill areas requiring further development. Prior to placements, students have benefited from setting work goals that align with their studies (Jaekel et al., 2011). Reflection, debriefing, and other post-practicum interventions are also useful for learning, and for identifying areas of growth (Billett et al., 2020). Gathering evidence through informal and formal feedback throughout the placement can help teachers and students evaluate and self-assess performance (Jackson, 2015).

While it is clear that in practising work through WIL and engaging and interacting with work colleagues, students develop employability skills, it is also noted that this experience needs to be connected to students' university education as a whole. Jackson (2015) argues that while WIL supports skill acquisition and refinement, it is not to be seen as an alternative or replacement to on-campus learning; instead, it should be regarded as a complement to or extension of learning. Further, Jackson (2015, p. 364) recommends that employability skills be nurtured through a course, asserting that they must be "culminated over a period of time, not just in the unit incorporating WIL".

Distinct from employability skills, WIL has further been linked to the attainment of graduate employment. In their paper, Silva et al. (2018) found that participation in internships significantly improved graduates' potential for being selected for a job. Interestingly, though, they also found that the effects of WIL increase over time, as students engage in multiple instances of work-based training, gain experience, and acquire more work skills. This suggests that WIL ought to be considered as more than a one-off opportunity if educators are to effectively ready graduates for work. Silva et al., (2018, p. 17) further write that "results suggest that it is not (only) the internship learning experience per se that makes the difference considering graduate employment, but (also) the way those internship experiences are organized along study programmes".

WIL has substantial impact on the development of a range of employability skills (Jackson & Dean, 2022) with placements, in particular, demonstrating links to employment opportunities. However, as studies by Jackson (2015) and Silva et al. (2018) suggest, a single WIL activity in isolation is not enough to support learning and the development of employability skills. Instead, embedding these practical opportunities across a degree and developing skills at multiple points in time are recommended to best prepare students for their future careers.

2.4 Enabling Career Development Learning

While employability skills focus on discipline competencies and the broad skills associated with producing work, students also need purposeful moments to consider their roles and the degree or course they are undertaking within a larger career trajectory. This forms part of a wider, multifaceted concept of graduate employability that includes a range of individual attributes, discipline expertise, non-technical or generic skills, and life and work experiences (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). Bridgstock (2009, p. 40) argues that "for Australian universities to effectively engage with the graduate employability agenda, they must recognise the importance of a wider skill set than the narrow generic skill lists imply and move into the realm of lifelong career development". In other words, to prepare students for workplaces, we need to look not only at the development of skills and knowledge, but also at the person and their career.

The changing nature of graduate careers has emphasised a need for individual responsibility for career management (Jain & Jain, 2013). Careers can spread across roles, industries, and locations and include how a person navigates their paid and unpaid work and personal life. Careers are self-determined, complex and unfold across an individual's life (Career Industry Council of Australia, 2019). Higher-education providers are responsible for producing graduates who are not only skilled and knowledgeable in their selected disciplines, but are also capable of making informed career decisions, navigating labour-market opportunities, and communicating their strengths (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010).

Career-development learning describes the process of teaching students how to make effective decisions and transitions into and throughout work (McIlveen et al., 2011). It includes learning about self and the world of work. WIL has been found to positively affect the development of job-opportunity awareness and decision-making (Jackson & Wilton, 2016), as well as clarify expectations of chosen professions and identify potential employment pathways (Watts, 2006). A study by Jackson and Wilson (2016) highlighted the positive impact of WIL for the development of critical employment-related capabilities and attributes, including the ability to self-assess work-related capabilities, insight into the profession, enhanced confidence for career decisions and pathways, and skills and tools for career planning and networking. Jackson and Wilson (2016) articulate a number of recommendations for educators in the important role they play before, during, and after WIL to contextualise the experience within the broader industry landscape. Examples include introducing students to industry requirements and techniques for assessing job applications, engaging students prior to placement, or encouraging purposeful reflection on experiences for insight into career readiness and preferences.

Career-development learning is compatible with WIL, as it promotes personalised, meaningful, and future-focussed learning for the world of work (McIlveen et al., 2011). It is pragmatically valuable and assists in preparing graduates to consider the labour market and their own strengths and desires, and offers strategies for transitions into work. Career-development learning has also been found to be valuable when embedded into a range of WIL modes from year-long placements to shorter work experiences (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). Educators in initial teacher education programs must consider the impact of career-development learning and WIL to support students for a life of personal growth and informed career choices.

2.5 Fostering Professionalism and Professional Identity

Another element of WIL that affects the preparation of teachers is the opportunity for introspection and awareness of self as a burgeoning professional. Creating space for professional identity awareness is important because "students might not be aware of the assumptions and interests that shape the way work is done which can lead them to accept unreflected, taking-for-granted work practices and developing accidental rather than self-chosen identities" (Trede & Jackson, 2021). Being in touch with one's

own values and motivations is core to understanding what drives one's professional behaviour.

The focus on professionalism in WIL studies is akin to the development of pre-professional identity, a complex phenomenon encompassing an awareness of skills, qualities, values, standards, and behaviours involved in a student's profession and pertaining to themselves in relation to the profession (Jackson, 2017). Pre-professional identity is described as the "less mature version" of professional identity (Jackson, 2017), where becoming, rather than being, is espoused (Scanlon, 2011). Professionalism is informed by professional identity, where judgements and decision are exercised in practice (Trede, 2012).

The development of (pre)professional identity is a lens through which students can make sense of experience, practices, themselves, and work (Jackson, 2017; Trede, 2012). This sense-making includes the articulation of qualities. Trede (2012, p. 159) reflects on its importance: "It is impossible to imagine a professional without a professional identity; but it is possible that professionals cannot articulate their professional values and commitments hence cannot purposefully draw on the core of their identity". Generating a discourse concerning professionalism and professional identity helps translate students' observations of self in practice and how they engage in the workplace. Integrating reflection into WIL experiences, through, for example, formative opportunities during WIL or post-WIL activities, is fundamental for any quality WIL curriculum (Campbell et al., 2019) to advance knowledge and personal development (Cord & Clements, 2010a).

Scholars have argued for explicit approaches to developing students' professional identities in WIL (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011; Cord & Clements, 2010a). Students traverse different spaces in WIL—investigating self as a learner, student, mentee, co-worker, and professional—to learn about theory and practice (Trede, 2012). This transition can cause an individual to evaluate, or revaluate, and adjust their identity to align with new contexts and roles. Trede and Jackson (2021) identify purposefully structured, dialogic, and written post-WIL peer reflections as an effective approach for developing professional agency.

Scholars investigating the development of professional identities in WIL also advocate for these opportunities to be scaffolded across a course (Trede, 2012) and to explore the potential of non-placement WIL (Aprile & Knight, 2020; Jackson, 2017). Alternative modes to placements can provide a more accessible option for immersing students in authentic learning (Jackson, 2017) while also affording students time to learn critical professional skills such as decision-making, critical reflection, and problem solving (Aprile & Knight, 2020).

2.6 What Are We Preparing Graduates for?

WIL is described as the "bridge" between university and work, facilitating the transition by enabling the transfer of skills and knowledge from university into applications through authentic experiences (Cord & Clements, 2010b). Supporting this

transition can be challenging because "for many WIL educators, the workplace and the learning that takes place is elusive, often spoken of and reported upon by students, yet rarely, or never, experienced first-hand" (Dean & Sykes, 2020, p. 2). This transfer can also present several challenges to students with barriers to transfer during WIL, including lack of opportunity, lack of support, and disconnection between curricula and reality (Jackson et al., 2019). Educators need to be aware of criteria for quality WIL design (Campbell et al., 2019) and implement strategies to help students transition effectively into work. Strategies may include pre-placement and post-placement preparation activities to help unpack workplace expectations and practices, suitably scoped placements with appropriate levels of challenge and relevance, and support from workplace supervisors who are familiar with students' coursework (Jackson et al., 2019).

While we need to be mindful of supporting this transition, it is also apt to understand the changing nature of work itself. Ways of working have been evolving for decades as a result of globalisation and digitisation, which have affected how and where work is performed (OECD, 2019). In schools around the world, the roles and practices of teachers and schools systems are shaped by the introduction of new information technologies that influence what and how children are taught in classrooms (Monahan, 2006). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, work was universally shaped by enabling technologies. These changes, both slow and rapid, in the nature of work have implications for how we prepare our graduates for employment, including how we design WIL. As Dean and Campbell (2020, p. 357) argue, "it is an inevitability that WIL, which connects these two worlds, also has to transform".

It is within this discourse of the changing world of work that Winchester-Seeto and Piggott (2020) ask, *What are we preparing students for?* Recognising the fluidity and emergence of new ways of working, they reflect on the preparatory purpose of WIL to suggest removing the fixed notion of a "workplace" to instead harness the notion of preparation for the "workforce". This fundamental shift has implications for the design of WIL and the opportunities afforded to students through their tertiary education to apply and reflect on their knowledge, skills, and personal and professional development.

Recent WIL practices and scholarship have shown that non-placement forms of WIL, through industry projects, remote WIL, simulations, and more, can still harness the authenticity of work roles (Jackson & Dean, 2022; Dean & Campbell, 2020; Dean et al., 2020a, 2020b). As many have suggested, these alternative and innovative forms of WIL can provide rich learning experiences for students and effective preparation for the "workforce" (Aprile & Knight, 2020; Jackson, 2017; Winchester-Seeto & Piggott, 2020). Building on students' learning is essential; therefore it is suggested that educators work together to embed multiple activities for WIL and reflection across a course (Dean et al., 2020b; Jackson, 2015; Trede, 2012).

To address the opening concern from the national government review of initial teacher education (TEMAG, 2014), this chapter has argued that WIL is an effective pedagogy for improving graduates' "classroom readiness". It has suggested that WIL offers value through influencing learning in a range of personal and professional areas to prepare students for work. However, the chapter also highlights that WIL is secured

not only to the notion of placements, and that opportunities for non-placement WIL models ought to be considered. Scaffolded WIL through an initial teacher education degree will provide multiple opportunities for initial teacher education students to contemplate their careers, values, identities, skills, and knowledge, to best prepare them for the future teaching workforce.

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Chapter 3
Introduction: The Purpose of This Book

Tony Loughland, Matt Winslade, and Michelle J. Eady

Abstract The purpose of this book is to engage the people who do the hard, sometimes unglamorous, but always interesting work of critical reflection about professional experience in teacher education. The authors are all university- and school-based teacher educators who rarely get the time to critically reflect on their work with colleagues, let alone write a chapter for an international audience. As higher-education institutions worldwide establish and focus on work-integrated learning (WIL), the editors thought it timely to draw attention to the predecessors of WIL—the work, and workers, of teacher education in the liminal zone of school-based professional experience. We wanted to move past the tired cliché of the theory–practice divide to examine the nature of this important work. In so doing, we wanted to give a voice to the workers in teacher education who make hope possible in what are often challenging circumstances for our pre-service teachers. rather than allowing despair to be convincing (apologies to Raymond Williams).

Keywords Work-integrated learning · Initial teacher education · Teacher-education workers · Praxis · Phronesis · Professional experience

3.1 Introduction

This chapter has three sections. The first poses a provocation focussed on the question of *who does the work of teacher education.* The second section tells the story of where the book comes from, and the final section offers three idiosyncratic reading guides from each of the three editors. The reader should not feel constrained by the order of the sections, as each may be read separately as interests dictate.

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_3

3.2 Who Does the Work of Teacher Education?

Visiting, assessing, supervising, and sometimes consoling teacher-education students and pre-service teachers on their WIL professional experience (PEx) has been a constant in the work of the editors for over 20 years. It is the part of our work that we cherish. This is the craft work of teacher education that has been largely unaffected by the many changes in the transition from purpose-built teacher colleges to universities in the early 1990s in Australia. There are many expert craftspeople of the profession who make such an integral, and largely unheralded, contribution to initial teacher education.

To call professional experience the craft work of teacher education is a provocation on our part to encourage reflection about what it means to be a practice-based professional, as well as to examine the culture of teacher education in universities that marginalises this work. The experiences and observations of one of our editors (Tony) in Ireland, where the part-time army of teacher educators remains as fundamental to the effective operation of teacher education as it is in Australia, serve as a third object to focus on in this examination. The Sahlberg Report into initial teacher education in Ireland in 2012 made sensible recommendations for the rationalisation of teacher education (Sahlberg et al., 2012). It is hard to disagree with their arguments that teacher education be research-based, that teacher educators be researchers, and that our graduates be teacher-researchers. The report also suggested that having a large part-time workforce of supervisors and methods tutors was counterproductive to the achievement of their aims.

Tony was fortunate to be a visiting Erasmus fellow to an Education school in an Irish university in 2019 and. Tony accompanied one skilled and experienced part-timer, Kathleen, on her professional-experience supervision visits to Dublin schools. The political economy of universities means that that education schools must employ part-timers like Kathleen to do the hard work of school visits and subject tutorials in methods to balance the budget.

To speak of the economic imperative of employing part-timers is not to denigrate the real work of teacher education they achieve. On the contrary, it positions the craft expertise of colleagues like Kathleen as fundamental to research into the practices of teaching and teacher education. Kathleen and her colleagues should be the vanguard of our research efforts into the practices of teaching, as they engage our students in the art of critical reflexivity. The artificial separation of researchers and teachers in university schools of education has meant that we often overlook the richest source of philosophical, practical, and ethical wisdom in our expert craftspeople.

The small provocation to you as a reader to reconsider and/or recognise the craft work of teacher education that we offer here draws heavily upon Gert Biesta's excellent 2015 paper, *On the two cultures of educational research, and how we might move ahead: Reconsidering the ontology, axiology and praxeology of education.* Biesta packs many ideas into his papers, and we urge you to read the full paper to capture the elegance of his thesis. For now, we entice you with one idea:

> When we look at education through the lens of what in the English-speaking world are known as the disciplines of education, we can say that the philosophy of education asks philosophical questions about education, the history of education asks historical questions, the psychology of education asks psychological question and the sociology of education asks sociological questions, which then raises the question "Who asks the educational questions?" (Biesta, 2015, p. 15)

The part-time army of professional-experience supervisors we employ in teacher education may be the expert others who are asking the educational questions to our students. This is going on whilst full-time tenured faculty members pursue their own equally important psychological, sociological, and philosophical work about education. These questions are more likely to receive funding and their answers published in the elite journals on which faculty members' sights are set to progress in their careers.

One of our motivations for editing this book was to give a voice to those teacher educators, in both schools and universities, who have been marginalised by the political economy of university-based teacher education. We are also very curious about Biesta's provocation that education should be regarded as a discipline rather than as a context for other disciplines to work in. At the centre of this curiosity is a desire that the experts we employ on our margins be given the space to ask the educational questions for which we do not know the answers. These answers may give practitioners a view of a different praxis in education: "it is important not to forget that research can also be of tremendous practical relevance if it provides practitioners with different ways of seeing and talking about education" (Biesta, 2015, p. 19).

We are proud that all the chapters in this book represent the viewpoints and the educational questions from the craft workers who do the work of teacher education where it matters most to our pre-service teachers. We hope that it provides you, as our audience, with many ways of seeing and talking about work-integrated learning in teacher education.

3.3 Where Does This Book Come from?

This book is a result of a seven-year collaboration between the academic coordinators of professional experience at each of the 12 schools of education in NSW universities. The collaboration began as a working party of the NSW Council of Deans of Education established to investigate the possibility of developing and providing a common mentoring course for all supervisors. The common mentoring course was a bridge too far for the nascent collaboration; instead, the working party, which represented just four schools of education, produced a website with both video and text-based exemplars of the graduate teacher standards (New South Wales Council of Deans of Education, 2019). The very generous funding for the development of the website came from the division of the NSW Department of Education responsible for the Hub School Program. The purpose of the Hub Schools has been summarised by the Department's own Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (2018, p. 7):

> Hub Schools have introduced initiatives that are targeted at both preservice teachers and supervising teachers. For preservice teachers, these most commonly include revised supervising models, increased support structures such as induction and orientation sessions, professional learning, and additional resources. For supervising teachers, initiatives include the provision of professional learning and additional support. Initiatives that benefitted partner schools include the provision of professional learning, funding, resources and increased support. Other initiatives and outcomes include revisions to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course content and modified content delivery.

An evaluation of supervising teachers' application of the graduate teaching standards to the assessment of professional experience was conducted in the first Hub School phase in 2016–2019 (Loughland, 2019). This evaluation was conducted for just one of the 12 providers of initial teacher education, and, like the website of graduate exemplars, it did not include the subjects of the report, as they were not asking the questions. The collaboration failed in these first endeavours against the criterion of inclusivity, as neatly summarised by the aphorism *nothing about us without us.*

The lack of inclusivity was addressed in the second phase of the Hub School Program. A study was commissioned by the relevant division of the NSW Department of Education that focussed on the school professional experience coordinators (PExCs) involved in the 2016–2018 and 2019–2021 cohorts of the NSW Department of Education's Professional Experience Hub School Program. Every university school of education was included as a signatory to the subsequent report. One of the editors of the current book, Matthew, rightfully argued that this report still did not acknowledge the voices of our colleagues doing the work of teacher educators in our partner Hub Schools. This book is a result of Matthew's inclusive advocacy and his careful scaffolding of the research process for both our university- and school-based colleagues. Michelle and Tony were happy to play our support roles in this worthy endeavour.

3.4 How to Read and Enjoy This Book

You may have read the excellent preamble by Professor Mary Ryan before embarking on this chapter, but it does not really matter where you begin to read this book. There are no rules; instead, as editors, we can offer some ways into the chapters that we know so well, so you can enjoy the experience.

The book has six sections: the aforementioned preamble, followed by sections on background and theoretical perspectives, research, practice, and partnerships, and a three-chapter postscript that examines the unique impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the work of professional experience during the creation of this book. Each of the co-editors recommends a different way of reading this book for enjoyment (and to learn), but many readers will have their own method, and if that is you, feel free to skip the next three paragraphs.

For Matthew, who came into academia from the teaching profession and never really being able to shake off that sense of still dangling one foot in the school world,

the book is a collaboration of like-minded people who unashamedly do the same. The book and the project that inspired it have offered the opportunity for teachers and academics not only to step into each other's worlds but to spend genuine time there and create an amazing array of initiatives, all with the common aim of supporting and inspiring the next generation of teachers. The fascination of seeing how each of the partnerships has evolved and how that has played out in the narratives presented in the book will provide Matthew and other self-confessed boundary-crossers with the dilemma of *where to, first*. That is truly exciting, because whichever chapter that starting point turns out to be, the knowledge of what has transpired over the past seven years and the sustained work and effort from everyone involved ensures that each chapter is from the heart, with a view of sharing learnings and challenges to benefit everyone who works in the education field.

Tony rarely reads any text, whether newspaper, book, or journal article, from start to finish. He reads voraciously and spasmodically for new ideas and dissensus, and fervently seeks counterpoints that challenge his existing ideas. Given this modus operandi, Tony's reading journey through this book would thus begin with all the titles that mention a "third way" that challenges the so-called theory–practice divide that is well past its explanatory utility for pre-service teachers' work-integrated learning experiences. After a good read of Chaps. 10 and 16, Tony would move on to other interesting ideas promised in the titles that he does not know much about. This would include Chaps. 12, 13, 21, and 29, which focus on video and virtual learning experiences that augment traditional on-site work-integrated learning. By this stage, Tony's curiosity has been piqued and he will dip into other chapters in the book by first reading their reference list for citations that intrigue, and then scanning the chapters in reverse.

For Michelle, there is great satisfaction in a book that highlights the often under-represented, on-the-ground, person-facing, invaluable work that is done in teacher education. There are chapters in this book that have been written in partnership with academics who are seldom granted workload that enables them to publish (see Simmons et al., 2021), school-based PExC), and supervising classroom teachers who have never been presented with an opportunity, and therefore have never given a thought to, writing about the work that they do as a means to share their craft with others. This textbook has been a team-building exercise and a peek through an academic window for the partnerships represented. There is something for everyone in this text: data for the researchers, examples of successful community partnerships as a guide to best practice, and all examples of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) practices in the work about which we are all so passionate.

No matter what approach you take to reading the content of this book, please take some time to reflect on the valuable teachings that have been shared within its pages. The editors believe that there should be more opportunities for everyone involved in teacher education to share their work in meaningful ways, and we hope that this text is one small example of the amazing things to come from all partnerships in teacher education.

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Tony Loughland is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales. Tony is an experienced educator who likes to think that theory should be the plaything of practice. He agrees with Marx's assertion that philosophy should be used to not only interpret the world but to try to change it. Tony subscribes to Marx as he believes this orientation towards research is vital in a world threatened by anthropocentric climate change. Tony is currently leading projects on using AI for citizens' informed participation in urban development, on providing staffing for rural and remote areas in NSW, and on Graduate Ready Schools.

Matt Winslade is the Associate Head of School for the School of Education at Charles Sturt University. Matt has a strong educational background with over 25 years of teaching experience. Prior to academia he was both a Head Teacher in the state system and a Director of Sport in the Association of Independent Schools. Matt is currently the NSW representative to the NADPE, aligned to the ACDE, and sits on the board of the NAFEA as both an executive member and editor of the association's journal WIL in Practice. His current research activities include evaluating school-university partnerships in relation to professional experience and school-based health and physical-activity programs. His joint publication Teaching Quality Health and Physical Education, designed to support both pre-service and in-service teachers, was awarded Best Tertiary Teaching and Learning Resource at the Australian Educational Publishing Awards.

Dr. Michelle J. Eady is an Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia. Michelle is the President Elect (2022–2024) of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). She is both an ISSOTL and HERDSA Fellow and a Senior Fellow of Advance HE, and holds a national teaching citation for her work in quality teacher preparation. Her research interests include SoTL, distance learning/synchronous technology, Aboriginal studies, work-integrated learning, and other current issues in education. Associate Professor Eady has had the pleasure of speaking at conferences worldwide and looks forward to collaborations with colleagues who have a passion for teaching and learning.

Part II
Historical Reflection of the Role of WIL in Teacher Preparation

Chapter 4
A Partnership Framework for Enhancing Teacher Education Outcomes

Sonia Ferns, Vaille Dawson, and Christine Howitt

Abstract Universities are increasingly accountable for the quality of learning experiences and graduate outcomes afforded through a teacher-education degree. This research explored quality components of teacher education and how stakeholders can work collaboratively to embed work-integrated learning (WIL) in the student experience, thereby ensuring that graduates are prepared for professional teaching roles. A mixed-methods, case-study research design was used to gather data from principals, teaching staff, students and graduates, and representatives of professional bodies. The graduate survey generated 322 quantitative graduate responses and 492 comments. SPSS and Excel functions were used for quantitative data analysis and NVivo for thematic analysis. Analysis of data collected for the case study revealed domains perceived as important for graduate employability, with collaborative partnerships emerging as integral to actualising the domains. Findings challenge conventional university approaches to brokering and maintaining partnerships, and suggest a holistic engagement framework for stakeholders. Greater collaboration, cooperation, and consultation are required for a more holistic, relevant, and inclusive educative experience that meets the needs of all stakeholders. This chapter proposes a partnership framework to support the attainment of teacher-education graduates' proficiency in preparation for the challenges and unpredictable interface of education. The "WIL Partnership Framework for Teacher Education" outlines roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and describes the features of partnerships among stakeholders to optimise graduate outcomes through shared expertise, vision, and aspirations.

Keywords Work-integrated learning · WIL partnership framework · Professional accreditation · Employability · Quality · Professional identity

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_4

4.1 Introduction

Education has multiple benefits for society from both an individual's perspective and a holistic societal outlook. Individuals benefit economically and intellectually from education, while society profits from a productive workforce that contributes to economic well-being (Schneider & Preckel, 2017). Education nurtures responsible, caring, and engaged citizens; this, in turn, benefits humanity, and encourages safe and stable communities (Universities Australia, 2016). Effective teaching enacted by creative, enthusiastic, scholarly, and compassionate teachers is instrumental to educative outcomes. Fundamental to such teaching is the quality of university teacher-education programs. Student recruitment, curriculum design, professional certification (Cooper & Taylor, 2010; Ingvarson et al., 2014), academic rigour, and work-integrated learning (WIL) pedagogies are critical elements of quality outcomes (Ingvarson, 2016).

Teacher-education degrees provide opportunities for students to integrate the theories of teaching within a real-world setting through a series of WIL placements. Placements progressively increase in duration and intensity throughout the degree (Ferns, 2018). Typically, placements begin with observational sessions, with students' teaching responsibilities gradually increasing across ensuing years. The undergraduate degree culminates with a 10-week, full-time work placement in fourth year. Designing and actuating WIL curriculum is challenging for educators, as it requires expertise beyond that of traditional teaching methodologies (Bilgin et al., 2017). Self-assessment, reflective practice, and active engagement are defining aspects of WIL pedagogy, and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders are a distinguishing feature (Cooper et al., 2010) that affords tangible benefits and reciprocal outcomes (Fleming et al., 2018). The interplay between these influences has created expectations about graduates' capabilities and work-readiness (Scott, 2016) for a teaching profession that is characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty.

The education sector has embraced the concept of embedding WIL in curricula as a strategy for enhancing graduate employability (Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017). The strategic intent of partnerships is to nurture a "borderless institution", where the university collaborates with external stakeholders to facilitate graduate employability. Partnerships are at the core of WIL, and are essential for realising the benefits of a WIL curriculum. The National WIL Strategy, which cites partnerships with industry as fundamental to enacting a WIL curriculum, exemplifies this notion (Australian Collaborative Education Network [ACEN], 2015). Further to this, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education in Australia, stipulates standards and expectations concerning governance of partnerships and the implementation of WIL experiences for students (TEQSA, 2015).

Teacher-education programs are recognised both nationally and internationally by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The Teachers Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) administers the accreditation process in Western Australia. Professions are increasingly seeking to enhance profile,

status, and sustainability through professional accreditation (Ferns et al., 2019). While terminologies and approaches differ among accrediting bodies, universities acknowledge the benefits of professional accreditation for benchmarking, quality assurance, and marketing potential (Harvey, 2004; Ralph et al., 2015). Professional accreditation informs the structure, learning experiences, and content of a degree, with an emphasis on graduate employability, but has minimal impact on student engagement and learning outcomes (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018). Despite the many benefits, professional accreditation can be costly, time-consuming, and rigid (Christ & Henderson, 2014).

Employability is a dynamic concept that morphs and shifts according to stakeholder perspectives (Smith et al., 2014). Chatterton and Rebbeck (2015) describe employability "as a continuous and lifelong journey" (p. 21). The acquisition of skills that makes one employable is enhanced with input from multiple stakeholders. Many definitions of employability exist, but all resonate a similar perspective: employability is not about securing a job, but about developing attributes that prepare a person for all aspects of life, and incorporates social, ethical, and professional behaviours. Teacher-education students require a complex array of employability capabilities to prepare for a dynamic, constantly evolving, and increasingly technology-driven profession. Alongside a curriculum that affords resilience, professionalism, and critical thinking is the importance of professional identity, which has been described as "crucial to academic self-efficacy and self-concept of pre-service teachers" (Sheffield et al., 2020, p. 303).

Evidence supports that professional identity is nurtured through experiential learning, which is usually undertaken within a specific discipline framework (Trede, 2012). The development of an agile professional identity that enables flexibility in accommodating varying workplace demands and skills is a graduate outcome (Daniels & Brooker, 2014). Professional identity of emerging teachers is directly related to the efficacy of their teaching (Alsup, 2005); this highlights the importance of rich, engaging, and challenging teacher-education programs that enable student teachers to explore their evolving professional identity (Chong & Low, 2009). Holistic experiences encompassing the development of "personal identity, brand and profile" (Kinash & Crane, 2015, p. 1) should be the cornerstone of teacher education degrees. There is also consensus among students, employers, and graduates, that transferable skills are more important than the attainment of discipline knowledge. hese key stakeholders benefit from an education that produces highly skilled and work-ready graduates, but each has different purposes and outcomes. Furthermore, there is limited research that provides input from professional accreditation representatives, who are highly valued stakeholders (Ferns, 2021).

The aim of this research was to investigate quality in a teacher-education context and to determine how stakeholders can work collaboratively to prepare students for transition to the school environment. This chapter reports on a teacher-education case study that was part of a larger study involving three disciplinary areas (Ferns, 2018). The research questions were:

1. What are the important components of a university education that support the development of teacher-education students' employability capabilities?
2. How does embedding WIL experiences in curriculum support the development of teacher-education students' graduate employability?
3. What are the characteristics of partnerships that facilitate successful outcomes in preparing work-ready graduates?

4.2 Methodology

The research encompassed a three-phase, mixed-methods case-study design. The strength of the case study is its usefulness for investigating complex social microcosms where multiple variables are at play (Patton, 1990). A mixed-methods approach is defined as a type of research in which the "investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 4). The amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative methods provides a more comprehensive analysis and rigorous process for making justifiable judgements on research outcomes.

The context of the research was a Bachelor of Education (Primary Education) (PE) delivered at an Australian university. Data was collected via surveys and interviews from stakeholders of teacher-education programs, including students, graduates, employers, teaching staff, and TRBWA representatives. Ethics approval was obtained from the University Ethics Committee. Three phases of data collection were employed.

4.2.1 Phase One

Graduate surveys were collected from 322 (55% response rate) PE graduates from the 2013, 2014, and 2015 cohorts. Quantitative data (23 items) was analysed to determine graduates' satisfaction with the PE degree experience. Data was downloaded via Excel and analysed using SPSS. A descriptive analysis of the data to determine frequency of responses and measures of central tendency was undertaken. Collectively, the surveys captured 492 comments about the best aspects of the degree and the areas needing improvement. NVivo software was used to organise, classify, and code qualitative data. The findings informed important components of a university education for employability (RQ1) and the design of subsequent phases.

4.2.2 Phase Two

Individual and small-group interviews with 13 PE students were conducted. Interviews were of one hour duration and were designed to explore employability and quality components of a university educational experience. Questions, informed by themes emerging from Phase One, related to assessment, workplace relevance, social connections, workplace transition, motivation, confidence, skill development (including affective attributes), and role models/mentors. In addition, the interviews explored professional identity and self-efficacy and professional accreditation. Student interviews broadened the context of the research schema with more explicit and in-depth comments pertaining to the outcomes of Phase One.

4.2.3 Phase Three

Interviews with four teaching staff, two school principals, and three TRBWA representatives inquired into the quality of the learning experience, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, the school's role in ensuring employable graduates, professional identity, the role of the TRBWA, and the nature of partnerships.

4.2.4 Domains and Dimensions

The incremental approach to data collection and analysis across the three phases enabled the progressive compilation of information and appropriate recalibration of data and findings throughout the investigation. Each phase generated Domains (major themes) and Dimensions (sub-themes of Domains) deemed essential to quality outcomes for PE graduates. Phase One established graduates' perceptions about the important components of their learning experience, specifically focussing on employability capabilities. Here, 10 Domains and a series of Dimensions were identified. The individual and small-group interviews conducted in Phase Two probed further into the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of the student experience. Phase One Domains were reinforced through Phase Two data collection and analysis, with one additional Domain and several new Dimensions emerging. Findings from Phase Three strengthened findings from the previous two phases, informed the reshaping and consolidation of the Domains and Dimensions, highlighted the importance of partnerships, and defined the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

4.3 Findings

The findings show synergies across stakeholder perspectives and identify how stakeholders can work collaboratively to prepare graduates for the future workplace. All stakeholders espoused the need to nurture partnerships that facilitate shared responsibility and authentic learning experiences. This section presents a description of each of the Domains deemed essential for quality outcomes and, in turn, the development of employability capabilities. It explains the central role of partnerships in realising the Domains and summarises the perceptions of each stakeholder.

4.3.1 Domains for Quality Outcomes

Consolidation of data across all three phases showed that stakeholders shared similar insights on what constitutes a quality educative experience to ensure that teacher-education graduates acquire employability capabilities during their studies. The following 11 Domains emerged from the analysis.

1. *WIL and workplace relevance*

Interviewees agreed that the "real strength [of the course] was the prac components because it is real" and where "theory is actually put into practice". Practicums were thought to consolidate the "career of choice" and were a "reality check". The final 10-week internship was thought to "tick a lot of boxes" in preparation for the professional working environment. Students attested that "the curriculum was outdated" and there was a misalignment between "prac units and theory units".

2. *Staff quality and expertise*

Graduates and students complimented staff who delivered "challenging lessons that engaged all students" and were "knowledgeable and enthusiastic". They appreciated staff who provided "clear expectations and information". Quality staff who were "experienced in the field [of education]" and showed a "commitment to students" were highly commended. Graduates perceived "lecturers who did not model being a teacher" in their delivery practices as inadequate.

3. *Assessment*

Assessment was described as "confusing" and lacking in "clarity". There was a perception that assessments were "not authentic or relevant enough", with little application to the real world. Marking criteria for the practicum was deemed of little value, as feedback failed to provide advice on how to improve. Students criticised the emphasis on essay exams because "passing exams isn't going to make you a better teacher". Students felt that "prac was more likely to test capabilities" because it "encouraged reflection" and enabled "questioning personal strengths and weaknesses". Failure was perceived as worthwhile as it enabled you to "pick yourself up again" and build resilience.

4. *Course content and structure*

There were "issues with unit progression" and "outdated curriculum". Suggested improvements included a course design that fostered "social connections and cohesiveness" as there was a perception of "insufficient active engagement". While interviewees considered the "content interesting" there was uncertainty about how it would "apply in the classroom".

5. *Social connections*

Students perceived "Peer collaboration" and "working with others" as beneficial for optimal outcomes, but there was "insufficient encouragement for students to engage with each other and poor collaboration between peers". The importance of "building a relationship with the supervising teacher" was highlighted. Students acknowledged the value of professional networks but noted that "prac was the only opportunity for professional engagement".

6. *Workplace transition*

Some graduates simply stated "completing the degree" as a personal highlight of their experience, while others felt the course lacked "preparation for entering the workforce and addressing application criteria". Students felt there was a lack of information on "career development and progression" and "what to do when you graduate". They appreciated the support of supervising teachers, who provided "helpful information on what next", but all students felt "more support for new teachers" was warranted.

7. *Motivation*

Comments indicated that motivation is intrinsically connected to "engaging and challenging learning experiences" facilitated by "enthusiastic staff with great teaching experience". Students emphasised the ability of these staff to "encourage me to strive to do better" and "believe in myself with a commitment to hard work". "Feedback provided and effort of teachers" helped students "aspire to reach personal goals". While some "staff were fantastic at motivating [PE students]", others were described as "boring and unenthusiastic".

8. *Confidence/skill development*

Students perceived the acquisition of "broad knowledge" gained and the application of "writing, communication, critical and analytical thinking skills, and resilience" in real-world settings as pivotal for developing the confidence necessary for the teaching profession. Skills deemed important were "research skills, and oral and written communication skills", and the "resilience and initiative to pick yourself up". Students also felt that a "multidisciplinary context to broaden skillsets and increase employability" built confidence.

9. *Role models and mentors*

Students regarded a "competent supervising teacher" as integral to successful outcomes from work-based experiences, and acknowledged the support and advice offered by "tutors and other students". They thought that teaching staff should teach how to use engaging teaching strategies "by example", and perceived "lecturers who did not role model being a good teacher" as unsatisfactory. Some expressed disappointment with the support and mentoring from university supervisors. All agreed that a "mentor impacts on your professional identity" and has a "massive impact on who you are".

10. *Professional identity*

Students perceived professional identity as "critical to be effective in the workplace", but were doubtful that "the course contributed to [professional identity]". Students agreed that "networks help the development of professional identity". They talked about how teachers are perceived in the broader community, expressing concern at a "public mindset" of lack of respect for the teaching profession. They were passionate in the belief that people "wouldn't have got to where they are without teachers in their life". Students agreed that the portfolio assessment helped "to build professional identity" along with "regular positive and constructive feedback".

11. *Professional accreditation*

The question pertaining to the role of professional accreditation bodies led to responses like "they give us our qualification don't they" or "does the portfolio have something to do with that?". Students commented that details about the TRBWA were "not in the course but [I understand] it is a pretty big deal". Interviewees contested that they "actually found out about it on [their] own" but it "should be embedded into course work". Stakeholders collectively agreed on the value of professional accreditation for the credibility of the PE degree and as an assurance of graduate employability, and suggested strengthening connections with TRBWA as a way of improving curriculum currency, fostering partnerships with schools, and supporting graduates' transition into the classroom. However, the TRBWA was perceived as an authoritarian body, and the accreditation process as structured and prescriptive. Students had little exposure to the rigours of professional accreditation and what it meant for their future lives as a professional.

4.3.2 Partnerships

Interviewees expanded on the notion of partnerships, highlighted stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, and outlined characteristics of beneficial partnerships. Partnerships emerged as integral to actuating the Domains, based on interviewees' perceptions of them as a mechanism for addressing existing challenges, building the capacity of all stakeholders, and ultimately enhancing graduate employability. Based on comments from interviewees, the concept of partnerships underpinned all Domains.

Staff highlighted the need to ensure that “linking and associating with the profession [occurred] early in the degree”. Staff agreed they needed to get “much better at working with mentor teachers and schools to improve students’ ability to make [professional] connections”. Staff referred to the system as “being broken”, but recognised that the solution resided with all stakeholders working together. Staff commented on the need for “a new model of engagement” involving collaborative decision-making.

Staff cited many benefits of partnerships, including the opportunity to “remain contemporary”, and specifically of “reciprocal partnerships” that “require trust” and build “social capital”. They considered negotiation of the “balance of autonomy and support” for stakeholders as fundamental to mutually beneficial partnerships.

4.3.3 Stakeholder Perspectives

The perspectives of stakeholders outlined below corroborate their agreement about the quality Domains for PE students that are critical to graduate capability and workplace readiness, and the characteristics of partnerships that afford PE students an educative experience that integrates the Domains.

4.3.3.1 Students and Graduates

Students and graduates agreed that the main purpose for studying an education degree was to “get a job” and increase the opportunities for “lifelong career progression and improved working conditions”. A higher-education qualification was perceived to facilitate a “better lifestyle, a sense of achievement, and an accomplishment” and to “increase employability, make a difference, and establish a future”. There was a perception that the degree was “not value for money”.

The importance of assessment strategies, workplace relevance, “hands on” activities, and social connections were considered pivotal to a successful career in the education sector. Students and graduates thought that collaboration with peers and establishing professional networks was essential, but that the learning experiences failed to provide support for workplace transition. They believed that confidence, resilience, and initiative were crucial for transitioning to the teaching profession. Role models and mentors were perceived to be very important. While students attested to the importance of a professional identity, there was some doubt that the degree facilitated the development of one.

4.3.3.2 Principals and Representatives of Professional Bodies

Both principals and representatives of professional bodies highlighted the importance of teaching staff with recent industry experience to ensure currency of industry

practices. They considered graduates' ability to "make connections" with all stakeholders to be pivotal to a successful career in education. Partnerships between schools and universities were considered influential in developing, designing, and delivering a quality education program. The principals believed such partnerships needed strengthening, and suggested that better communication and reciprocal services should be negotiated. Skills such as organisation, motivation, reflection, communication, lifelong learning, and interpersonal characteristics were deemed essential for the teaching profession. The principals and representatives from the TRBWA alluded to a systemic issue concerning the quality of teachers. The TRBWA representatives perceived that a key mechanism for addressing this issue was through the accreditation of education programs against AITSL standards. The TRBWA representatives considered that the organisation has a "relationship" rather than a "partnership" with universities.

4.3.3.3 Teacher-Education Staff

Teacher-education staff recognised that professional accreditation "helps drive the curriculum but also has constraints", as it restricts innovative curriculum design. Staff agreed that it was important for students to know that they are "undertaking a course that is accredited Australia-wide", and that the "benefits are [that] students qualify in any state and degrees are comparable across institutions".

Teacher-education staff believed their industry-currency and effective-delivery models, which challenged and motivated students beyond the confines of the education profession, promoted broader contexts for lifelong learning. Staff agreed that authentic assessment profiles were important, but required extra resourcing and were incumbent on staff capacity. They highlighted the value of learning in the workplace for establishing career connection and enabling students to determine their personal suitability for the education profession. A cohesive and connected curriculum was considered fundamental to quality student outcomes, as was a whole-of-course approach. They believed learning activities needed to challenge students and progress their ability to critically analyse and question information.

Staff perceived that social interaction that supported the development of positive relationships with all stakeholders was important for the development of professional identity. They acknowledged that transition arrangements from student to graduate needed to improve, but felt more support from schools was required. They highlighted the importance of personal attributes as fundamental to positive relationships, which ultimately build students' confidence in their self-perception.

Staff regarded partnerships as important to the sustainability of the degree. They believed partnerships with schools needed to broaden to include input into curriculum design, assessment, and research. Staff also highlighted the connection of self-identity, self-efficacy, and professional identity, deeming it important for students to identify as a primary educator with pride.

Staff considered resilience, lifelong learning, organisation, adaptability, theoretical application, and discipline knowledge as essential attributes for transition into

the teaching arena. They also felt that the ability to connect and form professional relationships with relevant people is crucial to a successful teaching career.

4.4 Discussion

Stakeholders considered that the WIL and Workplace Relevance Domain was the most important for ensuring PE graduates' work-readiness. This is consistent with previous research, which found that students valued WIL as a learning experience more than other aspects of their course (Karns, 2005). Real-world learning experiences that enabled students to network with practising teachers and immerse themselves in school settings were perceived as beneficial for developing entrepreneurial expertise and innovative approaches relevant to the teaching profession. Participants reported that WIL built graduates' capability for workplace productivity through a more holistic student experience, combining high-level intellectual capacity-building with practice-based problem-solving. Cunningham et al. (2016) cite problem-solving skills as pivotal to sustained economic growth and consider them the foundation on which economies "leverage future competitiveness" (p. 22). Research findings showed that students had higher levels of engagement, motivation, and in-depth learning through WIL activities.

While teacher-education staff considered it their responsibility to produce quality graduates with professional teaching skills, stakeholders questioned their capacity to successfully achieve this. Students verified that teaching quality was integral to networking opportunities, motivation, clarity of expectations, relevant curriculum and assessment, constructive feedback, and guidance and support. School-based professional development, highly sought after by teaching staff, was identified as imperative to their currency and expertise, but not readily accessible. Teaching staff cited university policies and priorities, student satisfaction metrics, workload, and greater recognition for research over teaching as barriers to fostering external partnerships. According to Reeve and Gallacher (2005), school-university relationships have the potential to provide development opportunities for teaching staff, but partnerships are problematic and "limited and marginal" (p. 220) in scope and impact. As teaching staff oversee curriculum development, assessment design, and enactment of the curriculum, the quality and expertise of the staff is paramount.

Assessment was perceived as disconnected from learning experiences and the theoretical course components. Brodie and Irving (2007, p. 14) assert that assessment should be an "integral part of the learning process". Diverse assessment tasks were highlighted as important to promote creative approaches to problem-solving. Supervision and feedback from both academic and practice-based perspectives were considered pivotal to workplace preparation. Partnerships were deemed particularly important for co-designing assessments, providing professional, real-world feedback to students, and enabling access to quality role modelling and mentoring. Hodges (2011) believes assessment should "prepare students for life" (p. 190), and stresses the importance of real-world assessment tasks that enhance students' lifelong approach

to learning. Participants believed that regular and constructive feedback from a range of sources supports skill development and self-awareness, and builds self-efficacy, confidence, motivation, and professional identity.

Students valued a cohesive curriculum design where learning is developmental and integrated. They considered that a curriculum that allows progressive development and reflective practice promotes a commitment to lifelong learning and facilitates work-readiness (Van Rooijen, 2011). While research attests to the importance of this from a curriculum-design perspective (Bosco & Ferns, 2014), it is of particular concern that stakeholders in this research cited it as an issue and a high priority for quality graduate outcomes. Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and international flavours in learning experiences were reported as enhancing global mobility, cultural appreciation, and preparation for the global workforce. Fung (2017) supports this perception, believing that these components create a connected curriculum that enriches creative thinking. Students agreed that the most powerful learning occurred where WIL was embedded and scaffolded across the curriculum, enabling a developmental approach to skill acquisition and employability. Students also expressed an appetite for professional accreditation processes, competencies, and connections to be more explicitly included in learning experiences. Furthermore, stakeholders agreed that collaboration between partners in co-designing curricula is fundamental to developing and implementing relevant and authentic content. While this approach is supported in contemporary literature, there is consensus that present partnership dynamics do not allow for collaboration on curriculum design (Foundation for Young Australians, (FYA), 2017).

Partnerships emerged as pivotal to optimising the PE student experience, addressing existing challenges, building the capacity of all stakeholders, and ultimately enhancing graduate employability. As an example of support for such partnerships, 2021, the Australian Government launched the National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF), which aimed to reward universities for increasing students' WIL experiences and strengthening partnerships with industry (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2021). Furthermore, employers believe that enhanced partnership models with universities will "accelerate Australia's skills agenda" (Bean & Dawkins, 2022, p. 7). The notion of partnerships in this study broadened beyond a relationship between universities and schools to partnerships that includes institutional leaders, teacher-education staff, teachers and principals, students and graduates, and the TRBWA. Mutually beneficial partnerships establish a culture of shared responsibility for co-designing curriculum and assessment; enhancing the capacity and expertise of partners; facilitating opportunities for students to engage, network, and connect with careers; and establishing mentoring models that benefit all partners. The current research validates that partnerships can facilitate a sense of belonging, a dynamic professional identity, and student motivation. Figure 4.1 presents a partnership model that prompts a rethink of how universities measure quality, determine staff priorities, and engage with external stakeholders. Partnerships, where all stakeholders share in the responsibility for building these components into the university experience, is highlighted. Collaboration, cooperation, and consultation among partners ensures that learning experiences are relevant

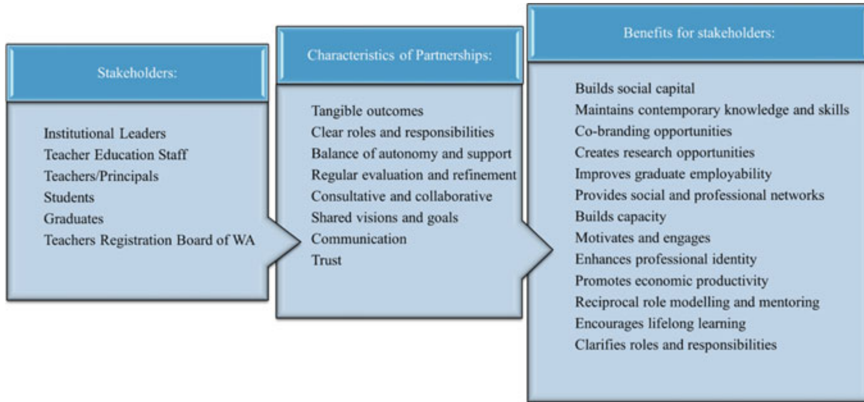

Fig. 4.1 WIL partnership framework for teacher education. *Note* Adapted from Collaboration, cooperation and consultation: Work-integrated learning partnerships for enhancing graduate employability (p. 288), by Ferns 2018, University of Western Australia (https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/publications/collaboration-cooperation-and-consultation-work-integrated-learni)

and cognisant of contemporary education standards, with opportunities for learning and development for all stakeholders.

The roles and responsibilities of partners, the dynamics of partnership arrangements, and the "rules of operand is" within the Framework are integral to a functional alliance. Institutional leaders have a role in reshaping universities' policies to enable staff to engage with schools and instituting greater flexibility in curriculum and assessment design to promote a collaborative environment. In addition, leaders are the drivers of the innovation and change needed to embrace a culture where building relationships is prioritised (Fullan & Scott, 2009). Teacher-education staff play a primary role in initiating and sustaining partnerships. Other responsibilities include leading collaborative design and implementation of curricula that afford authentic learning experiences and providing networking opportunities for students. School teachers and principals have crucial roles in co-designing curricula and providing real-world learning and opportunities for students to engage with and learn in the workplace. As alumni and practising teachers, graduates have an invaluable role in mentoring students and advising on learning experiences. Partnering with students promotes personal agency, encourages self-directed learning, empowers ownership of learning, and prepares graduates for the rigours of the future workplace. Finally, a more consultative approach for professional accreditation of teacher-education programs would benefit all stakeholders through shared expertise, thereby improving work-based learning and enabling national benchmarking. Additionally, the TRBWA could potentially provide much-needed support for graduates as they transition from student to graduate teacher.

4.5 Conclusion

This research examined the development of teacher-education graduates' workplace proficiency in preparation for unpredictable and rapidly changing educational environments. A research design incorporating a mixed-methods approach was used to ascertain the characteristics of teacher education that expedites graduates' work-readiness. Domains emerging from the research provide an overarching schema of how stakeholders can work together to prepare graduates for the teaching profession. With partnerships emerging as pivotal to employability, teaching staff expertise, and quality outcomes for stakeholders, an overview of partnership characteristics and the roles of the various stakeholders are outlined. The WIL Partnership Framework for Teacher Education is described, with an explanation of how implementation of the Framework facilitates collaboration among stakeholders to prepare graduates for the teaching profession. The importance of professional accreditation, its impact on the status and credibility of the profession, and how it informs curricula is a key topic, with suggestions for how professional accreditation could more effectively augment student outcomes and support graduates' transition to the classroom.

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Chapter 5
Harnessing the Value of Authentic Work Integrated Learning Experiences in Teacher Education

Narelle Patton

Abstract In this chapter I write from a stance that acknowledges the complex, dynamic, and contested nature of teaching practices and the schools where those practices are enacted and developed or learned. This chapter places teacher education in schools in a wider context of professional practice and the literature of situated and workplace learning to illuminate a broader perspective and deeper understanding than might be gained by considering teacher-education practicums—also called work-integrated learning (WIL)—in isolation. This is underpinned by the premise that enhancing the quality of teacher-education WIL is best built upon a deep and rich understanding of what teaching practice is like, the context where it is enacted, and the nature of what needs to be learned to become a teaching professional. Workplaces (including school classrooms) shape student (including teacher-education student) learning to such an extent and in such different ways from academic environments that development of specific WIL pedagogies is warranted. These specific pedagogies, underpinned by WIL theories, would move the focus away from instruction to privilege learning through student engagement with, and participation in, authentic workplace activities and relationships. These pedagogies would also acknowledge the significant influence of contextual factors on student learning, in particular the manner in which learning is shaped by the complex and interdependent interactions between students and workplaces. Fine-grained examination of schools as both workplaces and learning contexts for teacher-education students through WIL lenses open up pedagogical possibilities that can harness the richness of authentic contextual workplace influences to enhance student learning. This, combined with deliberate quality assurance of WIL experiences, will shape the construction of WIL experiences that best develop teacher-education students' authentic and appropriate capabilities for current and future education needs.

Keywords Situated learning · Work-integrated learning · Workplace learning theory · Professional practice · Quality assurance

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_5

5.1 Introduction

The understanding that learning is intimately bound to the context in which it is undertaken is not new. Dewey (1916) laid the groundwork for later theories of work-integrated learning (WIL) through his understanding of the centrality of environment to learning and his exploration of how learning is shaped by interactions between individuals and environments. Significantly, Dewey described the pervasive and often tacit influence of environment on student learning, and proposed, given the centrality of environment to learning, that providing an appropriate environment to stimulate and direct students' learning is an important educator role. The centrality of participation in authentic workplace activities to the quality and quantity of learning students undertake during WIL continues to be widely acknowledged (Boud & Hager, 2012). During WIL, individuals learn through working in authentic workplace settings and through addressing the challenges and issues that arise (Boud et al., 2009). Therefore, when designing WIL experiences, including teaching practicums, it is important to understand how student participation in workplace activities is achieved through the quantity and quality of experiences offered to students, as well as through the ways students elect to engage with those experiences (Billett, 2008) and access different experiences independently. Examination of WIL in this way simultaneously focusses attention on the critical contribution of workplaces and the learners themselves in shaping the character of learning that is undertaken (Patton, 2017).

Learning in workplace environments (including school classrooms) has many strengths: it is focussed on real problems in the context of practice (including teaching practice), and learners are motivated by its relevance and through active participation (Spencer, 2003). WIL can provide authentic and engaging learning experiences for teacher-education students that are central to students' preparation for their future teaching practice and professional careers. WIL in school contexts powerfully shapes teacher-education students' learning in significantly different ways to university academic environments. During WIL placements what and how students learn involves workplace affordances and student capability, including agency. WIL supervisors largely determine the level of student involvement with authentic workplace activities and shape student learning through modelling positive professional behaviours (Patton, 2018). For example, supervising teachers can determine the degree of autonomous teaching practice students can undertake and facilitate (or do not) student access to extra-curricular activities.

To harness the power of WIL to develop work-ready graduates, consideration and enhancement of WIL pedagogies is required. A focus on learners as participants opens possibilities to enhance WIL outcomes through examining how students learn in workplaces, and how they are welcomed and accepted into workplaces, invited to undertake meaningful workplace activities, and prepared to participate fully in workplace activities.

5.2 Embedded and Embodied Nature of Teaching Practice

Professional practices (including teaching) can be thought of as the enactment of professional or occupational roles in serving or contributing to society (Patton & Higgs, 2018). They are inherently situated in local settings and represent embodied ways of being in the world. Practice contexts are integral to practice itself and should never be taken for granted (Green, 2009): multiple contextual influences coalesce to shape the nature of professional practice (Patton & Fish, 2016). Individuals are mutually constitutive parts of their contexts (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004), and decide how they participate in workplace professional practices depending on their values, goals, experiences, and capabilities (Patton & Higgs, 2018). Different people bring different views and abilities to work, based on prior experience and knowledge (Fennessy et al., 2006). As an example, a student teacher brings fresh perspectives, current knowledge, and enthusiasm to teaching practice, while an experienced teacher brings a wealth of practical teaching knowledge (developed through successes and failures in their teaching practice) and contextual knowledge (including understanding of local school systems, staff, and student cohorts) to the same teaching practice.

Teaching practices are embedded in workplace (school) contexts that have a strong, pervasive, and often unspoken influence on the formation and enactment of teaching practices. Each school workplace represents a unique, dynamic, complex (Edwards & Nicholl, 2006), and contested context with its own physical architectures, systems, hierarchies, and relationships that are central to teaching performance. Physical conditions in workplaces (schools) shape local professional practices (teaching) by creating conditions that enable or constrain certain types of practice (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). For example, physical layouts of schools, including classrooms, staff rooms, lunchrooms, and playgrounds, strongly influence the learning and teaching activities that will be implemented. Classroom features such as the layout of student desks, position of the teacher's desk relative to students, and availability of information technology such as SMART Boards, laptop computers, iPads, and Internet connectivity coalesce to shape classroom teaching and learning.

The dynamic and often haphazard nature of workplaces is another contextual dimension that significantly shapes practice (Patton & Higgs, 2018). Temporal factors such as time constraints shape teaching practice by their influence on teachers' ability to both plan for and complete teaching activities. These influences can be seen at both macro and micro levels. Micro influences are evident in structured, timetabled learning sessions (lessons); macro influences can be seen in predetermined times for implementing curricula such as terms, sessions, and overall length of programs of study (Patton & Higgs, 2018). These influences can vary across and within schools; for example, lesson and break times as well as timetable structure (weekly or fortnightly) can be different across schools. Within schools, haphazard events such as a student emergency (injury or illness), behavioural issues, and unplanned supervision activities can influence teaching practice through decreased time for preparation, implementation, and breaks.

Practice is also framed by social and political conditions (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012) that shape professional practices in significant and complex ways (Patton & Higgs, 2018). In education contexts these conditions include political influences, practice traditions (evident in teaching standards and codes of conduct), individual school cultures including values and beliefs, school leadership, and financial conditions. Moreover, building and maintaining good professional relationships underpins good teaching practice.

5.3 Situated Learning

Situated-learning theory as a basis for WIL provides a useful lens with which to view the development of students' teaching capabilities in school contexts. It focusses on learning as a social activity in authentic contexts, and therefore makes a key contribution to improving the understanding, content, and context of teaching students' WIL, and assuring its quality. This section explores Lave and Wenger's landmark work on situated learning and relates it to teaching-related WIL.

Lave and Wenger (1991) described a WIL curriculum where learning occurs in opportunities for practice within a workplace community. They contended that learning in workplaces occurs through *legitimate peripheral participation,* a dynamic process where learners' knowledge, skills, and identities are developed through a trajectory of increasing participation in workplace activities and communities. As an example of student teachers' involvement in increasingly complex and important tasks in education contexts, a typical learning trajectory for teaching students would be that junior students begin with observation practicums and gradually work towards near-graduate practicums in their final year, in which they take responsibility for lesson planning and implementation, including classroom behaviour management, preparing student reports, and meeting with parents.

Situated learning facilitates rich and complex identity development because it is embedded in authentic contexts. In this model, through movement towards full participation in workplace activities, learners are active participants in knowledge and identity development (Wenger, 1998). Thus, social interaction is a critical component of situated learning, with learners constructing their identities in relation to workplace communities, and their participation shaping what they learn and who they become (Wenger, 1998). Learners' identities are formed through involvement in a community of practice that embodies beliefs and behaviours they need to develop to become full members (Evans & Rainbird, 2002).

Situated-learning theory highlights the dual importance of students undertaking a scaffolded learning trajectory involving increasing responsibility and acceptance into a school community during WIL. For example, teaching mentors can enhance students' acceptance in school workplaces through provision of opportunities for students to discuss teaching practices with other teachers, such as structured conversations during team meetings and serendipitous conversations in staff rooms and

lunchrooms. Students can also be made to feel welcomed or accepted through invitations to join staff for lunch or morning tea, the provision of a work space of their own, and meaningful tasks that enable them to make positive contributions to team processes and, consequently, student outcomes (Patton, et al., 2013).

5.4 Workplace Learning

Contemporary WIL literature provides another valuable lens to examine teacher-education practicums. WIL is a powerful and multi-faceted phenomenon that involves complex webs of power, acceptance (or not) into a community of practice, and transformation of both learners and practice communities (Patton, et al., 2013). In teacher education, WIL programs in the form of teaching practicums provide authentic, engaging, and challenging learning experiences for students alongside opportunities to demonstrate their professional teaching competency. This section explores WIL theory to better understand school contexts as learning spaces and their influence on student learning.

While the significance of learning through participation in workplace activities is generally acknowledged (Billett, 2000), attempts to understand WIL in general terms should be avoided due to the complexity of individual workplaces (Edwards & Nicholl, 2006). The development of a deeper understanding and awareness of the unique and complex nature of schools as workplaces and learning contexts for teacher-education students is warranted to contribute to teacher-education WIL models that harness the value of practicum experiences. Each school workplace represents a unique and complex context where teaching is enacted and learning (by the teacher-education student) is undertaken. Workplaces are contested spaces where students can be welcomed or not, and every action can be accepted or challenged (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Thus, school workplaces as learning environments can be understood as a complex negotiation about roles, processes, and participation (Billett, 2004), where it is unlikely that workplace negotiations for students will be mutual or reciprocal, equally shared or balanced (Patton, 2017). To access workplace opportunities, students often need to negotiate hierarchical workplace structures, practices, and relationships. For example, in some schools, teachers provide students with a planner, and they are required to teach exactly what is planned, whereas in other schools, teachers provide students more freedom to implement their own teaching ideas. It should be noted that students will learn from both of these scenarios, but what they learn will be different. This underscores the importance of developing teacher-education students' communication, negotiation, relationship, and reflection capabilities in preparation for WIL experiences where they can take responsibility for driving the learning they undertake.

Teacher-education student participation in workplace activities is not solely determined by the experiences offered by workplaces, but also by the way students elect to engage with those opportunities (Billett, 2004, 2008). They will ultimately decide their level of participation in workplace activities, and what they value and learn

through participation in workplace experiences (Billett, 2010). How students choose to engage with workplace activities is strongly influenced by their individual dispositions, interests, energy, strength, state of fatigue, and emotion (Billett, 2008). The character of learning undertaken in workplaces is determined by both the affordances offered by workplaces and the contribution of learners themselves.

Therefore, teacher education occurring in schools can be considered as a balance between workplace affordance and student engagement, where both school context and students' capabilities should be considered in the construction of wise WIL experiences. Supervising teachers are encouraged to acknowledge the significant influence of their school context on students' learning and critically examine their contexts to identify potential influences of those contexts on how and what teacher-education students learn. Academic staff are encouraged to consider how they prepare students for learning during placement, with specific focus on developing student capabilities to facilitate engagement with meaningful workplace activities.

5.5 Assuring the Quality of WIL in Teacher Education

WIL spaces, including those in teacher education, are fluid, relational, contextual, contested, and uniquely experienced spaces that can initiate powerful and meaningful learning for students. Consequently, harnessing the power of these complex spaces through quality assurance is an important, albeit challenging, activity. Nevertheless, WIL experiences, like other learning and teaching experiences in higher education, are required to comply with learning and teaching standards outlined in the Higher Education Standards Framework (2021) and, more specifically, within the TEQSA Work Integrated Learning Guidance Note (2017). This means that higher-education providers need to assure the quality of the learning students undertake in and through WIL experiences, by ensuring that WIL is supported by high-quality processes and that students are supported while undertaking practicums (Campbell et al., 2019).

Consistent with the centrality of participation to student learning outlined in workplace and situated learning theories, a quality WIL experience should provide students with a meaningful pedagogical experience in a workplace setting (McRae, et al., 2018) that is scaffolded, connected, and supported (Campbell et al., 2019). Organisationally, WIL needs to be prioritised through good governance, appropriate resourcing, and institution, and organisational-based champions (Sachs et al., 2016). Quality WIL activity across institutions also requires effective staff management, risk management, and reporting of WIL experiences to facilitate continual improvement (Campbell et al., 2019). Further, quality assurance of WIL also requires clear integration of WIL experiences into academic curricula, including intentional alignment to learning outcomes (Sachs et al., 2016).

Building on contemporary WIL literature, Campbell et al. (2019) have developed a holistic framework for quality assurance of WIL that encompasses before, during, and after phases of WIL placements. This framework provides guiding principles and identifies standards around four key domains of practice:

1. Student experience (scaffolded, connected, and supported pedagogical experience);
2. Curriculum design (embedded, accessible, and transformative learning and assessment within an intended and enacted curriculum);
3. Institutional requirements (proper management of staff, risk management, and reporting of WIL experiences supporting continual improvement); and
4. Stakeholder engagement (supported by engagement, connection, and responsiveness to the dynamic expectations of diverse stakeholders, including industry, community, government, higher-education sector, professional bodies, and students).

While the principles and standards within this framework align strongly with the principles of situated learning and WIL outlined earlier in this chapter, it reaches further in describing institutional and stakeholder engagement requirements for quality WIL. Areas of alignment with situated-learning and WIL principles include a focus on scaffolded, connected, and supported student experiences, such as ensuring student readiness and preparation for learning in the workplace context (Standard 1.1), that offer scaffolded learning opportunities (Standard 1.5), and ensure that WIL curriculum design provides inclusive, equitable, and accessible experiences (Standard 2.4). Institutional and stakeholder engagement requirements align strongly with TEQSA requirements for quality WIL; for example, WIL must be supported by adequate and effective information-technology support and administrative systems (Standard 3.3), institutions must provide targeted professional development for academic and professional staff, and industry and community partners (Standard 3.4), and partner sites must be reviewed for health and safety, and for their suitability for WIL activities (Standard 4.2).

In summary, quality assurance of WIL is critical to harnessing the power of practicum experiences to develop teacher education students' teaching capabilities. To achieve a holistic approach to quality assurance, consideration should be given to activities undertaken before (preparation), during (practicum) and after (reflection and debriefing) WIL. Further, WIL programs should be framed by university policy, practice and procedure (McRae et al., 2018) and seamlessly interwoven into the wider academic curriculum.

5.6 Recommendations for Supervising Teachers, Academics, and Students

The critical contribution of environment and individual students' dispositions and capabilities to the quality and quantity of learning undertaken during WIL experiences highlights important roles for supervising teachers, academic staff, and students themselves in harnessing the power of WIL to holistically develop teaching capability. Building on the previous discussion of situated-learning and WIL theory, this

section offers recommendations for supervising teachers, academics, and students for maximising student learning during WIL experiences.

Supervising teachers

i. Due to the complex and unique nature of schools, teaching mentors are encouraged in the first instance to examine their workplaces to better understand how these settings may influence student learning. Such examinations could include, for example, looking at the invitational qualities of workplaces (how students are included or excluded from workplace activities) and identification and implementation of ways to provide access and ease student pathways to authentic practice activities, such as helping students to form relationships with other staff, including administrative staff, other teaching staff, and school leadership (principal, deputy principal, etc.) to broaden their experiences and professional networks.
ii. In acknowledgement of the significant influence of teacher-education students' relationships with their supervising teachers, supervising teachers are encouraged to examine their own dispositions and the effect they have on student learning. For example, supervising teachers should interrogate their willingness to allow students to undertake independent teaching activities, with a view to being more open to developing trajectories towards autonomous student involvement.
iii. Because students uniquely experience teaching spaces, and thus the resultant learning can be surprising and unexpected, supervising teachers are encouraged to provide time to debrief with students following teaching activities. In this way supervising teachers can help students to develop skills in reflective practice, construct authentic teaching-practice knowledge, and understand more deeply the learning achieved (via the lived curriculum) through these encounters.
iv. Teacher mentors can develop their supervisory practices through critical reflection, including seeking and acting on student feedback and accessing supervisory professional development opportunities.

Academics and students

i. The critical contribution of students' disposition to the way they engage with and learn from WIL opportunities has significant implications for student preparation for teaching-education practicum experiences. Students should be helped to understand the significant influence of their dispositions on the provision of teaching learning opportunities and to enhance their placement learning through actively seeking a broad range of learning opportunities. Students will need to be prepared for being able to respectfully navigate hierarchical school structures to access a range of teaching opportunities. Students should also be encouraged to explore how what they bring with them and how they choose to engage with workplace activities shapes their learning and professional development.
ii. Students' awareness of their central position in teacher-education practicums can encourage them to powerfully enhance their placement learning through the co-construction of truly student-centred learning spaces. Students should

be encouraged to explore their innate learning practices during WIL, such as where and when they spontaneously reflect, and to purposefully create positive learning experiences. In so doing, they can drive, rather than merely receive, their WIL experiences.

iii. Student confidence and level of interest in particular clinical areas have been found to significantly influence student access to clinical activities, with clinical educators more motivated to find interesting activities for students who demonstrate interest in particular clinical areas (Patton, 2018). Thus, students should be encouraged to consider how the way they present themselves to and are perceived by others influences the richness of their WIL experiences.

iv. Relationships formed with a wide range of people have also been demonstrated to significantly influence physiotherapy students' clinical learning (Patton, 2018). Given this central contribution of relationships to workplace learning, student preparation for the relational dimensions of WIL can facilitate the development of effective experiences.

v. Student well-being also significantly influences how students engage with workplace activities. Given the challenging nature of teaching practicums on the one hand and students' vulnerability to poor physical and mental health during placement experiences on the other, students should be encouraged to prioritise their health and well-being during WIL. Maintaining normal routines, making time for social activities, and engaging in physically active pursuits beyond the workplace are three ways that students may enhance their well-being.

5.7 Conclusion

Examination of teaching practicums with a situated and workplace learning lens has revealed the complex and relational nature of the learning that teacher-education students undertake during WIL in schools. Teaching practicums have been found to be learning spaces where workplace influences, engagement in teaching practices and relationships, the intentions and actions of supervising teachers, and student dispositions and experiences interact to critically shape development of students' teaching practice capabilities. The central position of students in driving—not just receiving—learning has been highlighted. Therefore, to harness the full potential of teaching practicums, students should be made aware of and prepared for the significantly different mode of learning undertaken during WIL as compared to academic environments. Careful consideration of school contexts as learning environments for teacher-education students alongside deliberate and holistic quality assurance of teaching practicums will facilitate the development of high-quality teacher education WIL models that produce teachers capable of meeting current and future education needs.

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Chapter 6
The Current Nature of Australian School-University Partnerships: A Literature Review

Stacey E. Jones and Corinne A. Green

Abstract In recent years, collaborative and deliberate school-university partnerships have been advocated and implemented within initial teacher education. As explored in a recent systematic literature review (Green et al. in Asia–Pac J Teach Educ 48:403–435, 2020b), these partnerships have mutual benefits for all stakeholders. This chapter provides a literature review that builds upon (Green et al. in Asia–Pac J Teach Educ 48:403–435, 2020b) work using academic and grey literature published during 2015–2020. The chapter focusses on the fundamental qualities and models of school-university partnerships in Australia from multiple stakeholders' perspectives. We identify five key themes: partnership structure; partnership activities; partnership aims; respect and reciprocity within the partnership; and sustainability of the partnership. Exploring these themes allows us to further deepen our understanding of these partnerships, providing implications for teaching practice and informing varied stakeholders in the field of education. In doing so, this chapter foreshadows the remainder of this book, wherein examples of research and practice in partnership are presented.

Keywords School-university partnerships · Professional experience · Collaboration · Critical review · Sustainability

6.1 Background

The traditional approach to placing pre-service teachers—that is, university students within an initial teacher education degree—in classroom settings sees one pre-service teacher matched with one classroom teacher for a block of time (e.g., four weeks). The

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_6

pre-service teacher completes several of these professional-experience (PEx) placements at various schools over the course of their initial teacher education degree (Lemon et al., 2018). These arrangements require, as noted by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), "close working relationships" (2014a, p. 25) between schools and universities. While these relationships may be focussed on the logistics of PEx placements, in recent years collaborative and deliberate school-university partnerships have been advocated and implemented within initial teacher education (Green et al., 2020b; Grudnoff et al., 2017). These partnerships are espoused to provide mutual benefit for all stakeholders by presenting opportunities for professional development, shared communities of practice, and collaboration between partners who share a collective interest in the field of education and the provision of effective initial teacher education (Green et al., 2020b; Le Cornu, 2015). These partnerships can provide pre-service teachers with increased quantity (and quality) of time in school settings, which are vital experiences for them as they navigate the links between pedagogical theory offered through university study and the hands-on practice of teaching (Bourke, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Green et al., 2020b; Gutierrez & Nailer, 2020; Kenny et al., 2016).

The aim of this chapter is to use Green et al. (2020b) systematic literature review of Australian school-university partnerships as a "solid background" (p. 421) for our continued exploration of school-university partnerships. Using academic and grey literature published during 2015–2020, we have focussed on the fundamental qualities and models of school-university partnerships in Australia from multiple stakeholders' perspectives. From this literature, we have identified five key themes relating to Australian school-university partnerships connected to initial teacher education: partnership structure, partnership activities, partnership aims, respect and reciprocity within the partnership, and sustainability of the partnership. Exploring these themes allows a deeper understanding of these partnerships from multiple perspectives, providing implications for teaching practice and informing varied stakeholders (including researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers) in the field of education.

The absence of grey literature in Green et al. (2020b) review was acknowledged as a limitation that prevented the presentation of a comprehensive picture from all stakeholders' perspectives. Despite the voices of multiple participants being conveyed in some of the peer-reviewed articles, the authentic voice of school teachers was largely silenced, softened, or absent in the peer-reviewed literature. To ensure that the perspective of all stakeholders, particularly school teachers and school leaders, was included in this literature review, we have reviewed grey literature sourced from professional journals, policy documents, and social-media representations (such as Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Russell, 2019; TEMAG, 2014a, 2014b). This action ensured that all stakeholders' voices and their perspectives on partnerships were accessed, without the filter of academic authors' interpretation of school teachers' and leaders' experiences (Jesson et al., 2011; Mahood et al., 2013).

6.2 Definitions

Before continuing with the literature review, it is important to clarify the key terminology used in this chapter, as well as relevant contextual information regarding initial teacher education in Australia.

Pre-service teacher: This term is one of many used in the literature to describe university students undertaking initial teacher education. Other common terms include undergraduate teacher, prac-student, and teacher-education student.

Professional-experience (PEx) placements: This term refers to pre-service teachers' work-based experiential learning in school settings and is a critical aspect of ITE (Hartsuyker et al., 2007; TEMAG, 2014a, 2014b). AITSL (2015a) mandates that pre-service teachers within an undergraduate initial teacher education program in Australia must complete at least 80 days of PEx throughout their degree, with those in graduate-entry initial teacher education programs completing at least 60 days of PEx. Other terms used in the literature to refer to similar experiences include practicum, student teaching, practice teaching, internship, teaching rounds, clinical practice, work-integrated learning, field experience, and school-based experience. Schools voluntarily host pre-service teachers for PEx placements, with payment available to schools and/or teachers as compensation for the work involved.

School-university partnership: This refers to the intentional relationships formed between a specific school (or schools) and a university (or universities). Zeichner (2010) describes these types of non-hierarchical collaborative partnerships as operating in the "third space" where boundaries are crossed between schools and universities. For the purpose of this literature review, we have focussed on third-space school-university partnerships related to initial teacher education.

6.2.1 Literature Review

The five key themes arising from the academic and grey literature regarding initial teacher education-connected school-university partnerships in Australia are as follows:

1. Partnership structure;
2. Partnership activities;
3. Partnership aims;
4. Respect and reciprocity within the partnership; and
5. Sustainability of the partnership.

It is important to note that there are multiple points of intersection between and among these themes, which will be explored later in this chapter.

6.2.1.1 Theme 1: Partnership Structure

The recent academic and grey literature has presented various structures of school-university partnerships. These include partnerships between one school and one university, as well as partnerships between multiple universities and schools working in tandem. There are also community/cohort models, where groups of pre-service teachers are matched to groups of supervising teachers for their PEx placements, and hybrid teacher-educator arrangements where individuals hold staff roles at both a school and a university. Another interesting facet of this theme involved identifying who initiated the partnership, although this information was not stated in all reviewed literature.

One school and one university

While universities may have connections with many schools, particularly for the purposes of negotiating PEx placements, an intentional partnership may involve just one school and one university. Green et al. (2020a) provide an example of this, where the school in question chose to partner with one university even to the point of exclusively accepting pre-service teachers from that university for PEx placements. The school leaders in this instance believed that this exclusive relationship simplified their workload and strengthened the relationship between the institutions.

Another example is seen in Cavanagh et al. (2019), where a one-school, one-university partnership developed through a research project scaffolding pre-service teachers' classroom experience. In reflecting upon the implementation of their research project, the authors recognised the need for clear communication and collaboration, which could have "better facilitated the 'three way co-operation'…necessary to support [pre-service teachers]" (Cavanagh et al., 2019, p. 78) in their project.

Multiple universities and schools working in tandem

One example of this more-complicated organisational structure was evident in the Science Teacher Education Partnerships with Schools (STEPS) project (Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; Hobbs et al., 2018; Jones & Chittleborough, 2018). This project brings together five universities across Australia that have independently established science teacher education programs incorporating some form of school-based science learning for pre-service teachers. The project team has worked together for several years to explore the features of these partnerships that contributed to their success, and to develop a framework to guide other teacher-educators engaged in partnership work.

AITSL (2015d) gives another example of this structure, with a school-university partnership being integrated with community-based teacher education through Technical and Further Education (TAFE). TAFE is similar to community colleges elsewhere in the world. This partnership supports rural and Indigenous communities, enhancing accessibility to teacher-education programs and teaching experience within schools.

Community/cohort model

The formation of Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP) involved a two-year partnership between one university and nine schools (Grimmett et al., 2018). The project used a "cluster-based" model with pre-service teachers placed with a *cluster* or *team* of supervising teachers. The project shifted attitudes of the supervising teachers in schools as they engaged in a collaborative community/cohort model promoting collegial responsibility among numerous teachers. Similar approaches were discussed in AITSL (2015e) and Bone et al. (2019), with pre-service teachers placed in groups within school settings. These sources identified that this clustered arrangement provided social and emotional support for the pre-service teachers, supporting their overall well-being.

Hybrid teacher-educator

Several partnerships created new roles, including the appointment of boundary workers, operating between both the school and university contexts in a variety of combinations (AITSL, 2015b; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; White, 2019) and designated PEx coordinators appointed within schools to liaise with the university, pre-service teachers, and school staff (AITSL, 2015e, 2015f; Clarke & Winslade, 2019). These roles, which are also referred to in the literature as hybrid teacher-educators, can play a valuable intermediary role between the institutions in the partnership.

Clarke and Winslade's (2019) mixed-methods study of a regional school-university partnership sought to address the question "How could a university engage with school teachers beyond a supervisory role of their [initial teacher education] students?" (p. 139). Within the partnership, two "team teaching partners" (p. 140) from the school were selected to review university subject outlines, and to co-design and deliver weekly tutorials in the university setting for pre-service teachers preparing to complete mandatory PEx placements. The pre-service teachers were further supported by team teaching, in conjunction with allocated teaching supervisors within the school setting during placement. This project reported that the pre-service teachers showed increased confidence and readiness for teaching placements, although issues of equity were raised, as not all pre-service teachers were placed at the team teachers' partnering school due to logistical constraints. This project provides an example of a starkly different structure, using the same teachers within the university context to enhance pre-service teachers' preparation prior to school-placements and provide additional support for them in the school setting. The model provides consistency of expectations for them in both contexts of the partnership and reveals the significant benefit border workers bring to school-university partnerships in terms of pre-service teachers' confidence and readiness to participate in their professional placement.

White (2019) also explored the role of hybrid teacher-educator, where two teachers became "responsible for a cohort of pre-service teachers and their mentors" (p. 5) in conjunction with their classroom duties. These teachers had contrasting experiences in this role; where one was keen to be involved and understood that the role was "building a bridge" (p. 8), the other was less enthusiastic and experienced

tension between his allegiance to his school students and his responsibility to the pre-service teachers. The boundary-crossing role of hybrid teacher-educator is complex, with further research recommended into "how all teacher educators can successfully navigate the dualistic role of competing demands" (White, 2019, p. 10).

6.2.1.2 Initiators of the Partnership

Not all sources identified which party had initiated the school-university partnership. However, among those sources where it was noted, the initiator was predominantly the university. This may well be connected to the mandated PEx placements, with universities approaching schools to establish partnerships that facilitate the logistics of these placements (AITSL, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e, 2015f, 2015g, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j, 2015k, 2015l, 2015m; Allen et al., 2019; Betlem et al., 2019; Bone et al., 2019; Grimmett et al., 2018; Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; Lemon et al., 2018; McGraw & McDonough, 2019; Nguyen, 2017). The university approaching the school to establish a partnership can (but may not always) have implications for the power dynamics and activities implemented within the partnership, with the school seen primarily as a workplace learning site for pre-service teachers (Lemon et al., 2018; White, 2019).

There were two examples in the literature where schools were the initiators of the partnership. The partnership at the heart of Clarke and Winslade's (2019) paper, where two classroom teachers were selected to become boundary workers who co-designed and taught in the Bachelor of Education program, was funded and initiated by the NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) as part of the Professional Experience Hub School Program. The government-funded program (which involved 24 NSW government schools and their partner universities) was formed in response to the recommendations from TEMAG (2014a), aiming to promote high quality PEx for pre-service teachers. The Hub School Program is a unifying link among the subsequent chapters in this book.

The second school-initiated partnership was explored in Green et al. (2020a), where a school principal and deputy principal approached a university academic to share their concerns regarding pre-service teachers' readiness for the profession. The university academic invited the school executive to learn about a partnership activity that the university had implemented elsewhere as a possible solution to the issue identified by the school staff. This school and university have now been partnered for six years.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Partnership Activities

Pre-service teachers' leap from university to schools requires support and scaffolding to foster their development and confidence (Bone et al., 2019; Lemon et al., 2018; McGraw & McDonough, 2019). To this end, a variety of activities were reportedly enacted within school-university partnerships, including scaffolded classroom

experiences, extended immersion of pre-service teachers in school environments, mediated instruction, professional learning for in-service teachers, and the development of a community of practice. These activities typically operated as additions to the mandatory PEx placement requirements, giving pre-service teachers not just more time in schools, but also focussed support related to these experiences from school and university staff.

6.2.2.1 Scaffolded Classroom Experiences

In several sources, activities were described where pre-service teachers participated in school-based teaching opportunities and scaffolded classroom experiences that were additional to their mandated PEx placements (AITSL, 2015g; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; Kriewaldt et al., 2017; Lemon et al., 2018; McGraw & McDonough, 2019; Russell, 2019; Watters et al., 2018). As part of these activities, pre-service teachers engaged in reflective activities and debriefing discussions with teachers or academics to illuminate their classroom experiences.

Lemon et al. (2018) describe a partnership in which pre-service teachers observed "good teaching practice" (p. 83) at a partner school to support professional growth and skill development. They attended a partnership school in groups to observe lessons with the support of academics to guide subsequent reflection activities. Situated-learning opportunities were provided to enhance the quality of teacher education in this small-scale, short-term qualitative case study. In this instance, the classroom experience was intentionally designed to "step away from the pressures of being judged or formally assessed" (p. 94), which opened up new avenues of support and identity formation for PSTs. Other non-assessable in-school experiences were enacted within the STEPS program (Herbert & Hobbs, 2018), and explored by McGraw and McDonough (2019). Because the pre-service teachers' emerging teaching practices were not assessed in these instances, they were afforded valuable opportunities to take positive risks knowing that there was a safety net. This allowed them to experiment and build their confidence as teachers.

Some scaffolded classroom experiences operate in tandem with PEx placements, with PSTs provided with intentional opportunities to reflect on their teaching and implement evidence-informed practices (AITSL, 2015g; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Kriewaldt et al., 2017). For instance, clinical practice models are characterised by a focus on student learning, evidence-informed practice and a reasoning process that related to decision making (AITSL, 2015g; Kriewaldt et al., 2017). Cavanagh et al. (2019) described an activity in which pre-service teachers, prior to a PEx placement at the partner school, identified the learning needs of a particular student and planned whole-class lessons and assessment tasks with that student in mind. Throughout the placement the pre-service teachers kept reflective journals and considered what measurable impact their teaching was having on their own students' learning. These approaches add significant value to PEx placements and have the ability to enhance pre-service teachers' school-based learning during the placement.

Watters et al. (2018) report on their use of video-recorded mathematics lessons during university workshops to bring authenticity to the university setting whilst overcoming potential geographical and logistical constraints of accessing in-class lesson observations. Engagement with video recordings also removed the various sources of tension that are inherent in physical placements in schools, and allowed critical reflection of observed teaching in a safe space that allowed collaboration between peers, supported by academic guidance. This partnership provided a constructive method for schools to contribute to teacher education, as it required minimal resources and time investment and had the potential to benefit the professional development of large cohorts of pre-service teachers.

6.2.2.2 Extended Immersion in School Environment

Another common activity within the studied partnerships was providing pre-service teachers with extended immersion in school environments. In some instances, this involved experimentation with longer term PEx placements either for early stage PSTs or within an intern model for late stage pre-service teachers (AITSL, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015f, 2015k, 2015l, 2015m). In other cases, the teacher-education students volunteered at a school throughout the school year for one or two days a week while completing their university studies (Green et al., 2020a; Gutierrez & Nailer, 2020). In each of these circumstances, the extended time spent immersed in the schools provided the pre-service teachers with authentic teaching experiences that revealed the complexities of teaching (AITSL, 2015l; Green et al., 2020a). The long-term relationships developed between the pre-service teachers and schools could also alleviate the pressure experienced by both pre-service teachers and school staff during PEx placements (Gutierrez & Nailer, 2020).

6.2.2.3 Other Activities

A few of the reviewed sources mentioned the use of mediated instruction, whereby university tutorials and other classes are held within school settings (AITSL, 2015b, 2015g; Lemon et al., 2018).

In some instances, the university provided professional learning for school staff to complement other activities within the partnership. For instance, teachers in two partnerships received training and support to enhance their skills and understanding regarding mentoring pre-service teachers (Betlem et al., 2019; Grimmett et al., 2018). In the Hub School Program partnership presented by Clarke and Winslade (2019), a community of practice between school teachers and university academics was established to further support the hybrid teacher-educators as they mentored pre-service teachers.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Partnership Aims

As the STEPS Project team (Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; Hobbs et al., 2018; Jones & Chittleborough, 2018) and others have identified, the development of a clear aim and shared goals across institutions is a key component of successful school-university partnerships. The aims that we have identified from the reviewed literature overwhelmingly related to enhancing the overall teaching abilities of pre-service teachers—whether through providing high-quality classroom experiences, or through focussing on pre-service teachers' career-readiness.

PEx placements in schools are multifaceted, with many moving parts and numerous stakeholders contributing to their provision, coordination, and assessment. Additionally, there is overwhelming evidence that such placements are "critically important part[s] of initial teacher education programs" (Le Cornu, 2015, p. 1). Consequently, improving school placements was a key aim of many partnerships (AITSL, 2015j; Betlem et al., 2019; McGraw & McDonough, 2019; Watters et al., 2018). Initiatives implemented in response to this aim include team-teaching models (Bone et al., 2019), enhanced training for supervisors, academics, and mentors of pre-service teachers (Betlem et al., 2019; Clarke & Winslade, 2019), and non-assessed, short-term teaching opportunities (Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; Lemon et al., 2018; McGraw & McDonough, 2019).

An important thrust within recent policy has been for initial teacher education to develop classroom-ready teachers (TEMAG, 2014a). There are some critics of this language in our review, such as Curtis et al. (2019), who argue for the term "context-ready" instead, defining it as "preparing pre-service teachers for the realities of schools and early childhood sites as organisations with all the factors that implies such as policy, culture and hierarchy" (p. 79). Nevertheless, ensuring that pre-service teachers are well aware of and prepared for the complex reality of all that the teaching profession entails was a clear aim for several school-university partnerships in our review (Cavanagh et al., 2019; Curtis et al., 2019; Green et al., 2020a). As McGraw and McDonough (2019) acknowledge, universities alone are unable to prepare pre-service teachers for the "gritty reality" (p. 593) of teaching.

In contrast to the dominant narrative in which the development of pre-service teachers is seen as the key aim of a school-university partnership, several pieces of grey literature showed that school leaders and teaching staff focussed on their own school students (AITSL, 2015c, 2015g, 2015i). These staff saw the school-university partnership as a vehicle for enhancing schools' student learning outcomes, whether as a direct impact on school students at the time of the partnership activity or forecasting to the pre-service teachers' future classes after graduation.

6.2.4 Theme 4: Respect and Reciprocity

The notions of respect and reciprocity emerged clearly in our review of school-university partnerships. Alongside the direct and indirect benefits, there were conspicuous personal and institutional costs associated with the partnerships for each stakeholder group that need to be considered. It was important that those in the partnership worked to maintain a balance across all stakeholders, ensuring that no one group was disproportionately affected by their involvement in the partnership.

6.2.4.1 Inputs and Costs

The establishment and maintenance of school-university partnerships requires significant investment from both the university and the school. This is true for tangible resources, such as monetary contributions, but also for intangible items such as time and relationships. With regard to financial input, government grants facilitated the development of several of the partnerships reported in the literature (AITSL, 2015b, 2015e, 2015h, 2015l, 2015m; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Grimmett et al., 2018; Gutierrez & Nailer, 2020; Ledger & Vidovich, 2018; White, 2019). In other cases, funding was not deemed necessary for the partnership to succeed because "our teachers are the resources. Our knowledge is the resource" (Green et al., 2020a, p. 254).

Throughout our review of the literature, those involved in school-university partnerships made clear that the development of cross-institutional relationships and collaborative cultures takes time. When systems within school-university partnerships have time to evolve, reciprocity develops, collaboration grows, and well-defined frameworks are achievable to create meaningful partnerships (Gutierrez & Nailer, 2020; Jones & Chittleborough, 2018). These resources are required in the generation of "positive, supportive, responsive relationships between partnership members [that are] core to the level of success of the partnerships" (Jones & Chittleborough, 2018, p. 105).

6.2.4.2 Outputs and Benefits

While many benefits identified in the literature were related to the university—such as being able to provide pre-service teachers with authentic learning experiences and fulfil their mission of producing quality teachers—there were also many benefits connected to the school, such as professional-development opportunities for teachers and school-student learning. As with the costs involved in partnership work, it is vital that consideration is given to a balance of benefits for all stakeholders.

The provision of mandatory workplace learning within teacher-education courses represents a self-evident benefit to universities for participation in school-university partnerships. As universities seek to refine mandatory placement experiences in

pursuit of enhanced teacher quality, collaboration with schools enables the improvement of pre-service teachers' teaching and learning experiences. The benefits explored included the increased skills and employability of pre-service teachers, with classroom experiences instilling increased confidence and resilience as well as an enhanced understanding of the complexities of teaching (AITSL, 2015b, 2015f, 2015g, 2015i; Allen et al., 2019; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Herbert & Hobbs, 2018; McGraw & McDonough, 2019; Russell, 2019; Watters et al., 2018). The identity of pre-service teachers in some partnerships was described as being reframed, with the pre-service teachers being viewed as teaching staff or teaching fellows within the school, not just visitors (AITSL, 2015g, 2015j, 2015l). The provision of professional socialisation in school settings was also cited as a benefit for pre-service teachers (AITSL, 2015f; McGraw & McDonough, 2019), as well as improved expertise in their subject areas (Allen et al., 2019; Watters et al., 2018) and an improved ability to interpret and use student data (AITSL, 2015b, 2015g; Cavanagh et al., 2019).

A variety of benefits to schools and individual teaching staff are outlined in the literature, including enhanced mentoring and leadership skills for supervising teachers (AITSL, 2015l; Betlem et al., 2019; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Grimmett et al., 2018; Nguyen, 2017), enhanced understanding of pre-service teachers needs (Clarke & Winslade, 2019), and the provision of additional human resources to meet student needs in schools (AITSL, 2015c, 2015i). Furthermore, being involved in these school-university partnerships provided opportunities for teachers to engage in critical self-reflection on their own practice, achieving rich professional learning as well as instigating shifts in professional identity, with supervising teachers repositioning themselves as teacher educators within the partnership (Betlem et al., 2019; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Green et al., 2020a; Grimmett et al., 2018).

Teachers in schools contributed to the co-construction of new knowledge between stakeholders (Betlem et al., 2019) and felt that their expertise was recognised (Green et al., 2020a; Grimmett et al., 2018). There were several instances where their partnership involvement meant that teachers were seen as fellow teacher-educators and colleagues of their university partners (Grimmett et al., 2018; Lemon et al., 2018). Schools identified the potential of partnerships to facilitate Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher accreditation progression initiatives (Watters et al., 2018). Pre-service teachers in some cases were considered as professional learning resources, educating and upskilling current teachers in relation to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and acting as a stimulus to encourage evidence-based best practice for their own teaching (AITSL, 2015j, 2015l, 2015m).

Minimal reference was made in the literature to benefits to the school students' learning, although there is some indication that improved learning outcomes for school students has been achieved in long-term school-university partnerships (AITSL, 2015e, 2015i).

6.2.5 *Theme 5: Sustainability*

Concerns regarding the sustainability of school-university partnerships were raised by Green et al. (2020b) systematic literature review and continue in this review. These concerns relate to the potential longevity of school-university partnerships.

The duration of partnerships covered in the literature varied. Larger and more mature partnership structures, such as the University of South Australia's 10-year program based on a Learning Communities model, has resulted in strong links between academic and school staff, with newly defined roles such as PEx coordinators being established in schools (AITSL, 2015f). Similarly, learning communities were cited as the basis for another long-term partnership in Western Sydney, strengthened by the commitment of Western Sydney University's Dean of Education to develop a relationship that extends beyond training pre-service teachers to improving pedagogy in schools of low socioeconomic status (AITSL, 2015j). A common characteristic of these and other long-term school-university partnerships was joint financial investment of both stakeholders as they worked towards the creation of a learning community, adopting broader perspectives on their contribution to the quality of the national education system overall, not just of their individual institutions.

Jones and Chittleborough (2018) recognise the need for ongoing negotiations amongst stakeholders to sustain school-university partnerships over many years. This enables the partnership to be responsive to personnel changes and adapt based on changing needs from either institution. The authors offer a set of tools that stakeholders can use to scaffold initial and ongoing discussions, to support the sustainable growth of school-university partnerships.

6.3 Discussion

It is evident that for school-university partnerships to be sustainable, stakeholders must perceive a reciprocal benefit with evidence of mutual respect. School-university partnerships also require structures and designs that are efficient, practical, and sensitive to contextual factors. It is at this point we come to appreciate the interrelated nature of the five themes identified within this chapter. To achieve sustainability in school-university partnerships, a reciprocal balance between stakeholder interests needs to be integrated into the partnerships' aims. Rather than universities being the sole driver of the aims of a partnership, schools must bring to the table their own agendas and professional-development needs. In other words, school-university partnerships need to be truly collaborative, with all stakeholders contributing to negotiations regarding the structure, aims, and activities of the partnership so that reciprocity and sustainability are possible.

The question of power within school-university partnerships is a valuable one to consider. Ostensibly, school-university partnerships enable schools and universities to share power and responsibility through their non-hierarchical, collaborative nature

(Zeichner, 2010). However, in reality, there are multiple pressure points that tend to result in universities dominating in this arena. For instance, policy documents such as AITSL (2015a) and TEMAG (2014a) indicate that universities are responsible for instigating partnerships with schools, with the aim of improving teacher quality, given that initial teacher education in Australia is the responsibility of universities. As initiators of these partnerships, universities are commonly the decision-makers regarding the aim, structure, activities, and overall nature of the partnership. We are not suggesting that universities shouldn't initiate these partnerships, nor that a university-initiated partnership is doomed to a power imbalance and ultimate failure. Rather, as recommended by Phelps (2019), we aim to make this default position apparent so that the power may be redistributed to ensure a true partnership where respect is shared and costs as well as benefits are balanced across the stakeholders. As Burns et al. (2016) declare, school-university partnerships need to make "a commitment to a mission for the common good. Working for the common good includes a commitment to equity for all stakeholders" (p. 88). Indeed, many of the sources in our review depicted school-university partnerships where stakeholders had a shared aim, collective focus, and equitable outcomes (AITSL, 2015g, 2015l; Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Green et al., 2020a; Grimmett et al., 2018; Jones & Chittleborough, 2018).

In this review, as with Green et al. (2020b) systematic literature review, we found that the dominant focus of school-university partnership literature (both academic and grey literature) is on the preparation of pre-service teachers. That is, even with our inclusion of grey literature alongside recent peer-reviewed academic literature, we note that the depth and breadth of research centred on pre-service teachers far exceeds that of school-focussed research. There are a number of possible explanations for this, not least of which is our stated focus on school-university partnerships connected to initial teacher education. This choice forced us to ignore partnerships between schools and industry (including universities) targeting school students' learning and career development (such as Gaardboe, 2020; Puslednik, 2020; Puslednik & Brennan, 2020). Another reason for the dominant focus on pre-service teachers in the Australian school-university partnership literature is the policy directives related to improving the quality of pre-service teachers, particularly through PEx placements in schools (AITSL, 2015a; Allen et al., 2019; TEMAG, 2014a). Even so, this review suggests that attention is due to be given to the school side of school-university partnerships. We suggest that future research consider the perspectives of teachers, and empirically explore the benefits that school students experience. The long-term impacts of school-university partnerships (whether the inter-institutional relationship, or the associated activities) is another area for future research.

6.3.1 Author Reflections: Stacey

One means of fostering a balance of power and reciprocity is the development of communities of practice (CoPs) within school-university partnerships. As Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) assert, CoPs "are groups of people who share

a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p. 1); these people have a shared domain of interest, create a community of engagement with joint activities and discussions, and have a shared practice. I have been a member of a boundary-crossing CoP for five years, enabling me to establish professional relationships within the school-university partnership in which I participate. Within this school-university partnership I am positioned as a boundary worker with dual roles as a secondary-school teacher and a university tutor, and I thereby occupy a unique position within the context of teacher education. I am able to consider multiple perspectives and assist stakeholders in both contexts of the partnership to refocus and collaborate effectively. In particular, the relationships that I have made across both the school and university settings as a result of my engagement in the CoP have been significant to me personally and professionally. It is these relationships, and the way that the CoP has brought together the stakeholders of the school-university partnership on a level footing, that I see as essential to the long-term sustainability and reciprocity of the partnership.

However, it is worth noting that my partnership role as a boundary worker has relied on significant government funding, which enables my release from school-based teaching obligations to facilitate my university-based teaching role. As this funding ceases, I and others in the partnership now ask the pertinent question: Where do we go from here? In other words, this termination of funding (input) has obvious impacts on the sustainability of the partnership, as well as other implications for reciprocity should the partnership continue. As a committed and motivated stakeholder, I feel professionally and personally compelled to maintain the partnership's momentum despite the cessation of funding. Indeed, appreciation of the theoretical aspect of school-university partnerships (achieved through this review) has allowed me to truly value the essential nature of my multifaceted role as a boundary worker in both the school and university contexts. Even so, the reality is that the longevity of the partnership without this government funding is questionable.

6.3.2 Author Reflections: Corinne

In my Ph.D. research, I have intentionally focussed on what motivates school teachers and leaders (not university staff or pre-service teachers) to be involved in school-university partnerships. Interestingly, one of my key findings is that school teachers and leaders are involved in school-university partnerships because they have a sense of commitment and obligation to the teaching profession as a whole. This opens up the field for school-university partnerships that may well be connected to initial teacher education while also stretching into other avenues as appropriate (as indeed was the case for one of the school-university partnerships I have investigated). The activities of the school-university partnerships I have explored cover the full career spectrum for those in education—from pre-service teachers to early-career and senior teachers, to teacher-educators and educational researchers. According to my participants, these partnerships have the potential to enhance the profession as a whole by

supporting quality in its various parts. As one teacher explained, this comprehensive approach builds the profession by having stakeholders from schools and universities come together to ask, "'Well, how are we going to further the profession? How are we going to improve it?… I think that mutuality of both wanting to coexist in that space to improve [the teaching profession] is quite exciting" (Green, 2021, pp. 165, 171). Another school leader told me that their involvement in a school-university partnership "is not just about some benefit to the school. You have to look at it as the profession" (Green, 2021, p. 229). Continued exploration of school-based stakeholders' involvement in school-university partnerships, including the benefits and challenges they encounter, will bring further balance to school-university partnerships with regards to stakeholder power and research-based understanding.

6.4 Conclusion

Policy-makers have encouraged the instigation of school-university partnerships as the way forward to improve national education systems and have identified universities as the party responsible for initiating partnerships. However, we believe that the creation of effective school-university partnerships requires active cooperation and engagement in communities of practice. These arrangements provide organisational and relational spaces in which the benefits and potential of collaboration between stakeholders can be realised. Improving educational outcomes for students (whether they are school students or pre-service teachers) is everyone's business, not just that of universities. School-university partnerships are a valuable vehicle for whole-of-profession enhancement, as the following chapters of this book will illustrate.

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Stacey E. Jones professional interest in partnerships stems from her role as an educator operating within a school-university partnership in regional New South Wales. She occupies multiple education roles: a secondary educational leader; professional experience coordinator; and Charles Sturt University lecturer. Her lived experience as a border worker within a formal school-university partnership has instigated a vested professional interest in gaining a broader perspective on Australian school-university partnerships and collaboration to enhance the quality of the Australian education system.

Dr. Corinne A. Green professional interest in this topic was initiated by her own involvement in a school-university partnership. As an undergraduate student, one of the core subjects in her initial teacher education degree incorporated mediated instruction in a local school with tutorials held on the school site and assessment tasks connected to teaching and observation opportunities in classes. When commencing her Ph.D. (University of Wollongong), Corinne began teaching in that same initial teacher education subject (as well as co-designing another subject also based around school-university partnerships). Her Ph.D. research explored what motivates teachers to be involved in school-university partnerships and motivated her to continue her professional interest

in developing and supporting sustainable and collaborative partnerships between schools and universities (Green et al., 2020a; Green et al., 2020b). Corinne is currently an Academic Developer in the Teaching Innovations Unit at the University of South Australia.

Chapter 7
Reflections on a Journey of School-University Partnership Research: Findings and Future Directions

Ondine Bradbury and Daniela Acquaro

Abstract Researchers and policy-makers have long advocated the importance of school-university partnerships in improving initial teacher education and bridging research and theory. Federal policy-makers have made significant inroads in developing Australian national program standards for the provision of initial teacher education and, within this reform agenda, have been able to establish clear benchmarks in practice. Amongst these program-level standards is a focus on school-university partnerships. Conventionally limited to a site for professional experience (PEx), schools have now become an extension of the university, with these relationships evolving as essential alliances. This chapter draws together some early observations emerging from a two-year project focussed on identifying and analysing examples of school-university partnerships from across the globe. Drawing on examples from six continents and three Australian states, we identify the differences in approaches, challenges, and untapped opportunities that became visible to us as we worked with scholars to bring to life two edited works. The connecting threads of these partnerships and emergent collective themes of the partnerships explore the importance of autonomy, boundary-crossing roles, and open and fluid communication. The authors discuss the significance of these themes within a policy-reform agenda focussed on promoting, sustaining, and safeguarding school-university partnerships for the future.

Keywords Global school-university partnerships · Professional WIL placements · PEx

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_7

7.1 Introduction

Despite the natural connection between schools and initial teacher education providers, research into what constitutes successful school-university partnerships within initial teacher education is a relatively recent practice. Understanding the components of such partnerships is important, as is ascertaining the impact of the partnership more broadly. Like any partnership, a school-university partnership is not an exact science, with discrepancies in the structure and resourcing of schools and tertiary providers resulting in a chasm in practices. Nonetheless, the advantages for schools and initial teacher education providers to work together is becoming more obvious, as is the fact that making these partnerships work is not simply a matter of bridging the theory-practice divide.

Australia's recognition of the importance of school-university partnerships within initial teacher education is well evidenced across various reviews of its provision (Council of Australia Governments [COAG], 2009; Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2014) and is further demonstrated by subsequent shifts in policy as a result of these reviews. In an attempt to create a consistent national benchmark, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2015, 2016, 2019) has authorised that formal partnerships between schools and initial teacher education providers are to be one of six key principles for national initial teacher education accreditation. The partnership itself requires a formal partnership agreement with shared responsibilities and obligations.

As a result, the last several years have seen a significant shift in the practices of tertiary institutions offering initial teacher education across Australia. Given the requirements of program accreditation, in most cases, providers have initiated partnerships with schools that have created opportunities for increased communication, collaboration, and co-design. The partnership itself nurtures a "valuing" of the contribution of both the school and the university where teaching and learning are shared. Whilst approaches to school-university partnerships vary, the opportunities to co-design, share knowledge, and apply theory to inform practice and practice to inform theory are elements that underpin practice.

This chapter draws together some early observations emerging from a two-year project focussed on identifying and analysing examples of school-university partnerships from across the globe. We identify differences in approaches, challenges, and untapped opportunities that have become visible to us as we have worked with scholars to bring to life two edited works. Drawing on examples of school-university partnerships from six continents and three Australian states, we connect the threads of these diverse partnerships and present some emerging themes, including the importance of autonomy, boundary-crossing roles, and open and fluid communication. We use Caldwell and Harris (2008) first alignment in the study of school transformation to analyse our findings. We also explore the tensions resulting from a policy-reform agenda focussed on promoting, sustaining, and safeguarding school-university partnerships for the future.

7.2 Exploring School-University Partnerships

We have collected examples of school-university partnerships from six continents. This has allowed us to understand the driving forces behind the genesis of these partnerships and the strategies they employed to support the needs of each stakeholder group inherent in the partnership design. In working with 20 writing teams, we saw that the purpose of school-university partnerships differed from group to group. Aside from the practical benefits of a school-university partnership, including improving the quality of initial teacher education and safeguarding placements, benefits could be seen more broadly through increased capacity of mentors, improvement in in-service teacher practices through professional development, and broad-ranging community benefits resulting from service learning or community-outreach projects. Partnerships varied in size and approach, with some emerging organically through a community need, and others resulting from government incentives. Our analysis identified that policy imperatives and government incentives enabled partnerships to form relatively quickly. Having a partnership mandate enabled initial teacher education providers to initiate partnerships and to use resourcing to provide incentives for school involvement. Similarly, policy mandates requiring school-university partnerships also enabled partnerships to form relatively quickly. However, we discovered that whilst the incentives stimulated the process, this also created parameters within which stakeholders needed to work. These policy directives also set rigid requirements, which limited innovation and necessitated complex reporting requirements. This then affected the sustainability of the partnerships, which became entangled and reliant on the funding that had established them. More evident across international contexts were partnerships born from a community need. These partnerships were created to respond to an emerging or long-standing issue that both partners recognised, with both school and university partners strongly focussed on the community and on the partnership's power to foster citizenship. Often, these partnerships began from the ground up, without policy support; however, the internal drive of the stakeholders involved almost guaranteed their sustainability.

Our work identified varied approaches and, in many cases, significant impact on societal outcomes. Examples include a large school-university partnership in Brazil, the joint efforts of which resulted in system-wide curriculum restructuring across Rio de Janeiro to include an entrepreneurship curriculum and associated teacher training. This partnership was born from a desperate need to better equip citizens with the skills and capabilities to transform their life outcomes. Similarly, in both the Philippines and Italy, we encountered school-university partnerships that emphasised the social and civic responsibility of bridging the gap between university, schools, and society through service learning. Within each partnership, the needs of the community created the focus, and schools and universities worked together to create a sense of connection and support as well as deepen their sense of civic responsibility. Throughout these partnerships, pre-service teachers embarked on a journey of personal growth and civic responsibility and, in doing so, reconnected academia with the community. Partnerships within Scotland and the United States responded to

teacher shortages and alternate routes into teaching. These partnerships highlighted the need for collaboration that looked beyond policy constraints and provided reciprocity in their design from pre-service teachers' learning to the learning of the in-service teachers who were supporting them. Ireland and Northern Ireland provided a fascinating insight into two separate partnerships that collectively emphasised the importance of system-to-system communication, thus increasing the likelihood of a stronger foundation within the partnerships between policy-makers, universities, and school-based contexts. Reporting on partnerships within Vietnam and New Zealand saw the emergence of policy implementations; for Vietnam, the policies had a longitudinal aspect, whereas the new educational reforms in New Zealand aimed to define and support authenticity in their partnerships. In both of these contexts, drawing from the ways in which these policy reforms affected educational providers was key. Across Australia, Scotland, and Switzerland, the influence of these partnerships on the development and growth of teachers and teaching capacity was key in their design approach, and indicated a vision of transforming practice across their various contexts.

Research and examples of policy-informed partnerships across three Australian states provided insights into how universities responded to government directives in relation to partnerships with schools. Across the examples, many were founded upon policy-driven and government-funded programs involving on incentives. Some based their partnerships upon practical placements and the connecting purpose of providing quality support for pre-service teachers, in addition to developing two-way communication channels between initial teacher education providers and school contexts pertaining to capacity-building and quality professional-development opportunities.

In five Victorian universities—Australian Catholic University (ACU), La Trobe University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, Deakin University, and the University of Melbourne (Melbourne Graduate School of Education)—have provided reflections of partnership work within fully or partially funded initiatives provided by the Department of Education and Training. The funding for these partnerships stems from the Teaching Academies of Professional Practice, a Department initiative that provides a set of objectives for school-university partnerships. Many of these partnerships have been developed over the past seven years and continue to operate. Although the partnerships align with policy-driven objectives and parameters that involve links to professional placements, there are individualised aspects in their school-university partnership design approaches that are unique to each. RMIT University and their partner schools drew upon the theoretical frameworks that supported the development of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and highlighted how they worked toward reciprocity in their partnerships through the development of shared interests and a shared passion in specific teaching and learning foci between the university and the schools. Amongst the many outcomes, this has also led to the school-based partners influencing course design at the university level. An embedded placement experience was designed and implemented through the school-university partnership between ACU and their partner schools in the Catholic sector. The findings from this pilot program were that stakeholders valued this design and wanted to see these styles of placements as

a continuing aspect of their partnership. La Trobe University reported on a collaborative approach to designing structural elements of placement support for their pre-service teachers that were formulated and co-designed with school-based stakeholder groups. The pre-service teachers provided feedback and worked within this partnership as a visible and valued stakeholder group. Deakin University explored the experiences of boundary-crossing roles in the form of teacher educators and principal class stakeholders. Individual reflections showed the importance of these roles to both the design and delivery of the work within the partnership, and to the development of their own identities as educators. For the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, working with their mentors and teachers in their partner schools to support professional learning and development was central to school-university partnerships. Additionally, the valuable feedback that their school-based counterparts provided was essential to the design and development of future professional-learning platforms for the initial teacher education provider.

The states of Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales also provided us with insight into the design and delivery of varied approaches to school-university partnerships in their respective contexts. In response to policy and government review of rural and remote state schools in Queensland, the University of South Queensland examined stakeholder experiences, particularly those of pre-service teachers, and their knowledge and understanding of rural and remote contexts. This emphasised the need for cross-sector partnerships to co-construct mutually beneficial solutions that would pivot around the preparation of pre-service teachers' competencies for teaching in rural and remote Queensland. Victoria's Federation University explored notions of practice architecture as well as the underpinning motivations for developing and sustaining school-university partnerships, with relationships as being central to transformation in each educational context. As outlined within the subsequent chapters of this book, New South Wales provided insight into a NSW Department of Education initiative supporting school-university partnerships to invest in supportive strategies that included boundary-crossing roles as a conduit between initial teacher education providers and schools supporting all stakeholders involved in the partnership.

7.3 Values-Driven and Future-Focussed Partnerships

What became increasingly apparent from exploring these partnerships was that each had a driving force, a team at the wheel, working to design a vision, mission, and road map toward sustainability, and perhaps transformation, within each model. The evidence for successful partnerships was shared leadership representing both schools and the university. Policy mandates and financial incentives in many instances initiated partnerships; however, the challenge of developing sustainable models that do not need to rely on government financial support remains a key concern in the formation of enduring partnerships.

When developing the focus of a partnership, educational leadership research identifies the development of a vision that is "values-driven and future focused" (Caldwell, 2019, p. 12). Consequently, the stakeholders within the partnerships themselves must make a decision as to whether the nucleus of what is drawing them together is worth an ongoing commitment to a program that will be potentially self-funded, autonomous, and with a drive toward a centrally agreed-on "vision with high moral purpose" (Caldwell & Harris, 2008, p. 5). When considering our findings in relation to school-university partnerships, we drew links to Caldwell and Harris (2008) and their theory that there are three kinds of alignment within leadership approaches in autonomous and transformational schools. Their first alignment includes the terms "passion, strategy and trust" (Caldwell & Harris, 2008, p. 5). We used this as a lens to look at the collection of partnership examples that we had curated. Figure 7.1 outlines this first alignment, showing overlapping circles of passion, trust, and strategy, with a central sphere of working from or toward a compelling vision with a high moral purpose.

What is important to note from Caldwell and Harris (2008) first alignment, in relation to school-university partnerships, is that it centres around the foundational aspect of a compelling vision with high moral purpose. Caldwell (2019) encouraged us to consider the concept that in the formation or development of a vision, such "visions" can be seen both as essential and as being rarely stable. Therefore, a developed vision within any school, initial teacher education provider, or school-partnership should begin with the foundations of being collaboratively designed and aligned with each context in which it is developed, have "buy-in" from all stakeholders, excite, unify, and go beyond a series of targets and objectives (Caldwell, 2019). Importantly, Calwell and Harris (2018) profess that "no amount of passion or trust will suffice if well thought-out strategies are not designed and delivered" (p. 6).

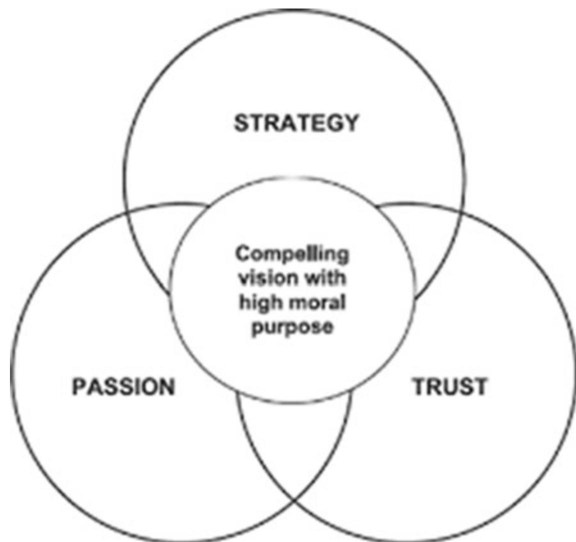

Fig. 7.1 The first alignment in the study of school transformation (Caldwell & Harris, 2008)

We believe that these imperatives are reflected in the themes that emerged from across the examples of partnerships that we have explored in our research journey.

7.4 What Have We Learned?

The following section outlines a range of themes that emerged from the various chapters that were drawn together both nationally and internationally through our journey as co-editors:

- A sense of autonomy for all stakeholder groups
- Boundary-crossing roles as an active design consideration
- Proactive rather than reactive, with context in mind
- Open and fluid communication channels.

7.4.1 A Sense of Autonomy for All Stakeholder Groups

The notion of the positive effect of autonomy and trust within educational contexts starts from the individual teacher and extends to the partnership work discussed within this chapter. Paniagua and Sánchez-Marti (2018) discuss advancement in teacher effectiveness and links to innovative practice when suggesting that for teachers to become reflective, effective professionals, they must develop skills of innovative practice. However, inherent in this development is the provision for elements of professional discretion and professional autonomy (Paniagua & Sánchez-Marti, 2018). When working within the guidelines of policy, grants, and other funding bodies that may include industry, it is important for the stakeholders to have a sense of autonomy and creative freedom that supports the contextual aspects of all institutions involved in the partnership. Caldwell (2016) argues that to have freedom to innovate, along with a degree of autonomy, schools must have the capacity for autonomy, the willingness to take risks, and an environment that is "not unduly constrained by accountability requirements or time limitations" (p. 13). As outlined, the importance of autonomy branches from the individual teacher through to the systemic functioning of schools. Therefore, it is only logical to suggest that autonomous ways of working would be beneficial for school-university partnerships. Day et al. (2021) characterise this collegial autonomy as the joining of individual autonomy together with the collective with the aim to promote both these joined approaches to making decisions that may lead to advances in teaching and learning contexts.

7.4.2 Boundary-Crossing Roles as an Active Design Consideration

Within much of the research on school-university partnerships that we have explored, there appeared to be a boundary-crossing, or third-space (Zeichner, 2010), role that spanned the boundaries between the various institutions within the partnerships. Within the sources of research that we curated, there were multiple examples of the development of boundary-crossing or third-space roles; these people were seen as essential to the working of the partnership. In her chapter on beginning a boundary-crossing or third-space role, Bradbury (2018) uses vignettes to describe experiences within a boundary-crossing role and as a participant in school-university partnerships based on practical placements. Many of these vignettes relate to identity and grappling with the "power relationships between [pre-service teacher], school-based mentor" (Bradbury, 2018, p. 189), and university-based personnel. Considerations when embedding boundary-crossing roles in partnership design should also include opportunities for the many individuals in boundary-crossing roles in school-university partnerships to reflect on and explore their professional identity. This includes prior to beginning the role, in addition to reflecting upon and understanding how their identity changes during their time in the role, and is renegotiated throughout their experiences in the role (Chaaban et al., 2021; Clifton & Jordan, 2019; Williams et al., 2018). Additionally, if the partnership is supported by external funding from policy-makers or external organisations, it is highly recommended that personnel from respective providers are included as a touchstone in boundary-crossing scenarios. Such an approach should be seen as an investment in understanding the ways of working in the partnership.

7.4.3 Proactive Rather Than Reactive, with Context in Mind

As we brought together a range of examples of school-university partnerships from across the globe, it became increasingly apparent that purpose and passion were central drivers in the partnerships that led to proactive interactions. This sense of purpose and passion provided insight into the need that was beyond the school and the university, and therefore included the linking of research and practice to the broader community. Often schools will come to discussions about developing partnerships with universities with their contextual needs in mind, negotiating what would work best for their school by being a stakeholder in the partnership. Contextual underpinnings for each stakeholder group that form the basis of the partnership is key to the development of the partnership, and perhaps indicative of its sustainability (Bernay et al., 2020). In their research, Bernay et al. (2020) suggest that contextual discussions between stakeholders related to the development of the partnership translate into the inclusion of culturally specific stakeholder groups, including "the voice of Māori teachers, teacher educators and students in co-constructing a partnership

model" (p. 137). As we have experienced in our research journey, this is also inclusive of the multiple individuals that make up the population of these contexts. These include university academics, the staff and leadership teams at the school level, and the students in the schools and in the university contexts as each stakeholder's lived and past experiences brings contextual relevance to the partnership (Bernay et al., 2020). Where there is a mutual understanding of the contextual needs of all involved, there is the potential for both the school and the university to join and create change.

7.4.4 Open and Fluid Communication Channels

Along with the people who are invited and enlisted into the development, design, and implementation of the partnership, we found that within the various aspects of research on school-university partnerships, there was a high level of importance placed on the communication channels. Where key stakeholders are often seen as gatekeepers of information, trickles of understanding are provided to certain stakeholders and not others. This can cause misunderstandings and potential lags in logistical, developmental, and design aspects of the partnership, which could potentially lead to a feeling of frustration for everyone involved. Burroughs et al. (2020) discuss the importance of communication in consideration of one of the design elements in policy-informed school-university partnerships. They reinforce the requirement of transparency and clear communication, particularly when policies and mandates are involved, to avoid negatively affecting the partnership's stakeholders (Burroughs et al., 2020). We respect that certain hierarchies do exist within school-university partnerships and emphasise that clear communication channels do not necessarily mean that a "need-to-know basis" cannot be undertaken. Rather, what has been uncovered in many of the school-university partnership examples that we have explored is the inclusion of strategically placed meetings, group and shared emails, memos and group posts in shared learning-management systems, and the invitation to interested parties and other channels to distribute and disseminate information relating to the partnership. Herbert et al. (2018) suggest that honest, open, and timely communication is a crucial aspect of building trust between stakeholders in successful partnerships, and may contribute significantly to its continued sustainability. From within the research we have curated, open and fluid channels of communication have often resulted in stakeholders feeling a sense of empowerment, autonomy, and ability to understand the logistical aspects of the partnership, in addition to gaining insight into the teaching and learning that is developing as a result of the work within the partnership.

7.5 Future Considerations

Within the exploration of school-university partnerships earlier in this chapter, it should be said that neither the schools nor the universities involved in these partnerships profess to know all there is to know about teaching and learning in education. Inherently, this is the reason why these partnerships were sought out, developed, and in many cases, sustained. Insisting on possessing comprehensive knowledge can result in the participants falling into a transactional partnership that is often founded **[on what?]**, and rarely positioned toward mutual transformation. Rather, what we have seen in our journey of research curation is that central to successful school-university partnerships is the ability of each stakeholder group to be seen as equal in their ability to offer insight, considerations relating to teaching and learning design, and opportunities for offering feedback about initial teacher education in ways that make the learning truly authentic.

Concurrently, the impact of the initial teacher education provider in school-based contexts may be reconsidered. The partnership should be fruitful in the acquisition of informal data collection and more-formal research outcomes; however, this does not mean that the initial teacher education provider necessitates and drives the research. We have seen in many nationally partnerships the evidence that school-based stakeholders are contributing significantly to the evaluation and feedback in research settings on the ways these school-university partnerships are working. This is shown in the fact that academic works are often co-authored by university and school-based stakeholders. Additionally, building teachers' capacity to reflect on their own practice in applying research techniques such as action research, critical reflection, and authentic inquiry are also important elements to emerge from these partnerships.

Reflecting on the first alignment from Caldwell and Harris (2008), the themes that we have outlined all fall within at least one of the three spheres of passion, trust, and strategy. It is also evident that the conjoining sphere of compelling vision with a high moral purpose is essential to the development of partnerships, particularly those that have social responsibility and service woven into the fabric of how they operate as organisations and institutions of learning.

It is important to note that there is no "one size fits all" model of school-university partnerships, and their context and culture are very important variables that should be considered. The goal of developing partnerships that have a positive impact on learning is essential, as is initiating an approach that considers how partnerships can become sustainable.

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Part III
Epistemology of Partnerships in Initial Teacher Education

Chapter 8
GROWing into the Profession: Promoting Pre-service Teachers' Subjectification Through Critical Reflection on Professional Experience

Tony Loughland, Keiko C. P. Bostwick, Helen Antoniadis, Candice Byrnes, and Bettina Wilson

Abstract Pre-service teachers' learning while engaged in professional experience can be examined through Biesta's three purposes of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. This study focussed on the development of pre-service teachers' subjectification when they reflected on their lessons using a newly created reflection protocol. Qualification and socialisation are both worthy goals for teacher education, but they should occur alongside the development of the students' sense of their own subjectification in their emerging role as teacher. Subjectification is a valuable goal for professional experience, as it creates teachers who know their own practice repertoire and have the confidence and skills to deploy it. A phenomenographic analysis was conducted on 95 lesson feedback and reflection forms employing the new protocol that were completed by pre-service teachers. Four categories of evidence emerged in these analyses: descriptive, instructional, causal, and clinical. The category of clinical had the smallest representation amongst this cohort, at 12.6% of the total reflections coded. From this evidence we argue that subjectification can and should be a valid goal of professional experience when initial teacher education programs provide the opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop their clinical reasoning skills.

Keywords Critical reflection · Pre-service teachers · GROW protocols · Professional experience · Teacher subjectification

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_8

8.1 Research Focus or Problem

The accreditation of teachers focusses on teacher qualification and the development of teacher skills and knowledge as codified by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). Professional experience also provides many opportunities for the socialisation of pre-service teachers into the working life of the profession. Qualification and socialisation are both worthy goals for teacher education, but they should occur alongside the development of the students' sense of their own subjectification in their emerging role as teacher. This is an interesting theoretical position on our part given that Biesta (2017) himself has warned of the dangers of seeing teachers as a mere instrument among others to be employed for the sole achievement of student outcomes. As such, our position requires further justification here. An examination of the process of subjectification according to Ranciere (Bingham, 2018) provides a clearer context for our position.

Ranciere regarded "subjectification as the process by which a political subject extracts itself from the dominant categories of identification and classification" (Bingham, 2018, p. 375). This subjectification only occurs for those who have "participated in dissensus" (Bingham, 2018, p. 375). This primacy of dissensus in subjectification is generative for the pedagogical conceptualisation of professional experience (PEx). It is often claimed that the pre-service teacher needs to resolve the tension or dissensus between the theoretical knowledge of their university courses and the practical reality experienced in schools (Grima-Farrell et al., 2019). In this sense we theorise that subjectification occurs when the teacher-education student can see beyond the simple binary of the rejection of university theory or the uncritical adoption of their supervisor's practice to an enhanced sense of their subject-ness as a teacher.

Biesta (2019) has identified qualification, socialisation, and subjectification as three distinct purposes of education. In the education of teachers, it is easy to identify qualification in the use of graduate standards that guide teacher education programs. In addition, socialisation is part of the hidden curriculum of professional experience. Biesta's notion of subjectification, or the ongoing oscillation between being a teacher and a learner of teaching is less easy to identify. It requires graduating teachers with a strong sense of their *self* as a teacher:

> To exist as subject, as I will suggest, means being in a "state of dialogue" with what and who is other; it means being exposed to what and who is other, being addressed by what and who is other, being taught by what and who is other, and pondering what this means for our own existence and for the desires we have about our existence (Biesta, 2017, p. 4).

We interpret Biesta's "state of dialogue" as akin to the kind of critical reflection that has long been a fundamental aspect of professional experience (Schön, 1983). Habitually engaging in critical reflection during teacher-education programs and PEx enables teachers to reflect on their practice and embrace an ethos of teacher as learner. However, there is a risk that this practice of critical reflection is becoming marginalised in students' PEx, as there is often greater emphasis on qualification-focussed discourses as set out in the graduate standards. Although it is necessary

to discuss and develop emerging teachers' professional skills during their university programs, subjectification serves teachers' ongoing development as teachers throughout their careers. We argue in this chapter that subjectification can also be achieved in PEx placements through the use of a lesson reflection protocol based on the GROW model (Whitmore, 2010).

The subject-ness of pre-service teachers is enhanced when they are free to choose their pedagogical repertoire; in other words, when their clinical choices are made in response to student engagement and learning rather than through strict adherence to a lesson plan or mimicry of their supervisor's practice. The research literature in pre-service teacher development argues that pre-service teachers may not recognise that the dual purpose of professional experience is, first, for them to learn to teach, and second, for their students to learn (Soslau, 2012). The purpose of the GROW protocol used in this study was to link these dual purposes for pre-service teachers.

The identification of subjectification in the GROW protocol can be examined through the connections that pre-service teachers make between student outcomes and their own actions as a teacher on PEx. In this sense the "other" in the dialogue is the students they teach while on PEx. We argue that this connection between their students' learning and their own actions as a teacher is an indicator of their developing self as a teacher. Therefore, in this study, we examined the ways in which pre-service teachers conceptualise the link between their actions as teachers and their students' learning during their post-lesson reflections using the GROW protocol.

8.2 Research Methods

This study used a phenomenographic approach to the analysis of the data. Phenomenography is used to identify people's different conceptions of reality (Marton, 1986). It was originally deployed as a method to identify students' existing views on key concepts (Marton, 2006) in disciplines taught in higher education. The methodology is now used across a diverse range of fields, but the original outcome criteria pertain:

1. That each category in the outcome space reveals something distinctive about a way of understanding the phenomenon;
2. That the categories are logically related, typically as a hierarchy of structurally inclusive relationships; and
3. That the outcomes are parsimonious—i.e., that the critical variation in experience observed in the data is represented by a set of as few categories as possible (Marton & Booth, 1997 cited in Åkerlind, 2005, p. 323).

Phenomenography is more commonly deployed using transcripts from interviews, but it has also been used with data from open-ended questions on surveys (Loughland et al., 2002, 2003). In this study, phenomenographic analysis was used to examine

the variations in how pre-service teachers reflected on the lessons they taught whilst on PEx. These reflections were recorded on a Lesson Feedback and Reflection Form based on the GROW protocol.

8.3 Data Collection

A total of 95 lesson feedback reflection forms were collected from nine pre-service teachers at a university in New South Wales, Australia. Students were enrolled in different teacher-education programs, including a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Teaching. At this university, students complete two professional experiences during their teaching program. Some participants submitted feedback reflection forms from their first professional experience, some submitted forms from their second professional experience, and some submitted forms for two experiences, having completed both in 2020.

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit the sample for the study. All of the students in each cohort were invited to participate in the study, and only those students who accepted the invitation were included. Informed consent was sought by email from each of the students who accepted the invitation. The ethical protocols used to recruit the sample and gain informed consent were consistent with the approval granted by the chief investigator's university ethics committee (HC190939).

8.4 Data Analysis

The lesson feedback reflection forms analysed in this study were a standard form used by all students in their professional experiences. Students are asked to complete the form after each teaching lesson to facilitate their self-reflection and the development of teaching skills during their professional experience. The form is based on the GROW protocol (Whitmore, 2010), where students are asked to: (a) state their goal for the lesson (i.e., Goal); (b) describe what happened during the lesson (i.e., Reality); (c) brainstorm some alternative pedagogical practices that could have been used during the lesson (i.e., Options); and (d) state a new goal for the next lesson (i.e., Where next). Of relevance to the current study is that one subsection of the "Reality" portion of the GROW form asks students to report on the extent to which they believe they met their goals during the lesson and to provide supportive evidence of their progress. This subsection was used as the source of data for the current study.

Two coders then examined the data. The first coder examined a random selection of lesson feedback forms to formalise the taxonomy of evidence students gave to support their teaching goals. The second coder reexamined the same selection to determine whether there was agreement between coders. Any discrepancies in this initial stage were resolved with discussion among the coders. The second coder then coded all other lesson feedback forms and flagged forms that were ambiguous or

fell between two categories. The two coders then discussed all unclear forms and resolved these discrepancies.

Four categories of evidence emerged in the initial coding of the data: descriptive, instructional, causal, and clinical. Below, each category is described and examples from feedback lesson forms are provided.

8.4.1 Category 1: Descriptive

At the most basic level of the taxonomy was the descriptive category. This category constitutes pre-service teachers' use of descriptions of the classroom activity as evidence of their teaching goals. In this category, participants primarily focussed on describing what they did in the classroom independently of student learning. In some cases, participants also described activities that they asked students to do, but there was no discussion of the extent to which students engaged with the material, learned the content, or enjoyed the lesson. Overall, these forms focussed solely on detailing the reality of the classroom experience, rather than how it contributed to better outcomes for student learning or the teachers themselves. Of the 95 forms coded, 18 (18.9%) were categorised as descriptive. Examples of descriptive evidence from the dataset include:

- *…initially wanted students to complete work mostly in silence but then realised it isn't really feasible during a practical lesson, so I just wanted to focus on keeping the noise level down.* [Participant ID 178]
- *Yes, the lesson ran very smoothly, students actively participated in discussions, responded to questions on their mini whiteboards and engaged with storybook reading. Students accurately wrote tally marks on the board with one-to-one correspondence. Students converted their tally information into a column graph.* [Participant ID 135]
- *Not effectively. I had hoped to get both the IPO and GANTT charts complete, but I only managed to get the class complete one of them.* [Participant ID 178]
- *I was alot [sic] happier with this lesson than previous ones of this same class. I felt alot [sic] more confident with the content (i.e. [software]), and most problems I encountered were at the fault of the student rather than my lack of understanding. I answered all of the students' questions quicker and clearer than previously, because I have spent more time knowing the features of the program, and actually understanding their purposes.* [Participant ID 176]
- *Yes. I finished the required content in accordance with my lesson plan on time. Also, I walked around the classroom to check their answers.* [Participant ID 130]

8.4.2 Category 2: Instructional

The next level of evidence was instructional. In instructional evidence, participants described an instructional strategy used during the lesson. This is considered more complex than descriptive because it demonstrates pre-service teachers' thinking about different instructional strategies learned in their teacher-education programs and how they are applied in classroom settings. However, similar to descriptive evidence, instructional evidence still focusses heavily on what happened in the classroom rather than how these instructional practices are linked to better teaching or better learning outcomes for students. Of the 95 lesson forms, 17 forms (17.8%) used instructional evidence. Examples included:

- *Use a range of teaching strategies: Applied the following: Better use of modelled, guided and independent teaching. -Visual and audio stimulation for student engagement—Differentiation used for year 1 and 2 students. The correct conjunction was provided for Year 1 and Year 2 were set…* [Participant ID 179]
- *Yes. I walked around the classroom and checked the worksheets completed by all the students. The majority of students answered all the questions on time, only a few of them did not complete the questions. In this case, students have time to do the formative assessment in class to assess what they have learned by themselves. Also, they have the opportunity to practice HSC exam-style short answer questions and check their answers using the marking criteria provided (self-reflection).* Participant ID 130]
- *Not entirely. There were a number of factors during the lesson that made behaviour management difficult. The class was in a different room, last lesson of the day, sitting at high tables and not in their usual seating plans. I thought this would be a good opportunity to assess how I manage challenging behaviour. I implemented the use of a quiet signal and returned to this throughout the lesson. I reminded students of their expectations in a positive way. However, this did need to be done a number of times.* [Participant ID 191]
- *Achieved. A range of different activities were conducted in class to engage students learning. Teacher was giving explicit instructions by giving examples* etc. *before activities. Understanding was checked such as thumb up/down after explanation.* [Participant ID 142]

8.4.3 Category 3: Causal

Level three of the taxonomy is causal evidence, which demonstrates that pre-service teachers can link instructional strategies to students' behaviour and learning in the classroom. Causal evidence is more complex than descriptive or instructional evidence because the teacher-education students see that their instructional strategies can affect their students' learning. Thus, participants who use causal evidence are demonstrating that they consider how students respond to their teaching to assess

their goal progress, rather than focussing solely on how a lesson was implemented or how students acted independently of lesson content. Importantly, however, this evidence focusses on how instructional strategies affect students overall. The largest portion of lesson forms—38 of the 95 forms (40%)—used causal evidence:

- *Yes, despite this lesson being planned as team-teaching it flowed well and the students engaged appropriately with required activities. I definitely improved my time management although it would have been nice to have more time at the end for the sharing circle. While some students struggled to choose a place, after discussion and modelled examples, everyone was able to choose a place, draw it and most were comfortable sharing with the group although we ran out of time.* [Participant ID 135]
- *Yes. I selected "assesses student learning" because it was very important for the students to gain a clear understanding of the content/concepts covered in this lesson. After the first write now, some students offered to share their responses, which demonstrated to me they had a good initial understanding of the ideas of moral dilemmas. Through class discussion and questions I assessed that students had understood the concepts of "tragedy" and "Shakespearean tragedy". Students engaged with the idea that humans are not perfect and good people can make bad decisions, like the characters in Shakespeare's plays. I circulated and read their final writing responses and again, they discussed moral dilemmas.* [Participant ID 191]
- *Achieved. Lesson was sequenced from revision of relevant vocab to get students prepared for the harder content. Following up students showed high level of accuracy….* [Participant ID 142]
- *I think this was achieved to a certain extent; the activity requiring everyone to get in a circle in the correct order ensured everyone was taking part in the lesson and communicating effectively with one another. They worked well to make the patterns, helping each other when a student didn't respond. Having students work in pairs meant that there were not any students feeling left out of a group or sitting waiting for too long.* [Participant ID 182]

8.4.4 Category 4: Clinical

The fourth category of the taxonomy was clinical evidence. Clinical evidence demonstrates a participant's understanding of the need to apply different pedagogical strategies in different contexts and for different students. This is a more complex level of understanding than causal evidence because students are consciously considering how different students or situations may need different approaches. In this type of evidence, participants describe how some students may have responded positively to the lesson or a strategy whereas others may have responded negatively. The smallest portion of lesson feedback forms—12 of the 98 (12.6%)—used clinical evidence.

- *When students were answering questions with the mini whiteboards, I wrote down student names on a post-it note, nothing those who were getting answers wrong and may need extra help. I also reviewed all answers, and if many students got the answer wrong, I reviewed the concept or question again. I also called on students who seemed distracted/daydreaming, to assess if they were listening and paying attention.* [Participant ID 122]
- *Every student was participating and engaged the whole of the lesson, so the goal was achieved in that regard. I wanted more specifically, however, to encourage faster working from the small handful of students still on the lino cutting stage. I was successful at stages, as I walked past their desks and made assertive comments ("staying on task please") whilst lightly knocking on their desks. I could have worked on this more though, as I felt I was easily taken away from this focus by assisting students with printing (and minor tasks such as reiterating the need for names on works).* [Participant ID 176]
- *…in the first half of the lesson, I provided a working example step-by-step. In this case, I asked the students if they understood the calculations, and they said yes. In addition, I asked a student to answer a similar example on the whiteboard. I repeated the calculating process in order to make sure that every student understands this important concept. After that, I designed a 3-page worksheet question. I checked their answers and provided constructive feedback. I realised that the majority students understand the learning concept. Also, I will talk to some students who have made mistakes individually during the next lesson.* [Participant ID 130]
- *This was an overall successful lesson, and I'm stoked by the overwhelmingly positive response the students had for the activities. Differentiation was set for students who were ahead and for those that struggled I offered techniques to help break down complex problems, rather than handing out an alternative activity.* [Participant ID 178]

The next section of this chapter presents the arguments as to why the clinical level of the taxonomy represents subjectification on the part of the teacher education student who can reflect at this level of complexity.

8.5 Discussion

The taxonomy of critical reflection proposed in this chapter is a hierarchy of structurally inclusive relationships (Åkerlind, 2005). Each higher level of the taxonomy subsumes the previous one. This nascent taxonomy of critical reflection is open to critique. As practitioners intensely involved in PEx and invested in the propagation of critical reflection among our students, we welcome this critique. To facilitate it, we elaborate on our own critical reasoning in making the link between the GROW protocol, our students' critical reflection, and their subjectification as pre-service teachers.

Our argument that subjectification is a purpose of PEx rests on the assumption that the progression of our taxonomy is valid. This argument depends on an expansive view of the clinician role of the teacher that is not well understood when it is parodied as another manifestation of a neo-liberal obsession with evidence-based practice. The clinical role in teaching is better understood as a problem-solving, research-informed practice (Burn & Mutton, 2015) that is sometimes referred to practice-based evidence (Fox, 2003). This broader definition of clinical practice enables the pre-service teacher to create an enhanced sense of their subject-ness as a teacher.

The Goal in the GROW protocol is selected from a range of relevant graduate standard descriptors that are the criteria for the assessment of the pre-service teacher. The Reality section of the form provides a space for the observer to describe what the teacher did in the lesson. The Options section is where the pre-service teacher writes their account of the post-lesson conversation and retrospectively explains their pedagogical reasoning through reference to the observer's description, their observer's post-lesson comments, and citation of student learning during the lesson.

The Where Next section of the form asks the pre-service teacher to nominate the next steps in their own learning as represented by their chosen graduate standard descriptor as well as the next learning outcome for their students. If all of these sections are completed, the pre-service teacher has recognised the dual purpose of their PEx through demonstrating their clinical reasoning. We argue that clinical reasoning should be considered a key attribute of a pre-service teacher's subjectification. When clinical reasoning is at the top of a structural hierarchy that includes descriptive, instructional, and causal reflection, there are clear milestones for their development.

This study found that only 12.6% of this sample of students were using clinical reasoning in their critical reflection. This finding needs to be investigated with further studies to see if this is a valid representation of pre-service teachers and the level of critical reflection in which they routinely engage. A possible focus for further research could be to see if the levels of critical reflection are developmental, in that pre-service teachers may need to move through the levels as they progress in their professional learning. To this end, future research could also investigate whether the different levels of reflection in this taxonomy are more akin to a model of learning transfer (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016), where it is necessary to build the surface level (descriptive and instructional) before moving to the deeper levels of critical reflection (causal and clinical). Transfer could then be tested through longitudinal studies that follow pre-service teachers through their professional experiences in initial teacher education.

8.6 Implications for Professional Experience

Subjectification should be a valid goal of professional experience when initial teacher education programs provide the opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop their clinical reasoning skills. Subjectification is a valuable goal for professional experience as it creates teachers who know their own practice repertoire and have the confidence and skills to deploy it. We have argued in this chapter that one such opportunity is via a reflection protocol based on GROW. The clinical reasoning demonstrated at the top level of the critical-reflection taxonomy shows that pre-service teachers can form inferences on the success of their teaching through reference to student data and their own practice. These inferences are the milestones of their continuous and self-regulated professional development as teachers.

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Chapter 9
A Shared Responsibility: Working Together to Develop Professional Learning Opportunities for Professional-Experience Supervising Teachers

Matthew Winslade, Graham Daniel, and Jacqui Hood

Abstract There are numerous examples of schools and universities forming partnerships to achieve common goals. In the field of teacher education in Australia at present, however, there are tensions between universities and classroom-based teachers in relation to what knowledge and which practices are to be valued and privileged in regard to professional experience. To address these current tensions regarding knowledge privilege, the New South Wales Department of Education initiated a school-university partnerships programs, known as Hub partnerships. These partnerships brought 24 schools together with a university in their region to develop a more collaborative partnership approach to professional experience. This chapter will explore one outcome from one of these partnerships situated in a regional context. The outcome was the development of a multilayered process drawing on the expertise of school and university staff to design and deliver a suite of professional-learning modules aimed at improving the supervisory practices of school-based practitioners who lead or supervise professional experience in schools. Using a mixed-methods research paradigm, this chapter traces the development of the professional-learning program and explores the perceived efficacy and impact of a partnered approach to developing professional-experience opportunities. Preliminary findings showed a positive correlation between the professional-learning program and supervisory practice.

Keywords Partnerships · Collaboration · Professional experience · Practice

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_9

9.1 Introduction

Tangible partnerships between teacher-education providers and schools in the development of pre-service teachers provide authenticity and relevance to the work of each institution in preparing teachers for entry into the teaching profession. This is particularly important in preparing and supporting students on their professional experience (PEx) placement, where theory and practice intersect (Zeichner, 2010). Recently, tensions between schools and universities concerning differences in expectations for these placements have prompted the New South Wales Department of Education to initiate partnerships between schools and universities to collaboratively provide more-effective preparation and support for pre-service teachers during their placements. These partnership projects formed what was referred to as the Hub School Program. This chapter will explore one such initiative, stemming from a larger, regionally focussed Hub School where one project outcome was to develop a series of professional-learning modules underpinned by a desire to increase the value placed on the practicum experience within the teaching and school-leadership community.

9.2 Background and Rationale for School-University Partnerships

Initial teacher education programs have at times been criticised by school staff for an apparent lack of authentic and tangible connection with day-to-day to day teaching practice in schools (Clarke & Winslade, 2019). Despite increasing consultation between universities, school systems, and regulatory bodies at higher levels, there is still a perceived level of distrust or misunderstanding at a more localised or regional level, particularly concerning the question of whose knowledge counts in professional placements (Zeichner, 2018). These tensions become evident during PEx placements, where pre-service teachers step into the space where often highly theoretical university preparation programs meet school-based reality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Green et al., 2020).

Whilst school-university partnerships have well-documented challenges and have come under criticism with regard to effectiveness (Lynch & Smith, 2012; Martin et al., 2011), successful partnerships represent a significant opportunity to establish sustainable relationships that can bring together both stakeholder groups to create more-effective teacher-preparation programs, or what Zeichner (2021) refers to as "genuine partnerships without second class citizens" (p. 3). Genuine partnerships between schools and teacher-education providers are recognised around the world as central to the quality and success of these placements (Moss, 2008). Effective PEx placements are thoughtfully planned and supervised (Burns & Badiali, 2018), and have benefits for the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher, as well as having a positive impact on student learning (McIntyre, 2017). In Australia, however, these genuine partnerships do not appear to have been adopted as a sustained practice over

time. Thankfully, and aligning with new research agendas focussing on the building of sustainable partnerships across the tertiary sector, this notion of school-university partnerships is currently undergoing a review in Australia (Moran et al., 2009).

A partnership approach provides universities with an opportunity to look beyond viewing schools purely as a resource for compulsory placements or as a source for research participants, viewing them instead as authentic partners in course design and delivery. Conversely, the expertise of universities can be engaged in the design of teacher-based professional learning, providing increased access to current research that supports evidence-driven practice and contemporary reconceptualisations of the roles and relationships involved in pre-service teacher development (Capello, 2020; McIntyre, 2017). For the Regional University and Regional College Hub Project team, the challenge was to consider how to more actively engage both school staff, as leaders of pre-service teachers, and teacher-education academics in the process of bringing theory and practice together to inform the preparation and supervision of school PEx placements.

9.3 The New South Wales Hub School Program

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requires that every pre-service teacher complete either 60 or 80 days of supervised practical or PEx placement in schools during their initial teacher education training, depending on their course profile (NESA, 2017). The NSW Department of Education Hub School Program was introduced in recognition that a distance had grown between schools and universities in the preparation of future teachers (TEMAG, 2014; Zeichner, 2018), and concerns had grown within the school sector about the perceived level of quality of universities' pre-placement training. The initiative aimed to find commonalities and develop consistency across the sectors to support the development of new teachers to the highest standards. The Hub School Program aimed to bring schools and universities together at the local and regional level to develop quality, sustainable relationships in the professional development of initial teacher education students.

The underlying philosophy behind the HUB initiative was to move away from the traditional model of adding practice to an established and potentially disconnected theoretical foundation. The program identified 24 schools acknowledged for their expertise and commitment to PEx placements. Each of the schools was partnered with a university based on location and appropriate initial teacher education course profile, with the aim being to produce innovative and sustainable practices to be shared with other schools, supported by research aligning the interests and needs of both stakeholder groups (NSW Department of Education [NSW DoE], 2021).

9.4 The Regional Hub PEx Project

Formed as a partnership between a regional university (RU) and a regional secondary college with two local campuses (RC), the RU/RC HUB aimed to explore ways to better support initial teacher education students transitioning into the teaching profession, with a specific focus on a regional community. Underpinning this project was the need to ensure that both stakeholder groups were committed to authentic engagement in order to develop a legitimate community of practice as conceptualised by Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015): a group where members with a common interest engage in sustained interaction and collective learning to maintain the integrity of their field or domain and improve practice. To guide the project, a team of school-based leaders and university academic staff was formed.

9.4.1 Method

To support the program as an evidence-driven project, the team first gathered baseline data on perceptions of the state of PEx. The perceptions of school teaching staff were gathered using surveys (n = 99) and semi-structured interviews (n = 22). The team also undertook an audit of the university's PEx programs to give a clear understanding of current practice, and to consider how that might present opportunities for partnership approaches to be implemented. A small number of school teaching staff nominated by the college for the project provided a further audit of existing PEx subjects at the university.

The survey data indicated a need to support teachers in understanding current teacher-preparation programs in universities, the requirements of these programs, and the links between teacher preparation in universities and practices in schools as classroom teachers moved into the process of supporting the development of the next generation of classroom practitioners (Winslade et al., 2021).

Key themes from the data included the need to:

- Increase the *quality* of the PEx experience for initial teacher education students and school staff through targeted professional learning for school-based supervising teachers.
- Provide a platform to support an increase in the responsibility level and profile of professional experience coordinators (PExC) at schools linked to the RU/RC Hub through a whole-of-school project to improve personal-development planning, a focus on professional learning and goal-setting.
- Shift focus to more collaborative practices in relation to personal-development planning amongst the teaching community, inclusive of university-based educators.

To meet these aims, a series of strategic co-designed programs and activities were developed (Clarke & Winslade, 2019):

1. A range of partnership-designed and delivered PEx subjects for both on-campus and online students.
2. A comprehensive review of the university's PEx processes and communication strategy.
3. Development of a NESA-registered teacher-supervision training program to assist teachers to meet accreditation and promotion requirements.
4. A pilot of a remote video supervision and observation tool (known as Swivl) aligned to the Department of Education's Personal Development Program.
5. A professional-development mentoring project partnering academics with teaching professional staff.

This chapter focusses on the third of these outcomes: the development of a NESA-registered suite of training programs, collectively titled "Growing Quality Educators Together". A key aim of this chapter is to report on the collaborative process of developing the package as an authentic and mutually beneficial project that constitutes a genuine partnership, and to present preliminary evaluations on its efficacy in improving supervisory practice.

9.4.2 Module Development

To raise the value of the PEx placement within the profession and develop leadership skills to bridge the school/university divide, the registration of recognised professional-development modules presented an authentic and recognised structure within which to work as a "genuine partnership without second class citizens" (Zeichner, 2021, p. 3). Aligning modules with the need for ongoing department-recognised professional learning provided authenticity for engagement within recognised career-progression structures and ensured alignment with the identified aims of the overall RU/RC project (Durksen et al., 2017). Engagement with existing structures within the profession (such as performance-development plans) provided acknowledgement of both the importance of PEx and recognition that supervising pre-service teachers was a higher-order professional skill and a priority in leadership.

To facilitate the creation of appropriate professional-learning modules, the project team formed a specific module-development team, recruited from an extended pool of experienced teachers and academics with expertise in PEx and professional development. Following initial discovery meetings and analysis of the baseline data, the team identified specific "gaps" in understandings of the role and expectations of PEx placements in contemporary Australian initial teacher education, and practices to lead and support students on these placements were identified. Overarching these gaps, a lack of formal skill development by universities for placement.

To address these identified gaps, it was important that the modules met the training requirements for teaching supervisors to host pre-service teachers, as outlined in the Professional Experience Agreement countersigned by both the NSW DoE and the NSW University Council of Deans (NSW DoE, n.d.). For this to occur, the modules

needed to be rigorous enough to be recognised through the DoE in order to earn the status of registered professional development.

From these analyses, the project team identified six key focus areas to form the basis for each discrete learning module:

Module 1—Preparing for success
Module 2—Using videos of practice to support classroom observation and ongoing professional growth
Module 3—Promoting professional growth using the Australian Professional Teaching Standards
Module 4—Supporting well-being through positive leadership practices
Module 5—Towards successful critical conversations
Module 6—Reflecting on Leadership skills, models, and research.

9.4.3 Design Principles

During the design process the development team identified four key strategic objectives to ensure that the professional learning was more meaningful for potential participants:

(1) Modules need to provide appropriate levels of differentiation to align with participant needs and be authentic to their individual context;
(2) Modules need to be recognised as having a high degree of credibility;
(3) Modules need to have tangible outcomes directly linked to participation; and
(4) Modules need to provide authentic opportunity for Hub partnership engagement.

To provide appropriate differentiation and have greater reach, the modules were designed to provide flexibility so that they could encompass all school settings and individual leader levels. The team adopted a "stackable" approach to module design that provided increased flexibility of delivery mode such as mixed mode/online, face-to-face, one-day conference or a series delivered across discrete sessions such as a staff meeting. The stand-alone modules provided a key focus that, when presented together, would progressively build the participants' skills and knowledge of the practicum and its supervision, and leadership roles in schools. Because the modules were independent, schools could also request particular modules that best suited their needs and time frames. Differentiation also included engagement time. For example, five leaders received the minimum approved training (a two-hour online professional-learning session focussing on the key area of observation), while other leaders engaged in a two-day conference facilitated through a range of workshops and an additional 12 months of follow-up and support.

Throughout the development process, university-based academics with expertise in PEx and professional learning provided feedback and support. This included the adopting the role of *critical friend* to ensure that current research and valid evaluation design were embedded throughout each step of the process. School-based teaching practitioners also acted as critical friends, providing guidance and feedback to ensure

that modules aligned with current practice and school needs and that the modules addressed the concerns raised in the baseline data analysis.

As part of the collaborative development process, all critical friends attended a full-day workshop at which the six draft modules were piloted for review. University Liaison Officers, who visit pre-service teachers in schools during their placement and provide support to both the teachers and their supervisors in schools, also attended the pilot program and provided feedback.

This feedback allowed for the development team to make adjustments accordingly and seek further feedback. For example, feedback from the pilot indicated that the initial content of Modules 2 and 4 aligned with existing resources, and thus neither added value nor effectively built upon existing knowledge. On analysis, this misalignment was due to the development team targeting the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Proficient accreditation standard at a level that did not accommodate the different levels of leadership experience of the participants. Therefore, the professional learning did not align with the first of the key strategic objectives of the process.

Workshop participants also identified that the success criteria were not clearly evident in all learning activities in these particular modules. Following refinement, accreditation was approved through NESA at the standard of Highly Accomplished, against Descriptor 6.2 *Engage in professional learning and improve* practice (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2017), providing a tangible outcome from the partnership and establishing the industry credibility of the program and its content.

Once revised, the modules were submitted for approval by NESA, in preparation for delivering the program.

9.4.4 Sharing Practice—Rolling the Program Out to Practitioners

Following the program's successful pilot trial, revision, and NESA registration, the modules were made available to other schools in the regional area surrounding the RU/RC Hub. Initially the program was delivered in 10 separate full-day workshops to over 200 leaders and aspiring leaders. The participants included staff from 35 school settings, made up of 16 secondary, 16 primary, and two central schools and the District Office, with a geographic reach of approximately 500 kms from the central Hub School location.

Fifty-eight percent of participants identified as classroom teachers, 32% identified as middle management, and 14% identified as senior executives. Given that schools could nominate any staff position to attend, this demographic data justifies the early decisions in the feedback process to ensure that the professional-learning opportunities would be differentiated to ensure relevancy to the target audience.

In addition, a number of courses were adapted and presented in an online format in response to travel and gathering restrictions associated with the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. To allow for consistent module presentation across the region, the same team of facilitators presented both the face-to-face and online versions.

9.5 Has It Worked? (School Culture and Impact)

Whilst the final data collection and evaluation in regard to impact and efficacy is still under way, feedback from school executive staff indicates that the modules have been successful in improving practice since the workshop (prior to final data collection at 12 months). Feedback on the modules and their impact in schools from senior staff (those working at lead level or to the principal standards) indicated that 85% perceived the modules as appropriate to their needs and the needs of their staff. Further feedback data provided by those identifying as senior executive staff related to their perceptions of both the quality and delivery of the professional-learning modules, with a satisfaction rating of 90%.

In relation to individual participant response, early data analysis indicates that the program has been positive. Across the six modules, participants rated the perceived efficacy of the program on their future practice. Ninety-seven percent of participants indicated they felt module 1 was either extremely or very helpful to support them as a supervisor, with 87% for module 2, 96% for module 3, 98% for module 4, 95% for module 5 and 87% for module 6. There were no participant responses indicating that the modules did not provide positive impact. Additional data will provide a more detailed indication of effectiveness, and post-workshop data collection **[not sure what the "post" is referring to here]** will help to determine how sustainable the program is likely to be. For example, 12% of participants in module 6 and 16% in module 2 indicated that they needed more time to consider the full implications of the program on their practice. Examples of feedback included:

> *This course was excellent in providing an empowering tool for our school leaders. Looking at a variety of areas where leaders can make a difference with their staff* (Principal K-12).
>
> *Excellent presentations and presenters. A thought provoking and informative day. Have already used some ideas in my current practice* (Head Teacher OH).

Providing a detailed reflection, the principal of one of the schools linked with the RU/RC Hub observed:

> *The Professional Experience Hub…has provided early career and experienced educators the opportunity to recalibrate and redesign their own professional learning. The high impact professional learning delivered by the team allowed structured reflection time, mentoring and coaching processes to improve classroom practice and leadership in line with the Professional Teaching Standards as educators move through their levels of accreditation. Staff confidence, willingness, and capacity to supervise pre-service teachers has improved as a result of the quality strategies and professional learning. Staff in leadership roles at [name of school] were now, more equipped to engage in professional conversations with staff as part of reinvigorated Performance and Development Process (PDPs). The ongoing PEX*

coaching and support has helped transport all staff into a cultural mindset of growth and as a result our school achieved an excelling rating for Learning and Development in External Validation in 2020 (Principal).

9.6 Challenges and Lessons Learned

As well as the early indications of success linked to the program, there were a number of challenges experienced on the way. These included the development of trust and awareness of the different needs, roles, responsibilities, and requirements of school and university staff. Consequently, a key challenge was identifying ways to build programs within each system that could account for these often disparate needs, while meeting the mutually beneficial goal of improved professional practice in the preparation and supervision of PEx placements and the student teachers who occupy that space.

It is also important to note that this opportunity for professional-development collaboration did not have the same impact for everyone involved. An area that will be followed up in the final data-collection process was the initial indication that three participant schools provided feedback that they did not feel the process had yet led to a successful implementation of practice supporting a cultural shift towards supervision, as stated in the course aims **[?]**. Significantly, this occurred in educational districts outside of the immediate regional footprint of the Hub School and university. Two of these schools had attended a full-day workshop in 2020 immediately preceding COVID-19 lockdown and reported that as a result of the lockdown and related ongoing staff issues, they did not have the immediate opportunity to implement the knowledge that they had gained from the professional development.

The third school had sent two experienced classroom teachers who currently did not hold executive positions. These participants reported that when they returned to their school, they lacked the authority required to drive and influence change. Further, these two participants identified a larger systematic concern relating to the continuity of leadership, where the senior executive staff supporting the PEx process had left the school. These concerns indicate the importance of leadership in understanding and supporting PEx.

9.7 Discussion and Conclusion

Effective PEx placements are thoughtfully planned and supervised (Burns & Badiali, 2018; Zenkov & Pytash, 2019). Genuine partnerships between schools and universities in the preparation of pre-service teachers and the PEx placement are recognised as central to the success and quality of these placements in developing high-quality teachers of the future (McIntyre, 2017).

As part of the larger Hub initiative, this particular project engaged school staff and the university in a genuine partnership in which the two professional sites were brought together in an authentic project, nested within the needs of both school staff and the university, and with benefits to participants and, ultimately, the profession. These benefits demonstrate the potential for mutual value-adding that can arise when schools and universities collaborate, drawing on their different areas of expertise and experience to focus on an educational issue; in this case, improving the links between universities and schools in the preparation of future teachers.

There were many positive outcomes from this Hub project, some of which have been reported elsewhere (Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Winslade et al., 2021). The delivery of these professional learning modules aligning with the Highly Accomplished Teacher standards provided a credible platform to raise the valuing of the initial teacher education PEx placement by engaging these skills at the level of proficiency and leadership within recognised career structures.

The Regional Hub PEx project has been instrumental in effecting change and building working relationships that have been sustained for a period of time; however, as with any partnership, it has not been without its challenges. An important aspect of the project is the ongoing commitment to research and the collection of data to inform future practice and to have a base from which to share that practice with others. This data, collected from the professional-learning arm of the project, will add to the growing literature available to support sustained partnership-developed programs and contribute new and locally focussed or nuanced knowledge that can be used by the teaching and learning community of practice associated with PEx.

This Hub project has demonstrated the value of genuine partnerships between schools and universities to improve PEx practice. Using a collaborative approach, with each as equal partners in a genuine partnership (Zeichner, 2021), intentionally focussed on what the users wanted in our professional learning design process, we were able to develop resources that will benefit all stakeholders. These genuine partnerships, where school and university educators engaged as equal partners, have enabled ongoing collaborations that encourage school and university staff to work together across the teacher-education program, improving on campus studies and placement supervision. By legitimising these boundary crossings, this project was able to present a package of professional development in a form that is consistent with and supportive of the aims and expectations of schools and of university teacher-education courses. By authentically aligning professional learning with stakeholder interests and professional requirements, the program has successfully taken advantage of the opportunity to increase the level of value that participants placed on their role in the pre-service teacher placement experience, while also improving overall supervision practices in schools.

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Chapter 10
The Professional-Experience In-School Coordinator's Role: Perspectives of Supervising Teachers and In-School Coordinators

Sarah James, Amanda Isaac, Suzanne Hudson, Cathy Lembke, Rodney Bullivant, and Donna Ryan

Abstract Professional experience is central to initial teacher education. The role of the in-school coordinator as part of professional experience (PEx) is somewhat unexplored terrain. Research literature highlights the importance of in-school coordinators in initial teacher education. The in-school coordinator can act as a conduit between the school and university, communicating information regarding the PEx requirements and overseeing the administrative processes. While the role of the supervising teacher is well researched, there are limited investigations that explore what is expected of the in-school coordinator. The aim of this research is to explore the perspectives of supervising teachers and in-school coordinators with regard to the role of the PEx in-school coordinator. This interpretivist case-study research design used one-to-one, 30-min, semi-structured interviews to gather data from supervising teachers ($n = 16$) and in-school coordinators ($n = 5$) about the role. The participants were from five schools involved in a partnership with a regional university. Data were analysed using hand-coding and organised into themes. The small number of participants in this study is recognised as a limitation that meant it was difficult to gauge whether the responses aligned with the broader population. Nevertheless, this case study provided insights into the participants' viewpoints. Results indicated similarities between the perspectives of the supervising teachers and in-school coordinators. While both parties viewed the role as a connector between the university and school and as providing support to pre-service teachers, the supervising teachers highlighted the importance of in-school coordinators providing an induction, offering career advice, and facilitating positive pedagogical experiences.

Keywords Professional experience · Mentor teacher · Initial teacher education

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_10

10.1 Introduction

The last 15 years have seen a steady increase in the scrutiny applied to the preparation of teachers for Australian schools (Australian Parliament House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training [HRSCEVT], 2007; Caldwell & Sutton, 2010; Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2014). The emphasis on initial teacher education is underpinned by research that highlights the impact of teacher quality on student outcomes (Rowe & Skourdoumbis, 2019; Scholes et al., 2017). Traditionally, tertiary preparation of teachers in Australia consists of two components. The first is the university component where pre-service teachers learn the underpinning theories, pedagogical practices, curriculum knowledge, and micro-skills for teaching. The second is the PEx, where pre-service teachers have an opportunity to enact, refine, and develop much of their university learning in a classroom under the guidance of an experienced supervising teacher (Le Cornu, 2015).

While both components of initial teacher education are recognised as valuable, reviews have highlighted the significance of PEx to teacher education (HRSCEVT, 2007; Caldwell & Sutton, 2010; TEMAG, 2014). Emerging recommendations have focussed on the need for closer links between university coursework and teaching practice, the consequent need for high-quality supervising teachers, a call for research to investigate best practice, and the impact of school-university partnerships on the outcomes for pre-service teachers. Through such partnerships, it is envisaged that links between theory and practice will be enhanced, clearer communication between university and schools will support the placement organisation (Johnston, 2010; Le Cornu, 2015), and responsibility in the development of future teachers will be shared (TEMAG, 2014). Indeed, Carter highlights that in enhancing initial teacher education, and in particular PEx, "partnership is the key" (2015, p. 3).

This current research has emerged because of a partnership between a regional university and associated "Hub Schools". The Hub School project at the centre of this research has provided opportunities to foster links between the university and schools to work closely together to enhance supervising teachers' support for pre-service teachers, undertake professional learning to enhance the knowledge and skills of all key stakeholders, and enhance opportunities for collaborative research. Through conversations between the associated Hub Schools and university staff, a need for greater clarity about the key roles of members of the school community was identified for research; in particular, the role of the in-school coordinator in relation to PEx. Hence, the aim of this research is to explore and describe the perspectives of supervising teachers and in-school coordinators regarding the role of the in-school coordinator. To provide context for this study, the following section will draw upon the literature that is relevant to the role of the in-school coordinator.

10.2 Literature Review: The Role of the In-School Coordinator

There is an abundance of literature and research in regards to the role of supervising teachers in supporting pre-service teachers in their PEx placements (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hudson, 2010; James et al., 2020; Tindall-Ford et al., 2018). Additionally, there are web sites and training programs that support supervising teachers to further upskill and develop an understanding about their role (e.g., Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership's Supervising pre-service teachers: Online training; Mentoring for Effective Teaching program, 2010). Another role that has emerged as being potentially important to PEx is the role of the in-school coordinator (Le Cornu, 2012); however, to date there is limited research that investigates the role. Nevertheless, despite the lack of research, the importance of the role has been recognised for some time (see Martinez & Coombs, 2001). Martinez and Coombs (2001) investigated the practices of 10 in-school coordinators in Queensland and found that most went beyond administrative activities. They documented an array of activities that included weekly meetings with pre-service teachers to confirm expectations for teaching, induction into the school and profession, discussion about achievements and concerns, and advice about future employment. The authors concluded that many of the in-school coordinators in the study were unsure of their role and suggested that further clarification and consistency were required.

International research conducted by Utley et al. (2003) described the in-school coordinator's mediation between the school and the university as "walking in two worlds" (p. 5). While the in-school coordinator may manage the activities in the school setting, they also liaise with the university to confirm the requirements so they can guide the supervising teacher and pre-service teacher towards success. Hoben (2011) confirms that the in-school coordinator can successfully communicate the required expectations for the PEx to both the mentor and the pre-service teachers to ensure that all parties have shared understandings. The clear communication promoted by the in-school coordinator can minimise conflict on the way to achieving successful outcomes for the PEx.

Mutton and Butcher (2007) suggested that while the role of the in-school coordinator may include much of the administrative responsibilities for hosting pre-service teachers, they found that many in the role also offered pedagogical advice and support to both the mentors and pre-service teachers. Through the sharing of this advice, the supervising teacher and pre-service teacher together demonstrated growth and development. Similar to other studies, Mutton and Butcher noted the importance of the in-school coordinators' role in creating school-university connections, and called for a reconceptualisation of the "overall role" (p. 1). In contrast, a study by Le Cornu (2012) investigated the potential for in-school coordinators to affect the learning of pre-service teachers during PEx. She researched the perspectives of five highly experienced in-school coordinators who were either principals or deputy principals. Each participant stated their commitment to the profession and to building the capacity of pre-service teachers through promoting high-quality PEx. When describing their

role, they believed they presented pre-service teachers to the wider school community beyond the classroom, supported both the mentee and supervising teacher during PEx, and viewed themselves as the link between the school and university.

A more recent study by Birch (2020) provided direct insight for this current study: she investigated the role of in-school coordinators from their own perspectives. In contrast to the study conducted by Le Cornu (2012), not all the in-school coordinators were from the school leadership team; some were classroom teachers passionate about PEx. However, they did share a common commitment to building the capacity of the teaching profession. Birch found that in-school coordinators viewed their role as ensuring high-quality PEx for preservice teachers. The participants further noted that there were no guidelines, and thus they constructed the role they felt would best support the pre-service teachers. This study again highlighted the need for clarity about the role of the in-school coordinators and opportunities for staff to apply for such positions with the benefit of dedicated job descriptions.

10.3 Research Design

10.3.1 Theoretical Framing and Methodology

This research is underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm as it investigates the perspectives of the supervising teacher and the in-school coordinator regarding the in-school coordinator's role (Bickman & Rog, 2009). The researchers deemed interpretivism appropriate because the participants' perspectives were socially constructed through experience and interactions with others (O'Donoghue, 2018). In alignment with an interpretivist paradigm, a case-study methodology was used as a tool to investigate supervising teachers' and in-school coordinators' roles in selected partnership schools. Yin (2018) posits that a case-study design is the most appropriate for a shared environment, such as a school, as the research can focus on analytical generalisations as opposed to statistical assumptions. Additionally, a case study allows for a concentrated examination of an individual or community and can expose distinctive elements of the subject of the inquiry, which in this case are the viewpoints of the supervising teacher and in-school coordinator about the in-school coordinators' role (Corcoran et al., 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Corcoran et al. (2004) highlight the value of case-study research, as the results can confirm current processes or generate new approaches that can be a beacon for other practitioners, who learn from the presented case study. In this instance, the case study consisted of self-nominating staff from five schools that were involved in the Hub School Program in partnership with a regional university. It is hoped this investigation will generate discussion about the roles of in-school coordinators to create consistency and inform future PEx practices.

10.3.2 Participants and Methods of Data Collection

Once the research topic was confirmed, ethics approvals were gained (ECN-19-068; SERAP 2,017,379). The participants were informed about the research through email and had opportunities to self-nominate to be involved in the study. The participants were involved in 30-min, one-to-one phone interviews. Using interviews as the data-collection method for the case study was an efficient way to gather rich data (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The participants provided suggested times for the interviews and teacher release was arranged. There were 21 participants in total from the five Hub Schools that self-nominated to participate in the investigation. Four were primary schools, and the fifth a secondary school.

Once the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed. It was at this point that the participants' names were de-identified to ensure anonymity. Ensuring participant anonymity increased the likelihood that the responses would be honest and representative of the participants' perspectives (Ary et al., 2020). Following the transcription, the data were hand-coded, interpreted, and placed into emerging themes. The themes were reviewed by the researchers to promote validity.

The interviews commenced with demographic questions such as "How many years have you been teaching?" and "How many pre-service teachers have you mentored during your career?" Salkind (2010) highlights the importance of demographic questions to provide the participants' backgrounds and establish their relevance to the study. The demographics confirmed the appropriateness of the participants. Table 10.1 summarises the participants' backgrounds and experience. The 21 participants (P) consisted of 16 supervising teachers and five in-school coordinators from the five schools involved in the Hub School Program. Of the participants, six were men and 15 women, which is representative of the population of Australian teachers (New South Wales Government 2013–2019). To clarify the roles of the participants, the in-school coordinators have been highlighted.

The 16 supervising teachers had varying experience in mentoring ranging from one pre-service teacher (P1, P7, P10, P18) to P16, who had hosted 20 pre-service teachers in 25 years of teaching. Similarly, the in-school coordinators expressed varying experience, with three (P2, P6, P9) stating they had six months or less in their roles. In contrast, Participant 13 noted having four years' experience, while P19 had been in her role for 20 years. Of the in-school coordinators, three (P2, P9, P19) had not mentored a pre-service teacher prior to entering their roles. As there appears to be no confirmed job description for in-school coordinators, experience in mentoring pre-service teachers is not a prerequisite.

Table 10.1 Summary of the background of the participants including their experience

Participant (P)	Gender	Years teaching	Current role	Number of pre-service teachers	Length of time in the in-school coordinator role
P1	F	3	Grade 2 classroom teacher	1	
P2	M	14	Grade 1 classroom teacher/Hub School and in-school coordinator	0	6 months
P3	F	15	Classroom teacher	5	
P4	M	8	Grade 5 classroom teacher	3	
P5	F	30	Kindergarten classroom teacher	> 15	
P6	F	6	Kindergarten teacher and in-school coordinator	3	6 months
P7	F	8	Classroom teacher	1	
P9	F	4	Classroom teacher and in-school coordinator	0	Newly appointed
P10	F	9	Kindergarten classroom teacher	1	
P11	F	21	Stage 1 AP and grade 2 classroom teacher	10	
P12	F	> 30	Grade 1 classroom teacher	5	
P13	F	19	Deputy principal and in-school coordinator	12	4 years

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Participant (P)	Gender	Years teaching	Current role	Number of pre-service teachers	Length of time in the in-school coordinator role
P14	M	4	Grade 2 classroom teacher	4	
P15	F	6	Grade 3 classroom teacher; relieving assistant principal and sports coordinator	5	
P16	F	25	Grade 1 classroom teacher	20	
P17	M	10	Science teacher	5	
P18	M	7	PDHPE & maths teacher	1	
P19	F	35	Head teacher administration; in-school coordinator	0	20 years
P20	M	20	Music teacher	15	
P21	F	32	HSIE teacher	7	

10.4 Results

10.4.1 Supervising Teachers Describe the Role of the In-School Coordinators

When supervising teachers were asked to describe the role of the in-school coordinator, the breadth of the role became apparent. There were also indications that some supervising teachers felt there was a lack of clarity about the role. A typical response from one participant (P17) was, "I have had a number of different leaders [in-school coordinators] who have done well or who haven't done so well." Similar to the research by Mutton and Butcher (2007) and Le Cornu (2012), the participants highlighted the importance of the in-school coordinator being a liaison between the university and the school. One supervising teacher used the term "networking", explaining that the in-school coordinator, "brings people together to communicate to all parties" (P20). Another participant described them as a "go-between" (P18), while yet another referred to the role as a "communication portal" (P17). The supervising

teachers in this study noted that the role was often enacted through administrative or organisational activities. For example, P16 suggested, “The role is to communicate to make sure that everybody knows what is expected, even from the administration point of view, like dates, names, and expectations”. Utley et al. (2003) confirm that the role of the in-school coordinator is often seen as “walking in two worlds” as they liaise, communicate, and mediate the school and university requirements to ensure both the supervising teacher and pre-service teacher are supported.

The prime role for in-school coordinators as described by the mentor teachers was to offer the pre-service teachers “support” (P6). Some participants went so far as to suggest that the role resembled being a “nanny” or a “mother” to the pre-service teachers (P4). The suggestion of the role being that of a support person was also recognised by P3, who confirmed that the in-school coordinator needed to be “supportive so that prac students know they are going to be supported no matter where they are at with their pracs”. Some participants extended the role to include supporting the supervising teacher, stating, “It is someone who is there to also mentor and help the mentor teacher if they need it” (P21). This viewpoint was shared by a number of supervising teachers, who deemed the in-school coordinator to be responsible for supporting both the pre-service teacher and the supervising teacher, and for being a “middle-man” or “sounding board for us and the prac students” (P16). P14 noted, “I guess they’re kind of the conductor between the pre-service teacher and the actual classroom teacher”. More than one participant highlighted the need for an in-school coordinator to be “approachable”. Hudson (2013) highlights the importance of supervising teachers having the personal attributes for effective mentoring, which include being approachable and supportive. It seems the same attributes are appreciated when they are demonstrated by in-school coordinators.

As well as being supportive and approachable, the in-school coordinator was also expected to provide optimum pedagogical experiences for the pre-service teacher. The participants claimed that there were several ways this was achieved. P16 noted that the in-school coordinator “selected mentor teachers who had sound pedagogical practices to ensure the best professional experience possible”. As well as selecting suitable supervising teachers, the role of the in-school coordinator was purported to include activities such as induction into the school context. P6 noted, “Yes, the in-school coordinator provides our pre-service teachers with weekly meetings as a way to induct them into the school and share best practice”. Three of the supervising teachers agreed that part of the in-school coordinator’s role was to meet with pre-service teachers regularly to discuss school and pedagogical matters. Mutton and Butcher (2007) confirm that the role can include the in-school coordinators sharing ideas and “pedagogical aspects” (p. 7). All supervising teachers saw the in-school coordinator’s role as being different to theirs but vital to the professional learning of the pre-service teacher.

10.4.2 Results: In-School Coordinators Describe Their Roles

Emerging from the in-school coordinators' interviews was the importance of offering support to pre-service teachers. While support was deemed as an imperative part of their role, the way the support was offered differed between the participants. P2 offered support by facilitating visits to classrooms by highly accomplished teachers, so the pre-service teachers could gain insights into good teaching practice. Two participants shared that they saw the role as a "helper" or a "sounding board" (P6 and P13, respectively) who could guide or help when the pre-service teachers had concerns. Similarly, P19 noted, "I'm the friendly face that meets them on the very first day and makes a big fuss about them," while another participant saw her role as "literally mentoring prac students" (P9). Martinez and Coombs (2001, p. 279) confirm these participants' responses, contending that "the in-school coordinators' role is to help and support preservice teachers, but to also ensure their growth and development is facilitated".

Similar to the responses of the supervising teachers, the in-school coordinators viewed their role as supporting those teachers who were hosting pre-service teachers. This theme was reflected through comments such as, "It is my role in the school to support supervising teachers before a professional experience commences, probably making sure they understand the expectations, [and] they have completed some training" (P2). P6 also responded that the role incorporated offering the supervising teachers support by "giving them time to answer questions and offer assistance". Another participant saw the role as contributing to the profession by "improving pre-service teacher education and mentoring them to ensure the best experience possible" (P9). Indeed, the response by P9 reflects the views of Hoben (2011), who suggests that in-school coordinators play a fundamental role in shaping future teachers and ensuring the quality of their PEx.

Some in-school coordinators saw their role as fostering the connections between the school and the university. P2 stated that his role as in-school coordinator was to "work collegially between all stakeholders" (university, in-school coordinators, supervising teachers, pre-service teachers, and other Hub Schools) to "maintain the connections between all parties". P13 had a similar perspective, stating, "I am the kind of stop-gap between the school and the university". P19 further elaborated that she felt her role included assisting the university by "promoting the pre-service placements in the school and to build the number of teachers taking on the mentoring of a pre-service teacher". Birch (2020) also found in her research that the role of the in-school coordinator was to build the connections between the school and university through the pairing of the pre-service teachers with suitable mentors.

As well as building school-university connections, P19 noted that her role also included "fostering a whole-school community approach to thinking about pre-service teachers". Hudson and Hudson (2018) and Le Cornu (2010) propose that a whole-school approach to supporting pre-service teachers during PEx offers best practice in supporting the development of future teachers. When the responsibility of mentoring within the school community is shared, pre-service teachers gain a

Table 10.2 Summary of participant descriptions of the in-school coordinator role

Supervising teachers		In-school coordinators
Liaison Communicator Go-between Communication portal Promote clear expectations Support for both the supervising teacher and pre-service teacher Sounding board Nanny or mother to the pre-service teachers	Conductor Approachable Administrator Organiser Optimise pedagogical experiences Regular meetings Induction	Supporting the pre-service teacher Time and support for supervising teachers Connecting between key stakeholders Positive PEXes Improving teacher education Fostering a whole-school approach to PEx Promoting pre-service teacher placements

richer, broader understanding about the role of the teacher. Table 10.2 summarises the responses between the two cohorts of participants. It is evident that while the language may be different, there are many overlaps in how participants in both groups describe the role of the in-school coordinator.

10.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This interpretivist case study presented the perspectives of supervising teachers and in-school coordinators regarding the role of the in-school coordinator. The viewpoints highlighted participant perspectives and revealed an evident lack of clarity about this allocated role. A review of some Department of Education web sites showed imitated mention of the role of the in-school coordinator. However, Australian reviews into initial teacher education (Bruniges et al., 2013, p. 15) describe the role of the in-school coordinator as being: a liaison; "an advocate for strong involvement of the school; a support for preservice teachers by welcoming them and sharing policies; a coordinator of consultations and overseeing the placement; a communicator with the university and; an administrator ensuring the paperwork is completed". Consistent explanations by education systems will promote clarity in the role description of the in-school coordinator.

As part of this research, the responses of the participants were interpreted, and themes identified. Similar to the roles described in the literature review, the participants highlighted that the role included liaising with stakeholders, supporting pre-service teachers, supporting supervising teachers, and providing optimal pedagogical experiences. While the in-school coordinators identified the same roles, they also expressed a broader understanding of their role, which included contributing to quality initial teacher education experiences and fostering a whole-school approach

to PEx. Indeed, the contribution of the in-school coordinator can affect the development of pre-service teachers by providing a greater understanding about the role of the teacher that extends beyond the classroom into the school and wider community (Birch, 2020).

Like most research, this study had limitations. The small number of participants meant that it was difficult to gauge whether the responses aligned with the broader population. A larger mixed-methods study would give greater insight and depth into the perspectives of supervising teachers and in-school coordinators and identify further influential factors from their perspectives. The self-nominating process adopted for the research design may also be a limitation, as the participants who nominated may have felt compelled to make a point about in-school coordinators. A random selection of participants may have resulted in a more objective perspective.

The purpose of a case study, as highlighted by Corcoran et al. (2004), is to confirm or enhance current practices within the "case" or enhance the case. Overall, the supervising teachers and in-school coordinators involved in this Hub School partnership with a regional university seem to have constructed an understanding about the role of the in-school coordinator; however, it seems more consistency and clarity about the role may be required. While professional-learning programs are available to help supervising teachers understand their role, more is required to support the development and understanding of in-school coordinators' roles. This research suggests that as part of this school-university partnership, professional learning could be developed in collaboration to give in-school coordinators—and, indeed, all stakeholders—a clear understanding of the in-school coordinator role.

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Part IV
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Initial Teacher Education

Chapter 11
Theorising the *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice Co-Constructed Professional-Learning Program

Kim Wilson, Nerida Wayland, and Amy Murphy

Abstract Schools in Australia are increasingly using flexible, open-planned, innovative learning environments (ILEs) that necessitate that teachers not only plan collaboratively but deliver their syllabi in an integrated, and sometimes cross-disciplinary, manner. Pre-service teachers need training to equip them to engage in this type of collaborative practice. However, as a review of the literature shows, there is minimal training provided to in- or pre-service teachers to assist them to make the shift from siloed delivery of their syllabi to collaborative delivery. The purpose of this chapter is to theorise and describe the first phase of development of a school-university partnership professional-learning program. We draw on Soja's (Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places. Blackwell, 1996) conceptualisation of the *third space*, an adaptation of Lefebvre's (The production of space. Blackwell, 1991) trialectics of spatiality, to frame our collaborative-practice professional-learning program. Our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project is disrupting the traditional hierarchical model by positioning teachers and academics as equal bearers of educational knowledge and skill. Our project is collaborative in all regards: from the conceptualisation of the program to the development of the project parameters, to the design, creation, and planned delivery of the professional-learning activity. ILEs open the possibility for an educational site that is both physically and metaphorically an educational place for innovation and collaboration. Our project is a response to the need to upskill pre-service and new and beginning teachers to work collaboratively in shared, flexible learning spaces.

Keywords Thirdspace · Third spaces · Collaboration · Flexible learning · Pre-service teachers · Transformation

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_11

11.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the theorising and first-phase development of a school-university partnership professional-learning program. We examine the contextual drivers of the professional-learning program as an example of collaborative practice, particularly as it relates to innovative learning environments (ILEs). Schools are increasingly adopting ILEs because of the flexible use of space, furniture, and technology found in such environments. However, they frequently require multiple teachers and classes to work in the same space. Such collaborative spaces can be an enriching learning environment; however, collaborative practice requires a change in pedagogy, and pre- and in-service teachers need support to make this shift in their practice. We investigate the link between ILEs and student learning outcomes, school-university partnerships, and the preparation of pre-service teachers to work in ILEs and engage in joint practice. We draw on Soja's theory of spatiality (1996) and explain why we position our collaborative-practice professional-learning program as an example of "third space" practice. We define the third space as a realm in which teachers question the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated, and used. The third space is a hybrid space "where academic and practitioner knowledge and knowledge that exists in communities come together in new less hierarchical ways in the service of teacher learning" (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89). Finally, we consider how our co-conceived and co-developed program of professional learning can prepare pre-service teachers to traverse and reimagine what it means to *be* a teacher and *do* teaching in the context of collaborative and innovative learning environments.

11.2 Literature Review

What follows is an overview of some key features of school-university partnerships as reported in literature from the past 20 years. At the same time, we consider the evidence that addresses the role of partnerships in preparing pre-service teachers for in-service practice. We investigate the literature reporting on ILEs and on collaborative practice. Working in ILEs requires a shift in pedagogical approaches, and teachers, including pre-service teachers, need support to work in such environments. We investigate recent empirical literature evaluating collaborative practice, and outline reported indicators of successful ILEs combined with collaborative practice. Finally, we highlight the known barriers to such practice and identify the gaps in and limitations of existing research.

11.2.1 School-University Partnerships and Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for In-Service Practice

Framing the school-university partnership as third-space activity has precedence. Zeichner (2010) draws on third-space theory because it facilitated "a rejection of binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge and theory and practice" (p. 92). Zeichner (2010) argues for a broader view of teacher-education programs wherein academic and teacher-based knowledge intersect on a more equal plane. Bernay et al. (2020) write of the intersecting space between university, school, and pre-service teachers as a "mutual learning environment" that "can be described as 'hybrid spaces' (third spaces)" (Bernay et al., 2020, p. 139). In this space, they argue, "student teachers, teachers and university lecturers engage in reflection and critique together" (Bernay et al., 2020, p. 139), resulting in new knowledge and practices. Green et al. (2020) similarly frame collaborative school-university partnerships as third-space activity because of the boundary-crossing from university and school into a space where established norms are challenged and reimagined. This "third space moves against binary reductions and instead facilitates a hybridised approach" (Green et al., 2020, p. 404). Third-space theory also speaks to a non-hierarchical relationship between schools and universities where all participants—pre-service and in-service teachers and teacher educators—are valued equally (Green et al., 2020; Zeichner, 2010). Generating third spaces in teacher-education programs and collaborative school-university partnerships creates a "more dialectical relationship between academic and practitioner knowledge in support of student teacher learning" (Zeichner, 2010, p. 92).

School-university collaborations recognise that well-rounded teacher preparation requires both academic and in-practice support. Furthermore, "nationally and internationally, there is evidence that the quality of teaching is the most significant in-school factor affecting student outcomes" (Australian Institute of School Leadership [AITSL], 2012, p. 3). When university teacher educators join with school educators, pre-service teachers' learning is contextualised, and the pre-service teacher is socialised into the profession (Burton & Greher, 2007). Bernay et al. (2020) found that models of school-university partnerships that function as professional-learning communities "enhance student teacher's preparedness for their first classroom" (p. 133). Morton and Birky's (2015) study of innovative school-university partnerships found that the pre-service teachers involved in the program "perceived an increase in the quality of their teaching, especially in the area of differentiation" (p. 12). Participants in this study reported lessons that were fine-tuned and classrooms that were positive, with fewer behavioural problems (Morton & Birky, 2015). The research literature consistently reports that effective school-university partnerships produce teachers with robust and practical classroom experiences (Bernay et al., 2020; Burton & Greher, 2007; McCray et al., 2011; Morton & Birky, 2015).

11.2.2 Preparing Teachers for Innovative Learning Environments and Collaborative Practice

Typically, pre-service teachers are not well prepared for teaching in ILEs, especially in secondary education where, in the state of New South Wales, Australia, the curriculum is tightly structured, content-rich, and clearly siloed into distinct subject areas. Teachers' lack of preparedness to teach in ILEs is evident in the need for in-service teachers, when arriving in a school with ILEs, to "reconceptualise teaching and learning from private autonomous learning environments to co-teaching in shared learning spaces" (Mackey et al., 2019, p. 97). This shift in practice is a substantial change for many teachers, suggesting that the vast majority of pre-service teachers do not experience teacher training in these types of school environments.

More frequently than not, an ILE demands in-classroom collaborative practice. However, this is not the norm for most secondary teachers in the state of NSW. Moreover, teachers need support to implement collaborative practice—both in terms of professional learning for best practice, and in terms of time to plan, implement, and review classroom activities and roles. In a three-year case study of collaborative teaching in an urban elementary school, York-Barr et al. (2007) presented key factors to which they attributed the success of collaborative practice. These factors included teachers having a predisposition for inclusive education, strong administrative support for teaching staff, and time for collaborative planning (York-Barr et al., 2007). Teachers involved in the study reported the need for a shared commitment to and accountability for student learning; flexibility; and a high level of professionalism (York-Barr et al., 2007). But what of the effect of ILEs on student learning outcomes?

11.2.3 Innovative Learning Environment and Student Learning Outcomes

Research investigating the student learning outcomes resulting from learning that occurs in an ILE is limited. Tanner (2009) in a study of the effects of school design on student learning outcomes in a sample of 71 schools, found that movement and circulation patterns "significantly influenced the variance in Reading comprehension, Language arts, Mathematics, and Science scores. Spaces allowing freedom of movement and circulation correlated with better test scores" (p. 394). Brooks (2011), drawing on a comparative study of two groups of students who were delivered the same curriculum by the same instructor, found that when "holding all factors excepting the learning spaces constant" (p. 719), the ILE group outperformed the students who were taught in a traditional learning environment. Nonetheless, we report Brooks's (2011) results with some caution because the ILE space used in the study was technologically enhanced:

> [There are] large, round tables that accommodate up to nine students each, switchable laptop technology that allows students to project content onto flat panel display screens linked to their respective tables, an instructor station from which content is displayed to two large projector screens and feeds to the student display screens are controlled and wall-mounted glass marker boards around the perimeter of the room (Brooks, 2011, p. 721).

By comparison, the traditional learning environment was not technologically enhanced: "ie, whiteboard, projection screen and instructor desk at the front of the room, student tables facing the front of the room" (Brooks, 2011, pp. 721–722). A technologically enhanced traditional environment would need to be compared to the equivalent technologically enhanced ILE before findings of outperformance could be relied upon.

Blackmore et al. (2011), in a commissioned literature review of research into the connection between built learning spaces and student outcomes, noted a dearth of empirical studies linking student learning outcomes to ILEs (Kariippanon et al., 2019). It is difficult to control for all factors and isolate the connection between learning in an ILE and resultant student outcomes. Research more typically focusses on the design phase and the *anticipated* learning outcomes (Blackmore et al., 2011). Anticipated outcomes are generally predicated on the assumption that "building design has flow on effects on teacher and student behaviours, morale and practices, and therefore learning outcomes" (Blackmore et al., 2011, p. 7), and that those "effects" are usually positive. However, there is minimal empirical evidence to support these assumptions.

Research such as Kariippanon et al.'s (2019) comparative case study of the delivery of the same curriculum to two groups of secondary school students—one group in a "traditionally furnished and arranged classroom", the other in a "flexible learning space containing a variety of furniture options" (p. 1)—draws on the assumption that changed building design and observed positive behaviour result in gains for students. Kariippanon et al. (2019) reported benefits from the ILE with regard to observing students more frequently engaged in:

- large-group settings
- collaboration with peers
- interaction with peers
- presenting work to the class
- lesson activities ("demonstrated through verbal and physical behaviours appropriate to the task set by the teacher, such as raising hands, writing or discussing the activity" (Kariippanon et al., 2019, p. 9)).

By comparison, the researchers in this study noted that students in a traditional classroom spent more time working individually and being explicitly taught (Kariippanon et al., 2019, p. 9). Whilst the researchers noted no significant differences in students' observable off-task behaviour across the two groups, an argument was made for the benefits of flexible learning spaces due to the observed higher frequencies of peer interaction and collaboration. Nonetheless, no causal link between learning in an ILE and improved student learning outcomes could be established.

Despite the lack of empirical evidence linking gains in student learning outcomes to a particular ILE, there are an increasing number of schools in Australia that have redesigned learning spaces to be flexible and open plan. Such designs frequently require co-teaching of larger groups of students. However, collaborative approaches to teaching are not straightforward to adopt (Cardellino & Woolner, 2020). Nor does co-teaching come naturally in a profession that is predominantly individualised. The assumption that an open-plan, flexible classroom environment will drive teacher pedagogical change lacks supporting evidence (Campbell, 2020; Mulcahy & Morrison, 2017). For example, Byers et al. (2018) set out to explore the claim that different classroom layouts can affect teaching and learning. They compared a traditional classroom layout to an ILE in an Australian secondary school. The researchers reported no causal link between an ILE and changed teaching practice, and concluded that "the ILE by themselves are not the agents of change" (Byers et al., 2018, p. 176). Kariippanon et al. (2019) similarly note that "pedagogical adaptation is not necessarily a natural flow-on from changes to the built environment" (p. 3). Research from the past decade is highlighting instead the necessity for structured support to enable teachers to transition into collaborative practice (Blackmore et al., 2011; Byers et al., 2018; Mackey et al., 2019; York-Barr et al., 2007).

The research literature reporting on ILEs overwhelmingly focusses on the physical space. However, we argue in this chapter that the focus on the space alone is misplaced. It is not the space that is most important—it is the people involved who can make an ILE a successful innovation. Those people include the in-service and pre-service teachers, school students, and school leadership, who all require support (in resourcing and learning) to achieve success in these spaces. In what follows we document a university-school partnered co-development of a collaborative professional-learning program intended to support pre-service teachers' professional experience of collaborative practice in an ILE school. The ultimate goal is to establish a program of learning that supports both pre-service and in-service teachers to thrive in ILEs. In what follows, we explain the theoretical framing of our program and how this framing will guide the project, and indicate the next steps of our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project.

11.3 Theoretical Framing: *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice

Framing the approach to the development of our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project is Lefebvre's (1991) conceptualisation of space as a complex social construction and Soja's (1996) adaptation of Lefebvre's theory of spacialisation. Lefebvre's (1991) theory of spatiality describes three social spaces: the perceived *spatial practice*, the conceived *representations of space*, and the lived *representational spaces*. Of the first, the perceived space, Lefebvre (1991) writes that "spatial practice regulates life—it does not create it" (p. 358). Ryan and Barton (2014) explain that the

perceived first space, in the context of a school, refers to the routines that structure the day, together with the design, delivery, and assessment of syllabus requirements. Of the second, conceived *representations of space* Lefebvre (1991, p. 41) writes "that representations of space are shot through with a knowledge (*savoir*)—i.e. a mixture of understanding (*connaissance*) and ideology—which is always relative and in the process of change. Such representations are thus objective, though subject to revision".

In the context of a school, the second space refers to the "ideal" of what a school or classroom looks like in practice according to those in power (Ryan & Barton, 2014). In this space, teachers are attending to accreditation requirements, meeting assessment targets, and preparing students for high-stakes external examinations.

The final space is the lived *representational spaces*. Lefebvre (1991) defined this space as alive, writing that "it embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations…it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic" (p. 42). Soja (1996) took Lefebvre's (1991) concept of the spatial triad and wrote of a spatial trialectic in which everything comes together in a *thirdspace* (or third space, the lived *representational space*). Soja (1996, p. 57) defines the third space as "another way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality—historicality—sociality".

The third space, then, refers to in-between spaces (Bhabha, 1994), a "space to resist, subvert and re-imagine everyday realities" (Ryan & Barton, 2014, p. 73). The third space can be understood as a metaphor that evokes a hybrid, disruptive space "that can operate to disturb normative, deficit perceptions" (Gannon, 2010, p. 21). When operating in the third space, teachers challenge and resist what may be taken for granted to pursue new possibilities in practice.

The third space is an apt conceptual model for our collaborative professional-learning program. Third-space theory focusses on the power of both tangible and figurative spaces that champion diverse ways of thinking and being. The third space, which is both a mindset and a physical collaborative learning space in an ILE, is a place to experiment; to question the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated, and used. The quest for creativity, the thirst for curiosity, and the interrogation of boundaries encapsulate the ideal of an ILE. Moreover, our co-conceived, co-designed, and co-delivered school-university partnered professional-learning program is challenging the more traditional model of school-university partnerships, in which the academics are frequently positioned as the bearers of superior knowledge (Zeichner, 2010). Our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project is disrupting the traditional hierarchical model by positioning teachers and academics as equal bearers of educational knowledge and skill. In this new partnership model, collaborative practice is not just talked about, it is the lived experience of all involved.

11.4 The *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice Project: A Co-Conceived, Co-Designed, and Co-Delivered School-University Professional Learning Program

Pre-service (and in-service) teachers arriving in an ILE will most likely engage in collaborative practice necessitated by the school's flexible and open ILEs. For most pre-service teachers completing their professional experience (PEx) placement at a school with ILEs, the practice of collaboration is new and daunting. Our team set out to support these pre-service, new, and beginning teachers to work collaboratively within an ILE context.

Our project is collaborative in all regards: from the conceptualisation of the program to the development of the project parameters, to the design, creation, and planned delivery of the professional-learning activity. The *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project, drawing on knowledge and expertise from teachers, academics, and pre-service teachers (past and present), aims to:

- Develop pre-service teachers' knowledge of and skills in collaborative school practice
- Provide scaffolding, strategies, and resources for engaging in collaborative practice
- Provide a bridge between university and school educators.

The program of professional learning will introduce pre-service teachers to both a theoretical and a lived experience of collaborative practice.

Our professional-learning program has five modules that are designed to immerse participants into a lived experience of collaborative practice (Table 11.1). Teachers and academics have worked together to conceptualise and map out the structure of the course and content of each module. The team (school-university-pre-service teacher) has an equal distribution of input into the development of module content, with partners having nominated areas to work on that fall within their expertise. We envisage a blended delivery of the course over an eight-month period. The course will sit within the university's learning-management system (LMS), online activities will be monitored by both teachers and academics, and face-to-face components will be completed in a school ILE. The *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice PLP is intended as an immersive experience during which participants explore their own pedagogical practice and learning characteristics in a hybridised third-space context where academic and in-practice knowledge conflate to generate reimagined ideas of what teaching in a secondary school can look like. A collaborative practice resource will be created and shared with the group to build a collaborative-practice toolkit. In the final module, participants will be asked to reflect on their practice and annotate their reflection for shifting perspectives over the course of the program. The program aims to equip pre-service teachers to engage more confidently in collaborative, co-teaching methods of practice. Participation in the professional-learning program should support pre-service teachers as they move into their teaching career.

Table 11.1 Overview of the *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice professional-learning program

Module	Outline
1. You, your knowledge and your skills	• Pedagogy audit • Learning-characteristics audit • Hybridised third spaces • Reflection (starter piece)
2. What is collaborative practice?	• What does the research report? • What do practitioners report: "Talking Heads" (in-school teachers) • What do pre-service teachers report: "Talking Heads" (ILE pre-service teachers, recently completed) • Annotated reflection
3. How can you collaborate?	• Student tips: What does effective collaborative practice look like from a student perspective? • Review pedagogy and learning characteristics audit • Hybridised third spaces • Annotated reflection
4. Build your toolkit	• Create and share a collaborative practice resource • Trial the resource • Hybridised third spaces • Annotated reflection
5. Looking back and looking forward	• Looking cack: Final reflection • Looking forward: Plan for collaborative practice next term or next year

11.5 Conclusion

ILEs open the possibility for a site that is both physically and metaphorically an educational place for innovation and collaboration. However, collaborative practice challenges the traditional mode of teaching that establishes one teacher in one classroom. We cannot expect pre-service teachers—or, indeed, in-service teachers—to be equipped to thrive in collaborative, shared spaces when the existing dominant mode of teaching is individualised and siloed. Our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project is a response to the need to upskill pre-service, new, and beginning teachers to work in shared, flexible learning spaces. Integral to our response is the reconceptualisation of a school-university partnership. The design and delivery of our program of professional learning is a collaborative endeavour at every stage of development. We are disrupting and reimagining the role and participation of educators and students at all levels. The conclusion of this chapter is the beginning of our *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice journey, in which academics and teachers are collaborating in practice to prepare pre-service teachers to flourish in modern, transdisciplinary, and flexible third spaces.

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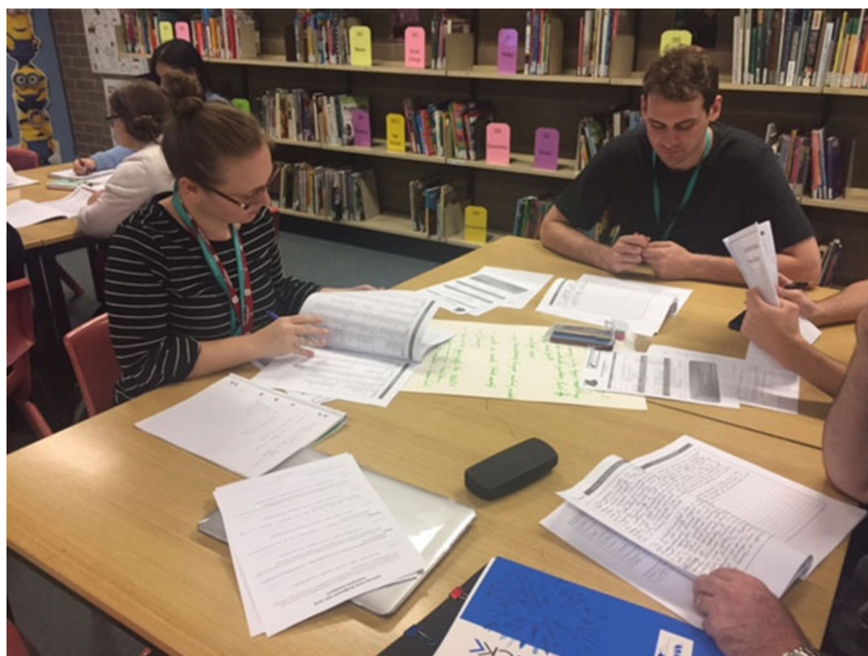
Chapter 12
The Importance of Data in Teaching and Learning

Jacqueline Humphries, Kay Carroll, and Jaison Varkey



Pre-service teachers at Data Immersion Experience

Abstract Understanding student data is an important dimension in teaching practice that is linked to improving learning outcomes in the classroom. Navigating and analysing student data on literacy and numeracy skills is an important tool for all

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_12

teachers in developing high-quality learning tasks and improvements. Specifically, data analysis and interpretation and the resulting modifications to teaching practice are important requirements of teaching excellence. Immersing and guiding pre-service teachers within school-based data- and evidence-driven teaching practices is a critical step in their development. This chapter considers how school-based data and evidence can inform pre-service teachers' professional knowledge and understanding of student learning. A case study of pre-service teachers' learning about school-based student data is presented within three Australian secondary schools. Implications for future pre-service teacher development in using school-based data are discussed.

Keywords Data literacy · Pre-service teachers · Data immersion · School-based student data · WIL-based data

12.1 Introduction

Effective teaching only happens when teachers know their students and are responsive to their needs. Using extensive assessment data can have a demonstratable impact on a teacher's understanding of learner needs. High-impact assessment data is collected daily within schools and at key points of cognitive and biological development using national standardised testing. Since the introduction of assessment-for-learning principles (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2010) in Australian schools, assessment has been considered fundamental in the teaching and learning cycle (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). More recently, the emergence of international testing such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and national testing in literacy and numeracy in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and science literacy with the Validation of Assessment for Learning and Individual Development (VALID), there is a plethora of high-quality assessment data for teachers to interpret and apply to their practice. Australian schools are awash with student learning data; to pre-service and early-career teachers this data can be overwhelming and opaque in its depth and volume.

Developing data awareness and analysis skills in pre-service teachers is an important deliverable in teacher education. The Australian Graduate Teaching Standards (Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2017) specify that at the graduate level, teachers know their students and how they learn so that the teachers can cater for diversity and differentiate the learning. To this a graduate teacher must be able to apply assessment practices, moderate, use consistent judgement in assessment, and engage in feedback and reporting processes. However, the school-based and national NAPLAN data and international PISA and TIMSS data that has emerged has not been immediately accessible to teacher-education programs, and is often hidden away behind the school gates; the restricted domain of the "real

teacher". To overcome these barriers, data-immersion professional learning within the school gates offers a unique, timely, and highly valuable experience for pre-service teachers. It is a necessary rite of passage for the pre-service teacher to gaze into the metrics, stare down the data, and come to comprehend the power of really understanding who the learner is and how teachers can move their learning further along the continuum.

12.2 Digging up the Data

Assessment can be defined as a fluid and continuous process that connects teaching to the learner. According to Moss et al. (2006), assessment is planned, enacted, and evaluated. The purpose of assessment is both formative and summative. Currently, policy discourse about closing the gap in student skill, achievement, or understanding has made data-gathering normative within schooling. Increasingly, global and national testing has concerned itself with benchmarking population cohorts in specific years of schooling in core skills such as literacy, numeracy, and, more recently, scientific literacy and problem-solving. Reflecting these international trends, national standardised testing has become ubiquitous within Australian schools. NAPLAN is an Australian test introduced in 2008 to document the literacy and numeracy skills of young Australian students in school years (grades) 3, 5, 7, and 9. It is a standards-based measure of a student's skills in numeracy, reading, writing, and language conventions. The progression of each individual student is mapped and traced at these critical milestones of different school years and reported on a single standards framework. Comparison with aggregated data from the same school cohort or other schools close by, or even across the state and nation, is also provided to give an indication of system-wide and national performance. According to the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2017), NAPLAN provides information about individual and system performance. The performativity aspect of NAPLAN is frequently controversial and well-publicised in the community. However, the data that NAPLAN provides to schools is often not well understood, and pre-service teachers are generally on the periphery of this scene.

This case study illuminates the careful work of teachers and shares these practices with pre-service teachers. The purpose of the case study is not so much to engage in the controversy and policy debates about NAPLAN, but to understand what data on numeracy and literacy such measures provide for individual students, and how it is used in schools as part of the daily practice of teaching and learning. This case study shows how digging up the data is exhaustive, meticulous, and methodical work conducted by skilled teachers, and can be a rich practice shared with pre-service teachers.

12.3 Data Immersion

The data immersion occurred across three secondary schools over a two-year period. This comprised cohorts of 30 pre-service teachers participating in a data-immersion experience at a secondary school and receiving professional learning about how each school uses data provided by NAPLAN to create student and class profiles of individual literacy and numeracy needs. The data-immersion days used de-identified and aggregated class samples to enable pre-service teachers to apply skills in reading and interpreting graphs, standards, and learner profiles using metrics and descriptive statements. Samples of school- and NAPLAN-developed literacy and numeracy tasks were deconstructed and analysed based on constructs of numeracy and literacy. Constructs of numeracy comprised exploring the relationship between students' demonstration of mathematical concepts across spatial, graphical, statistical, and algebraic domains and their responses to specific NAPLAN test items. Similarly, reading, writing, and language conventions were analysed as components of student literacy. Pre-service teachers interpreted students' responses to all three components and were guided to consider how each student could improve at sub-skills within these components.

The immersion was led by practising teachers and school leaders as part of a professional-learning exchange between proficient, highly accomplished, and pre-service teachers. This dialogue was a powerful pedagogical exchange within the profession and promoted the agency and professional identity of all participants. This model of professional learning was informed by the work of Timperley and Parr (2007) in New Zealand schools, where professional-development inquiry cycles were used to affect student learning. Within this model, the following principles were applied:

- The data shared was presented as useful and informative to the learning cycle;
- Pre-service teachers were given opportunities to develop sufficient knowledge about the meaning of assessment and how to modify assessments;
- School leaders shared professional conversations with pre-service teachers to unpack the data;
- Pre-service teachers were required to reflect on the data and develop stronger pedagogical knowledge of literacy and numeracy strategies; and
- The whole school was able to engage in evidence-informed cycles of inquiry to construct data knowledge (Timperley, 2008, p. 1).

This cycle of collaborative inquiry into evidence-based practices was a distinctive and successful feature of the immersion. Throughout the activities, pre-service teachers were guided to construct class learning profiles, observe literacy and numeracy activities in classrooms, debrief and reflect on these observations, and engage in the development of new or modified tasks to build specific literacy and numeracy skills in students. Other activities enabled pre-service teachers to engage in marking and moderation exercises using de-identified student samples, and to respond to assessment conversations with teachers and school leaders.

This case study collected qualitative comments about the perceived usefulness and professional relevance of the data-immersion experience from pre-service teachers. A cohort of 30 pre-service teachers were randomly assigned to one of the case-study schools for the immersion across key learning areas or teaching areas. Their feedback and comments about their perspectives of the experience were collected using open-ended survey questions and student feedback on a unit related to the data-immersion learning.

12.4 Results and Impacts

The data-immersion days offered pre-service teachers the opportunity to engage in rich pedagogical discussions and develop their perceived self-capacity to interpret aggregated data, apply constructs of numeracy and literacy to student responses, and analyse how differentiated learning can be developed further for specific learners. The hidden and nuanced skills of teachers and school leaders in using data about their students was revealed to pre-service teachers in ways that enabled conversation and promoted knowledge-sharing. The positioning of data, especially standardised and national sources, as useful and relevant to teaching practice disrupted discourses about performativity and anxiety with test taking. It provided an authentic context for exploring how assessment is used for teaching and learning. While the pre-service teachers could not master assessment and data analysis within the constraints of these experiences, they created spaces for the pre-service teachers to challenge their assumptions about assessment and standardised testing, and to understand how assessing student learning is part of daily practice within the classroom. Overall, it contributed to their perceptions about and stances on assessment and data practices in schools.

The following themes were identified in the case-study comments from pre-service teachers:

1. Increased understanding of NAPLAN tests and Smart Data, and how this data could be used at the school, faculty, classroom, and individual levels.
2. Improved confidence in analysing written responses and a stronger understanding of literacy.
3. Connections between classroom pedagogy and literacy and numeracy tasks.
4. Improved understanding of differentiation based on individual student data (Table 12.1).

Critical to these immersion experiences was the role of school leaders and experienced teachers in promoting the conditions where teachers talk data. This data talk is informed and guided by the need to know more, and understand better, how a student can improve. These conditions are powerful in making teachers willing to change their practice to achieve better outcomes. The participatory voice of teachers and school leaders is significant for improving the perceptions of pre-service teachers about data and assessment practices.

Table 12.1 Comments from pre-service teachers based on perceptions and experiences of the immersion

Perceived understanding of data-analysis tools and practices in classrooms
• Great use of strategies to identify marking criteria
• It was different to see NAPLAN in a positive light
• Was not aware of this application (only My School) to see student progress over years
• Seeing the relationship between NAPLAN test and SMART data was very helpful
• It was really good to see what the data looked like and discussing how it can be used was helpful
• Well presented. Teachers were great
Perceived improvements in assessment understanding and confidence with literacy strategies
• It was great to do as an aspiring English teacher
• Practice and examples helped significantly
• Some disparity in the mark given by myself and the official markers showed I gave more lenient marks
• Teachers' expertise was so helpful and profoundly insightful. This booklet with NAPLAN marking criteria is an incredible resource for pre-service teachers
• It was interesting hearing about how it works and very surprising
• Having a go at marking was fun and very informative
Perceived connections to classroom pedagogy and literacy and/or numeracy
• Great to see an English class in action
• Wasn't too practical in this aspect
• Teacher was able to modify her lesson to adjust for a class of few students
• Lesson did not allow to see senior literacy strategies in action
• While not a lot happened in the class, it was easy to see lots of strategies by the teacher, especially when helping the students one on one
Improved perception of understanding of differentiation
• Opened up possibility to scaffold and extend students at different learning levels
• Excellent opportunity to apply learned skills
• It is highly applicable, especially when I have my own class
• Some very good ideas were discussed in the group. Teacher helped in the literacy aspect of differentiation in a science class

12.5 Using Evidence-Based Teaching Practice Within Pre-Service Teacher Education

Evidence-based practices that include teachers in the dialogue and the direction of student learning are noted to improve school success (Wandersman, 2014). This approach has been aptly described as "empowerment evaluation". This form of data-driven teaching is effective, as it makes teachers think critically about the learner and inquire into their own practice. This model has been used to inform the model of immersion in schools as it relates to data understanding and interpretation. This has been situated as an inquiry into practice and perceptions of this experience, captured to consider how pre-service teachers can develop their pedagogic choices in applying data to their teaching. The pre-service teachers observed how data was extracted using school systems, applied to individual student learning progression

and shaped classroom practices and interventions. Pre-service teachers were exposed to the inquiry-led practices of accomplished teachers and school leaders in this case study.

Inquiry is a participatory discourse that enables teachers to make pedagogic choices and use both judgement and evidence (Timperley, 2011). Inquiry happens when teachers critically reflect on their practice, shared beliefs and theories, student understanding, and curricula, and intervene to change, redirect, or build greater coherence between all of these aspects of teaching. Inquiry brings disparate ideas together and situates them within the context and reality of a teacher's school. Inquiry is a form of participatory, noisy action that gives voice to teacher thinking and pedagogic choice. It allows for conceptually thick ideas and practices to be critiqued.

Pedagogic inquiry comprises open-ended, generative questions, rich tasks, collaboration, analysis and creation, and communication of and reflection on new ideas or understanding that solves problems or responds to substantive and significant questions. Inquiry is complex and situated in relevant, real-life contexts and problems. It involves making predictions, using evidence-based practices to discern and distil information, testing and evaluating conclusions, and communicating findings. It is cyclical and intellectually robust, and allows for a degree of autonomy, questioning, and reassembling of concepts (Maab & Artigue, 2013). It enables voice, develops critical thinking, and follows evidential practices for all teachers.

Successful inquiry within evidence-based teaching includes the following features:

- Collaboration and opportunities for discussions amongst teachers
- A consistent focus on teaching quality
- Use of assessment and student data to guide the learning
- Opportunities for creative problem adaptation (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006).

Additionally, when professional learning solves a local or contextual issue for schools and teachers, the solution and learning are more likely to be transferred and sustained. Mentoring and engaging with pre-service teachers in data-analysis conversations and scenarios was an important learning from this case study. The opportunity to build a community of practice in this case study was an important feature of successful professional learning that will inform pre-service teachers' identity as graduate teachers. The relational nature of professional learning and mentoring supports pre-service teacher development and allows for teachers to share their context, experiences, successes, and failures. The inquiry stance used at the data immersion facilitated pre-service teachers' perceptions of data analysis, and was observed to increase their confidence in applying literacy and numeracy strategies. Additionally, pre-service teachers in the case study were observed to have a stronger understanding and awareness of how to differentiate for learner needs. Central to this model of professional learning was the concept that the pre-service teacher is both a learner and an actor within a school setting.

12.6 Lessons for Future Practice

Immersing pre-service teachers in data analysis and evidence-based practices within schools is an innovative opportunity for praxis in teacher education. It provides pre-service teachers with a lens to see student, class, and school learning needs and adapt, differentiate, and modify their practice. Pre-service teachers can imbibe the data, lean in without risk of failure, and understand how effective teaching is predicated on knowing their students and how they learn. It provides an authentic context and purposeful inquiry into student learning. Using high-impact assessment data challenges pre-service teachers' prior assumptions and policy discourse of performativity in standardised testing, as it requires critical and careful deconstruction of the evidence of learning. The immersion within the professional spaces that teachers and school leaders inhabit inducts the new teacher into the profession and creates opportunities for their professional participation. Pre-service teachers in these spaces have a participatory voice and learn to grapple with live, messy, and complex data.

Despite the density and uniqueness of the data presented in NAPLAN, pre-service teachers in this case study were observed to have improved confidence about starting data conversations. These pre-service teachers through their comments demonstrated evidence of reflection about the value and usefulness of student-assessment data. These perceptions of data practice were built on an inquiry stance practised by teachers in an authentic context. The lessons from this case study are real and build pre-service teachers' openness to using an inquiry stance to gather data and apply it within the future. Thus, using inquiry-based approaches grounded within the school gates that encourage dialogue and pedagogic unpacking between school leaders and pre-service teachers could inform future models of teacher education.

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Chapter 13
Supporting Remote and Rural Pre-service Teachers on WIL Placement Using Video Technology: Relationships, Confidence, Self-efficacy

Michelle J. Eady, Sophie Buchanan, and Bonnie A. Dean

Abstract Tasks requiring students to demonstrate understanding and knowledge of teaching practice are ubiquitous throughout initial teacher education programs. The requirement is largely due to the expectations that pre-service teachers are to cultivate skills that characterise effective teaching practice and meet accreditation expectations. Pre-service teachers demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills through work-integrated learning (WIL) placement opportunities. Many students choose to complete their WIL placement in a rural or remote location, commonly known as out-of-area (OOA) placements. However, while on OOA placements, many pre-service teachers can be left feeling isolated or unsupported and can lack confidence. Although educators are unlikely to physically attend the school to observe and support the pre-service teacher in person, many have turned to technologies to facilitate support and connect with their students. This chapter explores the experiences of 14 pre-service teachers who completed OOA WIL placements and their perceptions of impact and support through video technology. Findings suggest that partnerships between pre-service teachers, their university advisor, and the supporting classroom teacher are valuable for enhancing students' confidence and self-efficacy.

Keywords Preservice teachers · WIL placement · Practicum · Technology · Support · Professional skills · Initial teacher education

13.1 Introduction

As technology continues to advance and influence the world of work, teacher educators are provided with more flexibility and capabilities to meet with pre-service teachers who undertake work-integrated learning (WIL) placements in remote and rural locations. This approach has been a time- and cost-saving benefit to universities (Xing & Marwala, 2017) and has provided an opportunity for pre-service teachers to receive immediate feedback from their university liaison advisor. In the past,

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_13

connecting with students in a remote or rural location has proven to be difficult to coordinate. There is an opportunity to use available technologies in creative ways, although many academics fall short of accessing the potential that these technologies can bring. While technology provides convenience and flexibility, there remain questions about whether authentic learning environments and online professional relationships can be fostered, nurtured, and sustained through synchronous technologies. Often educators relate comfortably with an "if it's not broken, don't fix it" mentality, leaving the worth of using technology to support students in this way an open question. There are also misconceptions and questions about the benefit of virtually meeting with students to replace the long-accepted practice of making a phone call to check in on students' progress on their placements.

Teacher educators encourage pre-service teachers to reflect and connect pedagogical theory learned in the university setting with classroom practice, honing their skills in an authentic environment while under guidance from an experienced classroom teacher. This chapter considers how these newfound skills and understandings can be consolidated through the support of the university advisor using online technologies. We are particularly interested in how these technologies can enable more-effective support for students who have travelled away from their home for a regional or remote professional experience (PEx) WIL placement, also known as an out-of area (OOA) placement. OOA placements are those outside of the university jurisdiction, traditionally with a travel time of longer than one hour from the student's residence. This study allowed us to better understand the role of video technologies for supporting students in OOA placements. The aim of this chapter is to explore whether aligning school-based initiatives carefully with the support of a spectrum of everyday technologies can enhance the teaching and learning experiences for pre-service teachers.

13.2 Literature Review

There are many pathways to becoming a qualified teacher in Australia. Besides the direct entry into a teaching program on completion of high school, there are opportunities to participate in bridging courses, or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) (otherwise known in international settings as junior college or polytech) courses that can assist in obtaining entry into a university degree in teacher education (State of New South Wales [Department of Education], 2019). In Australia, formal school systems have been in existence for over 200 years, with primary schools catering to children from kindergarten to year 6 (5–12 years of age) and secondary schools catering to students in years 7–12 (13–18 years of age) (Aussie Educator, 2020). In undergraduate education degree programs in Australia, students complete 80 days of PEx over the course of the four years of their degree (New South Wales Education Standards Authority, 2017). The responsibilities of the pre-service teachers to participate in these placements often begin in their second year of study and are observational in nature: taking notes about their day and watching the

teacher conduct a variety of lessons. As the pre-service teachers progress through their degree, the placements become longer, and what is expected from the pre-service teachers increases. While not all universities in Australia have internships in their final year of study, at the University of Wollongong (UOW), for example, pre-service teachers' responsibilities increase from the first WIL placement to the final internship. This is the longest amount of time spent on placement (between six and 10 weeks), where the pre-service teachers are required to complete 80 days of WIL placements (Hoskyn et al., 2020), with 50–60% of that time spent teaching in the classroom (NESA, 2017).

Pre-service teachers are offered the opportunity to decide whether they want to complete their placement in an OOA setting at various times during their degree. Encouraging pre-service and primary school educators to teach in rural areas is an ongoing challenge (Halsey, 2018; Hudson & Hudson, 2008; White & Reid, 2008). Unfortunately, this problem has been going on "for decades" (Hudson & Hudson, 2008, p. 67), as students prefer metropolitan and coastal regions in Australia (White & Reid, 2008). To solve this issue, universities and governments have worked together to demonstrate the benefits that pre-service teachers can receive working and living in rural and remote communities through participating in a placement in these areas. Providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore teaching in remote and rural locations can lead to:

1. Opportunities that can positively affect their the employability skills by giving them a variety of experiences in these locations.
2. Lessening the employment deficit in remote and rural locations by encouraging WIL placements that can lead to more graduates choosing employment in these areas.

Newly graduated primary school educators who take a PEx placement or a first teaching job in rural areas have a number of attributes that are enhanced relative to their predecessors. These attributes include quality of teaching (Hudson & Hudson, (2019), understanding of rural and remote locations (Deetlefs et al., 2021), exposure to diverse cultural values (White & Kline, 2012), and improvement in their capacity to create quality relationships with students (Herbert, 2020). In one study, Hudson and Hudson (2008) explored pre-service teachers who had participated in rural placements and the benefits they had received. They found that by immersing themselves in unfamiliar educational environments, pre-service teachers had the opportunity to learn the values of a new educational environment and community. This immersion assisted them to build their confidence as teachers and provided them with the ability to establish their own professional teaching philosophy and identity (Hudson & Hudson, 2008). Similarly, Beutel et al. (2011) documented reflections of pre-service teachers who spent time in rural areas. Their study, which focussed on how educators collaborate, also mentioned an increase in the PSTs ability to develop their professional identity.

Teachers who choose remote and rural teaching display qualities that align directly with the Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) (New South Wales [NSW] Department

of Education and Training [DET], 2008). The QTF is a NSW document that is incorporated into all teaching and learning programs to enhance quality education for all, with specific dimensions and elements educators and policy-makers can use to enhance and evaluate programs (NSW DET, 2008). Specifically, teaching in remote and rural locations provides both supervising classroom teachers and pre-service teachers a sense of connectedness, opportunities to learn cultural knowledge, and experiences to integrate that knowledge into authentic situations. This also intertwines with the other two dimensions of the QTF: quality learning environment and intellectual quality. According to Howley and Howley (2005), rural environments can be the most beneficial way to develop quality teachers, through the connections they make in generally smaller school communities. This involves pre-service teachers collaborating with one another to improve their daily practices and instruction. In turn, this type of networking in schools can strengthen the quality of teachers in their pre-service years, as it allows for reflection and first-hand observation of different strategies that they must apply (Howley & Howley, 2005). Seeing these student and teacher reflections alongside the QTF emphasises the connections among rural opportunities, quality teaching enhancement, and professional growth.

The university also plays a critical role in promoting rural areas through the advertisement of PEx opportunities for students as part of their practicums (Beutel et al., 2011). Universities have created networks that take advantage of rural teaching experiences to encourage more students to teach in these areas (Deetlefs et al., 2021; Trinidad et al., 2014). It is imperative that universities continue to provide remote and rural opportunities for pre-service teachers. These experiences help graduates make informed decisions about teaching in rural and remote areas and understand how doing so can affect their professional identities and futures (Kelly & Fogarty, 2015; Trinidad et al., 2014).

Formal studies have been completed in an attempt to increase pre-service teachers' participation in rural and remote placements (Deetlefs et al., 2021). A challenge for the students who undertake rural and remote placements is the requirement to reside and travel far from their home (Herbert, 2020). Lane et al. (2020) discuss that pre-service teachers will often feel levels of social isolation that hinder their WIL placement experience; however, once immersing themselves in the experience they discover many benefits. Furthermore, the authors suggest that keeping students better informed of the challenges of remote placements assists with the management of those challenges and how to overcome them.

Higher-education institutions have a responsibility to allocate staff members (university advisors) to mentor students on placements and provide assurance, support, and advice when needed (Rogers, 2021). Higher-education institutions encourage students to co-locate to remote and rural areas for peer-support and belongingness, and to have another peer with whom to discuss challenges (Held et al., 2019). Keeping students connected throughout an OOA placement is important for the sustainability of the placement. One possible way of keeping OOA pre-service teachers connected is through the use of social media. A recent study reported their findings on using social media to keep students connected, supported, and informed using a subject-specific Facebook group (Green et al., 2020). The purpose of this

chapter was to evaluate the students' experiences of being mentored in an online setting and the partnership between the university advisor, classroom teacher, and pre-service teacher.

13.3 Research Design

The epistemological lens for this study, social constructivism, provided a perspective for the researchers to investigate how the pre-service teachers constructed knowledge from their experiences and online support. At the University of Wollongong, WIL placements for primary school pre-service teachers are staggered throughout their four-year degree of study. Pre-service teachers who commence their second year of the degree are required to fulfil the requirement of spending three full weeks in a WIL placement at a primary school. In the second year of study, students are offered the opportunity to apply to participate in an OOA WIL placement that will occur in a remote or rural location. The schools considered to be OOA are located outside of the university's local government area but have contacted the university with an interest in having a pre-service teacher at their school. In some instances, students may have family or friends who reside in these remote and rural areas. In these cases, the university can reach out to schools in the area to inquire about their willingness to have a pre-service teacher. This results in finding the student a placement that aligns with their available accommodation with family.

During OOA placements there were opportunities for check-in sessions with the supervising classroom teacher, pre-service teacher, and university advisor all present in the online environment. The technology employed has evolved over time; Skype and Zoom have both been used for this purpose, as well as the Connected Classroom equipment available in all NSW public schools. As each of the placements in the degree are connected to a pedagogy subject, these students were required, as part of their course work, to prepare a professional learning plan in preparation for their placement. In this assessment task, the students reflected on their recent teaching practice and previously acquired teaching reports, and engaged in feedback and discussions with a classmate as well as their previous supervising classroom teacher. This combined information assisted each pre-service teacher in creating a personal professional-learning plan with goals to attain in their upcoming WIL placements.

In this study, 14 primary school pre-service teachers who had chosen to complete their WIL placements in remote or rural locations volunteered to participate. A case-study methodology was chosen as it provides the opportunity to explore existing practices in a "case" to inform current practice and illuminate discoveries to others practising in similar ways (Corcoran et al., 2004). Individual interviews were conducted in an effort to understand the different experiences of the pre-service teachers. Ethics approval was obtained for this study through the Human Research Ethics Committee (2011/401). In total, each student participated in two interviews: one at the halfway point of the three-week placement and the other after the pre-service teachers had completed their final week of the professional WIL placement. Each interview (28

in total) was audio recorded and transcribed. The research questions for this study included: How can the university support pre-service teachers in their choice of participating in a remote or rural practicum placement? And how can pre-service teachers use their professional learning goals while on their WIL professional placement?

The interviews were administered as semi-structured and used the following questions as a guide:

1. How was this placement different (if at all) to other placements that you have experienced?
2. Were there any time constraints with using the live-time technology? If so, what?
3. How supported did you feel by your university liaison advisor?
4. Would you recommend an OOA placement? If so, why?
5. How does the distance model of liaison lecturer support compare to previous professional experience WIL placements experiences?
6. Please provide details of how a liaison lecturer could better support you when you are on an out-of-area professional-experience WIL placement.
7. How did you use your learning goals while on your professional-experience WIL placement?

Thematic analysis was used to identify emerging themes and categories based on an inductive approach (Braun & Clark, 2006). Member-checking was used to ensure the credibility and rigour of the emerging themes.

13.4 Results

This study allowed us to see the way in which students were able to use their professional learning goals while on their OOA WIL placement, and how the university supported them in their choice to participate in a remote or rural placement. Themes that arose from the data included confidence-building, benefits of connecting and building professional relationships, and, as a result, the shift in self-efficacy of the pre-service teachers in their ability to complete tasks and successfully fulfil the requirements of their OOA placement.

13.4.1 Confidence-Building

Much of the data discussed the notion of confidence-building, and the effectiveness of the OOA placement on the pre-service teachers' personal professional development. Students were able to discuss these things with not only their university advisor, but the attending classroom teacher in the online space; these discussions often led to a change in the pre-service teachers' practice in the classroom. Several students showed an increase in confidence in their skills:

I had a look and I had set four main goals and a couple of them were pretty really simple ones. Like, for example, the first one was to ensure that I was in front of the class, and I had all students in my view all the time. So that was one that was pretty easy, that I made sure that I implemented. And then the other ones were really more focused on behaviour management, which I feel that I definitely focused more on, on this particular prac, and, you know, I just seem to do a lot better with that this prac than I did last time (P2).

I feel more evolved as a teacher in my practice because I've now looked back at something that I wasn't so good at, and I do now feel that I'm a little bit better at it (P2).

13.4.2 The Benefits of Connecting and Building Professional Relationships

Another theme from the data was the change in the level of communication from previous WIL experiences to the current experience. As OOA placements are generally too far for the university to travel, the use of video technology was a useful integration to continue to support the students and build partnerships between the student, the classroom supervising teacher, and the university.

I had a pretty tough day today and so I spoke to Michelle. So I had my meeting with her and I think that just kind of made me realise, like, wow, this is hard I think because we're halfway through and I am just exhausted. But it was helpful to be able to talk to someone from the university and gain that support from an expert (P12).

It was a very positive experience and was good seeing the advisor establishing the three-way relationship (P3).

I think the most exciting part was the relationship building. It was very personal, with instant feedback, and openly supportive. She immediately builds this good rapport with my mentor teacher and [me] (P5).

The university liaison mentor was very hands-on even in an online setting, which I didn't think was possible, and was different to other advisors. I felt very supported (P6).

[Our teacher] was really supportive and helped me after a tough day of teaching with strategies [for] moving forward in the classroom (P7).

There was an overwhelming response to the support gained from the university advisors using video conferencing to liaise with the pre-service teachers, and their supervising classroom teachers.

13.4.3 The Shift in Students' Self-efficacy Regarding Their Ability to Complete Tasks

The final theme emerging from the data revealed a shift in the students' self-efficacy from the first interview to the second. Pre-service teachers reported that their self-efficacy with regard to both assessment tasks and practical teaching skills during their remote or rural WIL placement was increasing.

In the first interview, for example, a student expressed concerns over completing their WIL placement in a remote and rural area, whether they would overcome their worries about issues like isolation and lack of skills for classroom management, and how the supervising classroom teacher and university liaison advisor could work together to support them.

> *I am not sure if I did it right in the first place (P1).*

> *I've been trying to implement some of the goals that I have, just, like, without specifically following it. I don't know. I just don't think I am used to it all, I guess (P11).*

> *It is hard to know what I can improve on for the next one [lesson] and what strategies can I do (P9).*

The second interview showed a positive shift in the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, which was attributed to the relationships fostered through the online environment between the pre-service teacher, the supervising classroom teacher, and the university advisor.

> *A lot of my goals were relating to assessment and teaching and curriculum. There were no behavioural problems in my class so all I did was teach, which was really good. I felt like I gained so much more on this prac (P1).*

> *I think I've been able to have more control over the classroom and be able to manage them better, and when they're off task I've been able to redirect them since [receiving] the feedback from my advisor and mentor teacher (P11).*

> *I did a lot of reflection after, and I found that really good (P9).*

As the statements from the three pre-service teachers show, these students had a positive shift in their mindset and their self-efficacy regarding their ability to teach.

13.5 Discussion and Recommendations

Confidence-building

It was evident from the results that the pre-service teachers had an increased level of confidence from the beginning of their placement to the end. With the combination of specific learning goals, as well as the live video support received from the university advisor, and social media, the pre-service teachers were able to feel comfortable in the meetings, gauge their development, combat issues, and ask for advice. In a

study completed by Hudson and Hudson (2019), students who completed a rural or remote placement had similar experiences and showed an overall increased level of confidence in their teaching ability. The findings in this study align with existing findings that OOA placements provide an opportunity to develop employability skills (Adie & Barton, 2012; Deetlefs et al., 2021; Herbert, 2020; Hudson and Hudson 2019; White & Kline, 2012).

The benefits of connecting and building professional relationships

As Rogers (2021) discusses, students benefit from their higher-education institution providing support and guidance throughout their placement. Similarly, the pre-service teachers in our study benefitted from these mentoring traits even when video technology was used. This was a significant theme in the interviews, as they disclosed that after a difficult day, all they had to do was connect and send a message to the university advisor to have a meeting and discuss their day. It was helpful to ensure an open-door policy in the form of a Zoom meeting with their advisor; this allowed them to take comfort in knowing that they were being taken care of. The social-media page was also important, as they could connect with one another, as the thought of having a buddy has been shown to be an incentive for those pre-service teachers considering rural or remote placements (Francis-Cracknell et al., 2017; Held et al., 2019).

The shift in self-efficacy of students in ability to complete tasks

Retention rates in the education workforce may be positively affected by ensuring that graduates leave the higher-education institution with a level of self-efficacy that prepares them to enter the classroom (Colson et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2016). Self-efficacy has been seen to be a sought-after graduate quality, and some ITE programs have attempted to identify the dispositions needed to succeed as teachers in educational settings (Colson et al., 2017). The pre-service teacheres in this study were able to shift their professional state of mind and came to believe in their own capacity to teach, and they felt confident to share their challenges and successes with a supportive group of peers, their supervising classroom teacher, and the university advisor.

Using technology is not just a convenience. It can also be a mechanism for pre-service teachers to make connections, build relationships, and foster change in their self-belief (Green et al., 2020). The findings of this study suggest that the pre-service teachers in this study did not have these relationships in previous placement experiences. They reported that having this support was surprisingly pleasant. The positive synergy a pre-service teacher, supervising classroom teacher, and university liaison advisor made a difference to the pre-service teachers through collaborative support, fostered relationships, the building of confidence, and increased self-efficacy.

13.6 Recommendations

As a result of this case study and in alignment with the supporting literature, we recommend a series of strategies to bolster relationship-building mediated through online video technology to support pre-service teachers in remote and rural placements. These recommendations serve to enhance university support and we welcome their use by other higher-education institutions when considering how to best support pre-service teachers in OOA placements.

1. Meet the pre-service teachers before they depart for their remote or rural placement. It is important to introduce yourself and allow them to see that you are here for their success, and to begin initial conversation. If they have already spoken to you, they will be more likely to reach out when they need advice or assistance.
2. Review the expectations of the placement. Sharing your own field experience with the pre-service teachers will not eliminate, but can alleviate, potential worries or concerns they have prior to their placement.
3. Schedule regular online meetings between the university liaison advisor, the supervising classroom teacher, and the pre-service teachers before they depart for their placement. An online scheduling tool such as Sign Up Genius, for example, is an easy and accessible method for scheduling meeting times. This not only benefits the academics in organising their student allocations, but also helps the pre-service teachers and provides them a time frame to prepare for their meeting.
4. Use a social media platform to support your pre-service teachers. Using a platform that most already have, such as Facebook, allows for peer learning, is reassuring, and lessens feelings of isolation. Studies have shown the benefits of using social media as a means to connect with others in a positive way in higher education (Green et al., 2020).
5. Take time to build relationships with both the pre-service teacher and the supervising classroom teacher.—Relationship-building benefits all parties involved. Ensure that the student and classroom teacher are aware that the university is there to support them whenever they may need assistance. This relationship-building can also encourage the supervising classroom teacher to volunteer as a supervisor for more pre-service teachers in the future and builds a partnership between the school and university.
6. Encourage the pre-service teachers with whom you are working to take risks. In a profession such as teaching, it is important to take risks and teach outside your comfort zone to maximise benefits and confidence. Encouraging pre-service teachers to take these risks will not only increase their understanding of the profession, but bolster their confidence moving forward.
7. Praise your pre-service teachers for their efforts on placement. It is a huge risk for a pre-service teachers to decide to complete their placement in remote or rural areas. They need to be acknowledged for the extra mile that they have gone and their willingness to take risks to try something different as an educator.

13.7 Conclusion

Supporting pre-service teachers while in remote and rural areas will influence the perceived experiences and effectiveness of skill acquisition and confidence while participating in OOA placements (Deetlefs et al., 2021). This case study has shown how pre-service teachers initially feel isolated and disconnected from their peers and university lecturers, as well as, in some cases, from their family and friends. The university educator must employ purposeful interventions and strategies to ensure that students feel more connected to the institution and one another. It is our job as educators to help our pre-service teachers to feel confident in their own abilities. Our goal is for our graduates to not only fulfil the requirements of their degree, but to move on from the institution with a level of self-efficacy that enables them to conduct themselves at the highest professional level (Swan et al., 2011).

Ultimately, OOA placements are a rewarding and encouraging step for future generations of teachers, and it is important to use the equipment and resources that we have at our disposal to support pre-service teachers in preparation for their future careers. As university educators, we must remember to build confidence, create and maintain professional relationships, and help our pre-service teachers realise that they are capable of being the type of educator that they have always wanted to be.

Acknowledgements The authors would like to thank the pre-service teachers who agreed to participate in this study. Your insights were invaluable. We would also like to acknowledge the time and commitment that the dedicated OOA supervising teachers give to students on OOA placement. We would also like to thank Dr Mark Fraser and PhD candidate Holly Capocchiano for their contributions to this piece.

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Chapter 14
Online Professional Experience: Video as a Medium for Observing and Critiquing Classroom Practice

Joanna Anderson, Timothy Bartlett-Taylor, and Genevieve Thraves

Abstract Initial teacher education is designed to guide students through the theories and practices of teaching, with the objective of graduating classroom-ready teachers. The past 15 years have seen an increasing number of students in Australia gaining their education degrees through studying online, a mode that is effective in preparing teachers for today's classrooms. ITE students spend time on professional experience (PEx) placements across their program of study. Many initial teacher education degrees commence PEx placements with students spending time in a school to observe classroom and teaching practice. This has been the process for many years, and while it is common, there are questions about the value for ITE students of beginning their PEx placements by completing observations in classrooms, when they may not have the experience to understand and reflect upon what they are observing. In 2016, as part of the initial NSW PEx Hub initiative, a new approach to observation PEx was proposed by the University of New England and their partner schools, in the form of an Online Demonstration School. This chapter presents a narrative account of the implementation of the Online Demonstration School, from the perspectives of the professional and academic staff involved. We set the context for this initiative within the complexities of PEx, review some of the current literature, highlight the ongoing challenges the project has faced, reflect upon outcomes, and end with a discussion of the way forward.

Keywords Initial teacher education · Professional experience · Online professional experience · Demonstration school

14.1 Introduction

Initial teacher education is designed to guide students through the theories and practices of teaching, with the objective of graduating classroom-ready teachers. In the past 15 years, increasing numbers of students in Australia have been gaining their

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_14

education degrees through studying online (AITSL, 2018). In 2019, a quarter of all initial teacher education students started their education degrees enrolled in some form of online study, a marked increase from only 10% of students studying in this way in 2010 (AITSL, 2019). There are a number of factors to which this increase can be attributed, including convenience, flexibility, and access (Pelliccione et al., 2019). In words, online study affords opportunities to cohorts who once may have faced barriers to higher education; thus students from diverse backgrounds are enrolling in greater numbers than ever before (Pelliccione et al., 2019). Emerging data suggests that while attrition rates are higher for students studying online, those who complete their education degrees are performing well (Pelliccione et al., 2019), and, from the small body of work to date, there is evidence to suggest that "mode of attendance is not an integral factor in graduate quality" (AITSL, 2018, p. 12). A recent systematic review into online ITE degrees found a growing evidence base for "the effectiveness of online ITE in preparing teachers", for the classrooms of today (Dyment & Downing, 2020, p. 329).

During their study, ITE students spend time on professional experience (PEx) placements: allocated days working in schools with supervising teachers and school leaders, to refine and enhance the application of key concepts learned at university. Placements provide an opportunity for students to make connections between theory and teaching practice, through experience, mentoring, reflective professional conversations, and feedback (Hall et al., 2018). Many ITE degrees commence PEx placements with students spending time in a school to observe classroom and teaching practice. The aim is to support students to experience the classroom as a "teacher", often for the first time. After an allocated period of observation, ITE students begin to take responsibility for teaching, working towards independent practice with guidance from their supervising teacher. This has been the process for many years, and while it is common, there are questions about the value for ITE students of beginning their PEx placements by completing observations in classrooms, when they may not have the experience to understand and reflect on what they are observing (Green et al., 2018).

In 2016, as part of the initial NSW PEx Hub initiative, a new approach to observation PEx was proposed by the University of New England and their partner schools, in the form of an Online Demonstration School. The concept of the demonstration school is not new. In 1928, NSW opened the first "Demonstration Schools" (DoE, 2020a): schools that had been selected for excellence with the objective of creating an environment for ITE students to observe the practice of good teaching (Loughland, 2012). In the twenty-first century, the concept of the demonstration school has been taken online, allowing students to observe, reflect on, and critique teaching practice in the classroom, from multiple viewpoints. The capacity for carefully planned observation facilitates opportunities for ITE lecturers to teach the art of observation, and endeavours to narrow the knowledge gap between educational theory and teaching practice.

This chapter presents a narrative account of the implementation of an Online Demonstration School at a regional university in NSW, from the perspectives of the professional and academic staff involved. We set the context for this initiative within

the complexities of PEx, review some of the current literature, highlight the ongoing challenges the project has faced, reflect upon outcomes, and end with a discussion of the way forward.

14.2 Common Challenges of Professional Experience

ITE students generally commence their PEx placements by observing classroom practice with a supervising teacher, gradually progressing to full responsibility for a classroom (Bacharach et al., 2010). Numerous reviews into initial teacher education (for example, see DESE, 2021; DoE, 2000) have highlighted that this PEx is core to the preparation of students for the teaching profession. Traditionally, PEx situates students within schools where, under the supervision of an experienced teacher, they are guided and supported towards effective classroom teaching practices and a deeper understanding of the profession. While the importance of PEx is well documented and understood, common challenges emerge from the literature that identify the complex nature of the enactment of effective school experience via observation.

The university involved in the development of the Online Demonstration School had, in the years preceding the project, experienced challenges with finding observation placements in schools, due to a reluctance to take students for short placements. As a result, many students found themselves completing their first observation placement and their second placement, which involved teaching, concurrently, leading to expectations of "micro-teaching" episodes in which ITE students taught a portion of the lesson, often to a small group of students (Kilic, 2010), for which they were not prepared. This exacerbated another common problem in ITE PEx: a limited pool of teachers to supervise students, meaning that initial teacher education teachers are generally only exposed to a small number of teaching exemplars from which to build their practice. This is problematic (Zeichner, 2010), as due to their neophyte status their experience of teaching practice is already limited.

When students commence their initial observation placements, which are usually completed in the first year of an initial teacher education degree, they have limited knowledge of educational theory and little or no classroom experience. In addition, classroom placements are guided by what supervising teachers consider necessary preparation for entering the teaching profession, and this can potentially create a disconnect between what is taught at university and what is experienced in schools. During the observation placement, students may receive very little guidance as to the *what* and the *why* of classroom observation, as they engage as passive attendees in the classroom (Zeichner, 2010). Consequently, initial teacher education students have limited capacity to know what to notice in the classroom, and how to interpret, understand, reflect upon, and critique teaching practice. This may present a barrier to initial teacher education students making links between what they have engaged with in their coursework, and what is happening in the classroom. Teaching initial teacher education students how to both *notice* and *reflect* on what they are noticing could go some way to bridging the theory/practice divide.

14.3 *Noticing* and *Reflecting* as Practices to Bridge the Theory/Practice Divide

The theory/practice divide in initial teacher education has been critiqued by researchers for many years (Seidel et al., 2013), and is an issue that universities have struggled to navigate. Educational theory taught at university may not align with the practices being used in school settings (McGarr et al., 2017), yet the ability to make connections between educational theory and teaching practice is critical for initial teacher education students to move successfully into the classroom. The review *Action Now, Classroom Ready Teachers—Report* (TEMAG, 2014, p. x) articulates this point strongly:

> Theory and practice in initial teacher education must be inseparable and mutually reinforced in all program components. Pre-service teachers need to develop a thorough knowledge of the content they will teach, and a solid understanding of teaching practices that are proven to make a difference to student learning.

Carefully constructed and coordinated approaches that connect educational theory and professional experience are more effective in preparing future teachers than when these two aspects of initial teacher education are considered as separate entities (Le Cornu, 2015). *Noticing* and *reflecting* afford an opportunity to explore the nexus of theory and practice.

Mason (2002) describes the act of *noticing* as:

> …what we do when we watch someone else acting professionally (teaching a lesson, working with a client, leading a workshop, delivering a lecture or training session) and become aware of something that they do (a task they set, a pattern of speech they employ, a gesture they use, a question they ask) which we think we could use ourselves…. (p. 30).

Noticing is a skill (Rooney & Boud, 2019) that initial teacher education students should be taught before they go on PEx placements, through purposefully designed programs. Without this, students may not know what they should be noticing in the classroom, nor why they should be noticing it. Moreover, noticing alone is not enough. Initial teacher education students need time to reflect on what they have noticed to integrate educational theory with teaching practice (Brookfield, 2017). Reflective practice promotes inquiry and helps them to build a "toolbox" of strategies, creating opportunities to influence student engagement and learning through informed decision-making (Brookfield, 2017; DoE, 2020b). Like noticing, reflection should be taught within initial teacher education programs, where opportunities to practice reflection in a structured and safe way are given to students before they enter the classroom (Adoniou, 2013; Green et al., 2018).

Video technology can be used to support initial teacher education students in knowing how and what to notice in classroom interactions, and to develop new ways of looking at and reflecting on teaching practice and its relationship to educational theory. Video can be used to create a resource that demonstrates, in real time, what teachers notice during the delivery of their lessons (Luna et al., 2009, p. 1); this affords initial teacher education students the opportunity to engage more slowly

with what they are observing in relation to the teaching that is occurring on screen, strengthening connections between theory and practice.

14.4 The Online Demonstration School: Using Video as an Alternative to Observation Practicum Placements

At the University of New England, NSW, Australia, a video-based Online Demonstration School was conceptualised, designed, and developed for use as an alternative to the first in-school observation PEx. The initial 20-day in-school observation placement was changed to a 10-day equivalent online placement. This targeted approach to observation meant that the 10 extra professional-experience days could be relocated to a subsequent PEx, where the focus would be on teaching. It is important to note here that the videos used within the Online Demonstration School are videos of authentic teacher practice, teaching real classes in real time. Principles underpinning the Online Demonstration School are aligned with those promoted by Rich and Hannafin (2009) and Seidel et al. (2013). These authors argue that video as a medium for bridging the theory/practice divide in initial teacher education is not effective if used in isolation. However, when videos are embedded in an appropriate learning context with clear objectives, supported by an experienced educator, they become an effective teaching tool. There are two ways in which videos can promote understanding of teaching practice within the theory context (Seidel et al., 2013). First is the *rule-example* approach, where the intention is to illustrate rules and how they are applied within the classroom context. The second is the *example-rule* approach, where classroom practice is viewed as the basis upon which rules are derived. The *rule-example* approach has been found effective in enhancing learning of factual knowledge and how that might be applied, while the *example-rule* approach promotes the use of knowledge and understanding to identify challenges and critique classroom practice (Seidel et al., 2013).

14.5 Creation of an Online Demonstration School

The conceptualisation and development of the Online Demonstration School took time, and many different facets of the project required careful consideration, from the filming to privacy and security issues, to the use of the videos within initial teacher education units, and finally to the way project outcomes would be assessed.

14.5.1 Filming

Teachers working within partnership schools were invited to participate in the creation of videos for the Online Demonstration School. Interested teachers worked with staff from UNE's Office of Professional Learning to develop a lesson plan, provide information to set the context for the lesson (such as learning outcomes, time of day, groupings of students, and other information pertinent to the planning of the lesson), and put together a bank of relevant resources. Teachers participated in a recorded discussion about their cohort of students, context for the lesson, and the lesson plan itself, before the actual lesson was filmed. Upon completion of the lesson, teachers took part in a reflective interview to discuss their thoughts on what worked well and what did not. Filmed lessons were edited to reduce any non-active teaching time such as times of silent reading. This process led to the production of four videos per lesson:

1. Lesson introduction
2. Lesson (raw footage)
3. Lesson (edited footage)
4. Lesson reflection.

The decision to produce these four different videos, each centred on the same lesson, was made to afford flexibility and scope in the way the video could be used by academics. To further ensure the capacity for breadth of observational opportunities, lessons were filmed across both primary and secondary school settings and included the teaching of a variety topics across different learning areas. Examples of lessons include:

- Stage 6 science lesson
- Guided reading lesson
- Early Stage 1 English lesson
- Stage 4 history lesson
- Multi-stage mathematics lesson.

This variety in lesson stage and type was imperative to ensure that all initial teacher education students, from those interested in the early years to those hoping to teach students in the final years of school, could engage with and observe teaching practice that was situated within their contexts of interest. It also provided a broad understanding of the continuum of teaching across the years of schooling.

14.5.2 Scope

Videoing in schools presents several challenges, none more significant than privacy for the students, as well as for the teachers and other school staff involved in the filming. Consequently, strict rules were applied to ensure that the video content used

Table 14.1 Scope of video use

Video use within scope	Video use out of scope
As part of unit content for initial teacher education degrees at the University of New England	Any use of the videos in ways other than that agreed upon by the school principal, and the teachers and students involved in the filming
As part of professional learning offered by the University of New England to schools within the educational jurisdiction in which the filming occurred	Use of the videos outside of the educational jurisdiction in which the filming occurred (unless agreed to in writing by all involved parties)

in the Online Demonstration School met ethical requirements as stipulated by the New South Wales Department of Education (NSW DoE). Rigorous inclusion and exclusion rules were applied to all filming scenarios, as outlined below.

Inclusions

- Willing teachers, with approval from the school principal
- Students with parental consent
- Classes where filming could occur with minimal disruption to normal lessons.

Exclusions

- Staff unwilling to participate
- Students without parental consent
- Classes where filming could cause disruption to normal lessons.

Rules were also applied to the use of the videos after production (Table 14.1).

It was made clear to all participating teachers that they had the right to withdraw consent to the use of any or all the video footage taken in their classrooms at any stage of production, and also over the ensuing period of the videos' use. Students and their guardians were also afforded the same withdrawal rights. Teachers who participated in the filming, including in the pre- and post-video discussions, received remittance through recognition of the process as professional learning that could be used as evidence of professional growth for maintenance of accreditation.

14.5.3 Privacy and Security

The production of videos for the Online Demonstration School involved the collection of personal information from participating staff and students, and included visual images, audio, and personal details on consent forms. Managing the private information of those involved was of utmost importance, and all obligations under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIP Act) were strictly applied. In acknowledgement of the sensitivity of collecting personal details from individuals under the age of 18, including images and audio, a Privacy Impact Threshold Assessment was performed. The University's Privacy Officer, in collaboration with relevant

School of Education executive, considered the situation and concluded that appropriate steps had been taken to mitigate potential issues, in compliance with the PPIP Act.

Security was another consideration of the Online Demonstration School. The video material included footage that identified schools, teachers, and students, and therefore security was paramount. To meet the stringent requirements of the NSW DoE, videos were housed on the university's secure video-hosting platform. This allowed videos to be directly embedded within the institution's Learning Management System, increasing security even further. Only university students and staff with an active university account with a verified login and who had been given access to the units containing the Online Demonstration School videos were able to view them, with access ceasing at the end of the trimester of enrolment in the relevant unit. In addition, staff coordinating the Online Demonstration School units could select which videos in the collection could be viewed by students and other university staff at any given point in time, a set of Terms and Conditions had to be agreed to before videos could be accessed and watched, and the Learning Management System had the capacity to provide detailed logs of user access to the videos over time. A final level of security sat with the video-hosting platform itself, which would only allow videos to be played if within a university assigned web address, and videos could not be copied or saved.

14.5.4 Implementation

The Online Demonstration School was positioned as part of the first-year program in both primary and secondary postgraduate initial teacher education degrees. Videos of authentic teacher practice were embedded into two core units (an undergraduate unit and a postgraduate unit), both of which focus on broad concepts related to teaching, learning, and classroom practice. Over the course of the units, students view a series of videos showing a range of educational contexts. For some activities, students can select which videos they watch, based on their own specialisations and/or areas of interest. Through engagement with specially designed learning sequences that include viewing video content, students are taught to notice and reflect. A variety of observational strategies are taught and used to interrogate specific aspects of educational theory and teacher practice. Students employ qualitative and quantitative scaffolds to focus their attention on and *notice* specific aspects of classroom practice, such as characteristics of active learning, the impact of different types of feedback, the establishment of classroom expectations and routines, and the influence of teacher body language and positioning in the classroom on student engagement. Students then *reflect* upon what they have observed through structured tasks that require them to share (with both lecturers and peers) their understandings, questions, and critiques, through making connections between their observations and relevant educational theory. Students have the capacity to rewatch the same video as many times as they wish to, and some tasks require students to watch the same video from different

perspectives. Lecturers have the capacity to facilitate discussion, ask provocative questions, and challenge assumptions. To ensure that mandatory time requirements are met, compulsory weekly assessment tasks, completed over an extended time, are set to guarantee student engagement with the videos and their associated tasks. Learning analytics are used, if necessary, to source additional information about time spent on Online Demonstration School tasks.

14.6 Outcomes of the Online Demonstration School

An assessment of the effectiveness of the Online Demonstration School as an alternative to the in-school observation professional experience placement was conducted two years after its initial implementation (Whannell et al., 2019). The following question was asked:

> What differences exist in relation to the preparedness of initial teacher education students at the University of New England to meet the AITSL graduate teacher standards on their second practicum placement based upon whether they had previously completed the ODS or an in-school placement? (Whannel et al., 2019, p. 112)

The study involved an analysis of PEx reports, completed by supervising teachers upon the conclusion of the second PEx placement. These reports required supervising teachers to assess students against the seven professional standards for graduate teachers (AITSL, 2017). Half of the PEx reports analysed were from supervising teachers reporting on students who had completed their first placement as an in-school observation PEx, and the other half as part of the Online Demonstration School unit.

Results identified no significant difference between the two cohorts of students in preparedness for their second practicum placement: those who had completed their observational practicum through the Online Demonstration School were as "classroom-ready" as their peers who had completed the traditional in-school placement. This finding occurred within the context of the Online Demonstration School practicum being the equivalent of only 10 days, complared to the 20-day in-school placement, allowing students to experience an additional 10 days of teaching practice in schools. It also provided other benefits to both students and the university, with students afforded greater flexibility in when they accessed their first placment, and a reduced burden on the University in terms of locating over 300 face-to-face in-school PEx opportunities (Whannel et al., 2019).

The success of the Online Demonstration School resulted in its expansion across all degree options, a move that was endorsed by the second iteration of the PEx Hub partnership. All students completing an ITE degree at the University of New England now complete their first PEx placement through the Online Demonstration School.

14.7 Where to Next?

A change of leadership at the NSW DoE prompted a change of perspective regarding the Online Demonstration School, and departmental support for the project waned. University staff and PEx Hub school leaders involved in the expansion of the Online Demonstration School found themselves having to shift focus from growing and enhancing the project to defending its use. Despite the NSW PEx Hub initiative describing an aspect of its purpose as being an exploration of "innovative models for professional experience", the current attitude to the Online Demonstration School expressed by the NSW DoE has led to a perception there is a desire to realign practice to more "traditional" methods of professional experience, rather than a focus on innovation. While no official objection has been lodged with the PEx Hub regarding its Online Demonstration School initiative, the NSW DoE has blocked further filming for the project, citing reasons of security and privacy. For the moment, additions to the Online Demonstration School video bank are on hold. Evidence suggests that the Online Demonstration School is an effective way for students to learn how to *notice* and *reflect*; it helps to bridge the gap between teaching practice and educational theory. The NSW PEx Hub initiative agreement asked for innovation; however, tradition has trumped innovation.

It is not all bad news, however. Other education sectors and systems have come on board with the Online Demonstration School, and filming has started in schools that sit outside the jurisdiction of the NSW DoE. The PEx Hub Schools involved in the initial development of the Online Demonstration School are continuing to work with the university to challenge the decision and overturn the current block on filming in NSW DoE schools. The evidence shows it is a fight worth pursuing.

14.8 Conclusion

Academics and policy-makers have long expressed concerns about gaps in initial teacher education programs. Their criticism has focussed on aspects such as a lack of opportunity to observe and interrogate classroom and teaching practice (Thornton, 2013) and to notice and reflect upon practice when it is observed (Green et al., 2018; Rooney & Boud, 2019), and too little focus on bridging the educational theory/practice divide (Le Cornu, 2015; Allen, 2009). In addition, universities face the practical challenge presented by the organisation and enactment of PEx placements. Experimentation with an Online Demonstration School at the University of New England has produced beneficial outcomes that go some way to both responding to the criticism levelled at university initial teacher education programs and circumventing the sometimes-onerous practicalities of PEx placements. Developments in technologies continue to influence the way classroom observation is considered, and the opportunities for how it can be enacted (Ó Grádaigh et al., 2021). Rather than shy away from the possibilities, universities and education systems should embrace these

opportunities, using them to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to start their careers as "classroom-ready graduate teachers. The experience of the Online Demonstration School at the University of New England is evidence that new ways of doing things can lead to better outcomes for initial teacher education students, and, ultimately, for those children and young people they will teach in years to come.

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Chapter 15
The Mentoring Role of Professional Experience Coordinators: Beyond a Sink-Or-Swim Discourse

Fay Hadley, Iain Hay, Rebecca Andrews, and Vanessa Vale

Abstract This chapter highlights the key role professional-experience coordinators (PExCs) play in mentoring pre-service teachers in their professional experience (PEx) and transition to the profession. The chapter reconceptualises how the "place of context" defines the mentoring of pre-service teachers. There is a need to consider how student diversity is applied to exploring their pathways to university, considering their family backgrounds and values. Attention needs to be given to how they navigate their way to, through, and beyond the initial teacher education (ITE) program and transition into the teaching profession. Over the past 30 years there has been increased interest in understanding the importance of mentoring, which has become the prevalent practice for the PEx placement aspect of pre-service teachers' education courses (Ure et al. in Professional experience in initial teacher education: A review of current practices in Australian ITE. Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2017). Central to this activity are the school-based teachers' mentoring of pre-service teachers in developing their understanding of the practice of teaching (Ambrosetti in Australian Journal of Teacher Education 39, 2014). It is important to examine the complexities of the place of context and how these affect how mentoring is enacted. The chapter argues that the negotiation of values is an optimal starting point for both the mentor and mentee. Examining mentoring through the lens of (Boler & Zembylas in Pedagogies of difference, Routledge, 2003) framework of the "pedagogy of discomfort" allows for challenging notions of sink-or-swim discourses that are sometimes viewed as tacit teaching culture determining what it means to become a teacher (Howe in Educational Philosophy and Theory

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_15

38:287–297, 2006; Strawn et al., The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas 81:271–277, 2008; Tynjälä & Heikkinen in Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft 14:11–33, 2011). The chapter uses case studies from current research as examples to illustrate how ITE providers can apply a "pedagogy of discomfort" to reduce inequity and improve PEx opportunities for both the mentor (classroom teacher) and mentee (pre-service teacher). Finally, this chapter provides a model for considering mentoring within the "place of context".

Keywords Mentoring · Pedagogy of discomfort · Culture · Context

15.1 Understanding the Role of the PExC

Several role titles are used for those individuals who coordinate PEx activities: for example, practicum coordinators (Birch, 2020); school coordinators (Le Cornu, 2010); or initial teacher training coordinators (Mutton & Butcher, 2007). Traditionally, the role of the PExC has been one of managing the PEx in the school, serving as an administrator and overall supervisor of pre-service teachers while on their placement. The PExC acts as the link between the school and the initial teacher education provider in overseeing the practice component of pre-service teachers' education. Those teachers in this role are generally experienced educators who themselves have supervised pre-service teachers over many years in their own classrooms (and continue to do so). They are often viewed by peers as highly accomplished practitioners. More recently there has been a shift in the expectations of what PExCs can do to ensure that highly skilled teachers supervise pre-service teachers on their PEx placements.

PExCs' role is complex, diverse, and demanding (Loughland, 2021). They operate within a *third space* between the school and university (Zeichner, 2010; Elsden-Clifton & Jordan, 2016): "third space theory describes a non-hierarchical relationship between schools and universities where the roles and responsibilities of PSTs, in-service teachers and teacher educators are transformed to create new learning opportunities". This thinking is reflected in how the role is now viewed from the employer's perspective; for example, the NSW Department of Education (2021) see that "the professional experience coordinator is not just a liaison between a university and school, they develop school procedures and practices that support a high-quality placement for both supervising teachers and pre-service teachers".

15.2 Complexity of Context Affects Mentoring

There is a need to reconceptualise how the "place of context" influences mentoring paradigms and highlights how the complexity of context affects mentoring. The place of context central to the current discussion positions context as more than the environment. The impact of curriculum, cultural, or social factors on pre-service teachers during PEx placements also constitutes a place of context. Therefore, we examine the broad context of pre-service teacher education in Australia, and subsequently narrow this focus to discuss the life histories of pre-service teachers at the time of entering and interacting with the university and school environment. We offer Boler and Zembylas's (2003) framework of the pedagogy of discomfort as a way of thinking about the place of context as we respond to the question: what does the place of context have to do with mentoring?

It is well known that pre-service teachers have multiple pathways to university. Of those in undergraduate ITE programs, 43% come directly from high school, 8% are considered mature-age students (over 25 years of age) with or without a Year 12 qualification, and 17% have completed a technical qualification (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2015). Compounding this diversity of varied pathways into university is individuals' prior experiences and backgrounds. Previous studies in Australia with pre-service teachers have illustrated how these diverse pathways affect their successful transition to university and their success on PEx placements (Campbell et al., 2008; Hadley et al., 2011; Heirdsfield et al., 2008; Spooner-Lane et al., 2009).

The fundamental premise here is that the place of context is central to the mentoring process. This thinking challenges the dominant paradigm, in which the pre-service teacher is seen as the mentee and any one of several, more "experienced", people, including the university-based teacher educator, PExC, and supervising teacher, is perceived as the mentor. Challenging the dominant paradigm begins with a negotiation of values by both the mentor and mentee within the context of the teacher-education programs. This notion of understanding diversity (individual dispositions, ethnicity, faith, socio-economic status, employment experiences, gender, abilities, and literacy and numeracy levels, amongst other factors) when applied to mentoring pre-service teachers helps to reduce inequity (Allen et al., 2013).

The traditional notions of mentor and mentee require rethinking, as these terms generate a distinct "expert and novice" frame of thinking. If place of context is important, then both the mentor and mentee need an approach that transcends this hierarchical view. This requires being mindful of nomenclature and how it can affect the enactment of mentoring (Ambrosetti et al., 2014; Le Cornu, 2015). We maintain that the mentor or mentee could be any one of the people identified in the preceding paragraph and/or other "actors" in the educational setting. Conversely there needs to be a recognition of the different contexts from which mentees come and an acknowledgment that the mentor–mentee relationship requires flexibility, fluidity, and bidirectionality, as the mentee may also have knowledge and skills acquired elsewhere to offer to the evolving relationship. The relationship between the mentor

and mentee is dynamic, and this needs to be explicitly valued and encouraged in ITE programs and in the educational settings where placements are located. Highly skilled PExCs constantly negotiate this on behalf of the pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers in the school. Place of context and its implications for initial teacher education pedagogy and mentoring becomes the focus later in the chapter.

The next section outlines a theoretical framework, the pedagogy of discomfort, and discusses how the mentor/mentee role can be imagined and reconceptualised when previous experiences are considered an important part of the place of context. Two case studies are provided as examples of understanding diversity to enrich the mentor–mentee relationship in moving beyond the sink-or-swim mentality, as illustrated in studies conducted by Tynjälä and Heikkinen (2011) who found that:

> *New teachers meet similar challenges as newly graduated in other professional fields, including the threat of unemployment, the feeling of inadequate competences, related decreased self-efficacy and increased stress, temptations to leave the teaching career, problems in integrating into the work community as a full participant, and the need of learning at work (p. 26).*

15.3 Pedagogy of Discomfort: Troubling the Status Quo

Boler and Zemblylas (2003) coined the term “pedagogy of discomfort”. This term has some of its origins in Foucault’s work, in particular his notion of “ethic of discomfort and the promise of safe classroom” (Goldingay et al., 2016, p. 164). Foucault’s underlying thesis was that the linguistics constructions to create our reality (through speech acts in which we participate during our day-to-day lives) comprise sometimes erroneous assumptions and artificial habits of mind, about which we must pause and take critical note. However, these assumptions and habits of mind embed themselves so firmly in our thinking and ways of understanding the world that they can be quite painful to critique and reconstruct—this is certainly the case for the re-culturing of teachers (Fullan, 2001)—and widely held as necessity if we are to achieve a truly *critical* and transformative education (Boler, 1999). Thus, the term “pedagogy of discomfort” refers to teaching practices that aim to move students out of their comfort zones, so as to require them to question and critique long-held, and potentially highly valued personal beliefs and perspectives (Boler, 1999).

There is much research to show that adopting a pedagogy of discomfort can produce anxiety, fear, and defensiveness (Boler, 1999; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012). However, Boler (1999) would argue that this discomfort is necessary to “shift our positionality and modes of seeing…and begin our processes of inquiry by noticing where we are currently situated” (p. 197). Moreover, such a pedagogy requires teachers to undertake disruptive innovations and to facilitate discomfort about routinised ways of thinking, knowing, and behaving (Latham, 2012). In this way both the educator and the student need to move outside their comfort zones to recognise their own biases and provide opportunities for transformation (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Taking this stance provides opportunities for beliefs

and assumptions of normativity to be questioned and challenged (Zembylas, 2015). This framework, if used in initial teacher education programs, provides opportunities for the pre-service teacher to explore their values, beliefs, habits, and assumptions about teaching and the teaching profession. Where academics in ITE programs also embrace this stance, as advocated by Boler and Zemblylas (2003), there is greater provision to examine the injustices that may be occurring at university—who is included, who is silenced, and who is missing? This requires a critical standpoint and the examination of both university practices and pre-service teachers' experiences during their PEx in educational settings.

Researchers such as Loughran (2011) have noted that the transmission of knowledge is problematic, as it positions the university educator as the expert and the student as the passive receiver of knowledge on "how" to teach. Rorrison (2006, 2010) has also identified the tensions that exist in the PEx placement when this imbalance continues.

As Boler and Zembylas stated:

> *Hegemony masks itself as common sense, as natural: "That's just how things are!" Dominant ideology relies on the processes of naturalizing what are in fact culturally constructed values (p. 114).*

The following two case studies unpack examples of how a university and school partners are trying to deconstruct these deeply held cultural values and systems.

15.4 Place of Context: Mentors' and Mentees' Diversity

Carter Andrews et al. (2016) argue that educational institutions face challenges meeting the needs of diverse learners in increasingly complex contexts that "are often farther removed from the lived experiences of many, perhaps most P-12, educators" (p. 170). Other authors such as Loughran (2011) also note the complexity of teaching and of what institutions expect of teachers, including the increasing compliance requirements of schooling. This complexity of teaching also needs to be considered from the perspective of the pre-service teachers entering university. They are not a homogenous group, and it is important to be mindful of labelling pre-service teachers, mentors, and the educational settings. Supervising teachers' diversity and experiences also affect how they support pre-service teachers. The literature suggests that these teachers rely on their own experiences, particularly of how they were mentored when they were a pre-service teacher (Goldingay et al., 2013; Le Cornu, 2005; Simpson et al., 2007). A relational approach has been considered a successful mentoring paradigm since the 1980s (Hobson et al., 2009). This approach highlights mentors as both a provider and receiver of information (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Le Cornu, 2005; Zembylas, 2015), and this notion of reciprocity in the relationship is crucial to its success (Ambrosetti et al., 2014; Le Cornu, 2010). Ambrosetti's (2010) study of first- and final-year pre-service teachers' perceptions of the mentoring role

found that both relational and developmental components were highlighted as important, but that the importance of context was rarely reported. In another study by the same author (2014), supervising teachers participated in professional development about mentoring. The participants reported that after completing the professional development they had a better understanding of the importance of the relationship with the mentee in supporting them during the PEx placement.

Pre-service teachers also face challenges when negotiating roles and relationships with multiple stakeholders, including other staff, families, and volunteers, when they enter the educational setting for PEx. These multiple stakeholders, their perspectives, and the need for pre-service teachers to be well versed in managing these diverse perspectives can present challenges, particularly for those in the early stages of PEx and as early-career teachers.

Case study 1: Context of diversity: An international pre-service teacher's struggles to fit into the system

This first case study illustrates the links between place of context, feelings of belonging, and exploring values and beliefs about what being a teacher can mean across diverse contexts. This study was conducted with international students studying an early-childhood degree, and gained their perspectives of their first primary-school PEx placement. The researchers met regularly face-to-face and in an online community with international pre-service teachers. The discussions and reflections focussed on values and beliefs regarding education and unpacked what these participants understood about teaching in the Australian context. One of the participants, Zuki,[1] discussed her struggle to *hold on* and *also let go* whilst she was immersed in the placement. She had been raised and schooled in both Hong Kong and Australia by her grandparents and parents, respectively. She acknowledged her struggle with her own identity. This did affect her feelings of success in her placement. She worried about her language proficiency, whether she was teaching effectively (in terms of managing the students in the classroom effectively), and how to interact appropriately with her university-based teacher educators. These worries did appear to affect her confidence in conducting herself in the school environment. Her quiet nature in the classroom and school environment and her need to defer to her supervising teacher's opinion, which she saw as being respectful, but her supervising teacher saw as a lack of confidence in her teaching, resulted in a difficult experience. During the PEx placement, the university teacher educator visited Zuki in person and via an online platform they discussed the experience and the issues Zuki was facing. This was a crisis and did unsettle her and the university-based teacher educator. Zembylas would describe this point as important for "challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities and they create openings for individual and social transformation" (2015, p. 163). Zuki did take a break from the degree after this placement and returned later to complete the degree.

Navigating this PEx for Zuki required understanding notions of context; this has often been researched in terms of the social, cultural, and curriculum factors within

[1] Pseudonym.

education settings (see, for example, Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2012). Place of context is a critical juncture for many pre-service teachers whilst on PEx, as often they are seen as the novice by the university and in the educational setting. This conception of the pre-service teacher has been discussed in the research literature for nearly two decades (Allen et al., 2013; Le Cornu, 2005, 2010, 2015), yet little has changed. Thus it is important for this to be contested and problematised, and for alternative approaches to be investigated. For instance, did the research outlined in the above case study provide an opportunity for opening up a communicative space for mutual learning? Even though Zuki found the experience difficult and chose to take a break from her degree, she returned. If we want students such as Zuki to be successful and complete their teaching degree, and then teach in the Australian system to ensure a diverse teacher workforce, then it will be necessary to trouble the pedagogy and rethink approaches in ITE programs.

Case study 2: Mentoring in context—disrupting the status quo, moving beyond a sink-or-swim—bring the school-based mentor and university-based mentor together into the same space

As in other professional tertiary degrees that incorporate WIL, such as nursing, health, and engineering, there is considerable complexity in constructing placements that effectively serve the learning needs of all students and, at the same time, comply with regulatory requirements, are cost-effective and sustainable, and add value to the work lives of those university and school staff involved (Allen et al., 2019).

When both school-based and university-based mentors operate in the same sphere, that of focussing on supporting PSTs through PEx placement and transition into the profession, positive outcomes often occur because these activities are aligned (Walker et al., 2019). The following case study shows how a PExC of a large government school challenged the sink-or-swim mentality by creating a structured program for pre-service teachers with explicit approaches to understanding curriculum, links between high-quality practice and teacher standards, and immersion in authentic activities reflective of the profession, such as a formal induction program.

This immersion was accomplished through providing mentoring by expert teachers, attending professional-learning workshops, and making explicit links between the graduate teacher and proficiency standards (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, AITSL). Making these links explicit allows pre-service teachers to understand what high-quality practice looks like in the classroom as they make connections between theory and practice. This is pivotal in their journey, which extends into their transition to becoming a beginning teacher. “Beginning teachers often question the relevance of their formal training compared to what they learn on the job” (Howe, 2006, p. 290). The induction program at this school was purposely designed to ensure that pre-service teachers felt safe and supported in their placement, as pointed out by the PExC:

> *Getting to know the pre-service teacher prior to beginning their placement during our orientation process is very effective in building strong connections between the school and the student. It allows students to feel comfortable to ask questions but also to establish expectations in our setting during their placement (PExC).*

Sharing high-quality practice from expert teachers and instructional leaders supports pre-service teachers in developing syllabus knowledge, explicit teaching, student-engagement strategies, use of hands-on resources, and differentiation in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Through regular meetings and online communications with the PExC and running targeted workshops with subject professionals in English and mathematics, pre-service teachers are exposed to different techniques to introduce learning intentions that are engaging and explicit, build syllabus content knowledge, understand how lessons are broken down into components, and analyse and reflect on their own lessons to target areas for improvement. This approach fosters collective efficacy in providing opportunities for students to learn together and implement new learning.

The school is committed to developing the capacity of teachers at different career stages in the art of mentoring, providing quality feedback, student impact, and reflection. Mentoring allows experienced teachers to share their expertise and consider professional growth into recognition as a Highly Accomplished Teacher (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, AITSL) or leadership roles.

> *Due to the size of our school and the number of pre-service teachers who have had placements with us and who have later become beginning teachers with us, supervising teachers continue to be able to mentor and support those teachers. We believe in building relationships and networks that will continue (PExC).*

The role of the PExC has been instrumental in supporting pre-service teachers and supervising teachers. Alongside the administration role, the PExC can oversee and support all supervising teachers and pre-service teachers during placements. This is imperative with the sheer number of placements each semester. The PExC also organises and conducts workshops and regular check-ins with pre-service teachers and regularly observes them and gives feedback and support to supervising teachers in their role of mentor. The PExC also serves as the bridge between the university and the profession. This relationship is instrumental in allowing the school and the university to have conversations and guide course content—to bridge what is learnt at university and what happens on placement.

> *The leadership of both institutions are invested in the professional-experience Hub program, and without leadership support, the program would not be successful (PExC).*

This case study shows leading practice in supporting pre-service teachers in their transition to the profession by delivering a structured induction program. However, despite the increased efforts across the sector in supporting early-career teachers, difficulties in the induction stage have contributed to increased numbers of novice teachers leaving the profession (Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011).

15.5 Conclusion

Starting from a point of discomfort for both the mentor and mentee in relation to the acknowledgement of place of context (curriculum or cultural or social) provides opportunities to disrupt the embeddedness of routinised ways of thinking and behaving, such as a sink-or-swim mentality (Fig. 15.1). The case studies illustrate how these negotiations need to be central to the mentor–mentee relationship and demonstrate the importance of applying this lens to mentoring. Both the mentor and mentee need to engage in this *disruption* to ways of being and doing.

Disrupting thinking to ensure transformation requires both the mentor and mentee to apply the pedagogy of discomfort, as well as considering and reflecting on the place of context. This provides opportunities to engage in examining values, beliefs, habits, and ways of doing teaching, and allows participants to recognise both their commonalities and differences in the philosophy of teaching. It challenges a teaching culture that sometimes seems permeated by a sink-or-swim mentality. High-quality praxis in mentoring is often a dance between the supervising teacher and the pre-service teacher, and includes providing enough space for the latter to experiment with their teaching as well as be guided when needed. The case studies discussed in this chapter have demonstrated that universities can engage with the pre-service teacher and the educational setting to rethink and reframe this place of context, ensuring that it is a successful experience for both the pre-service teacher and the educational setting.

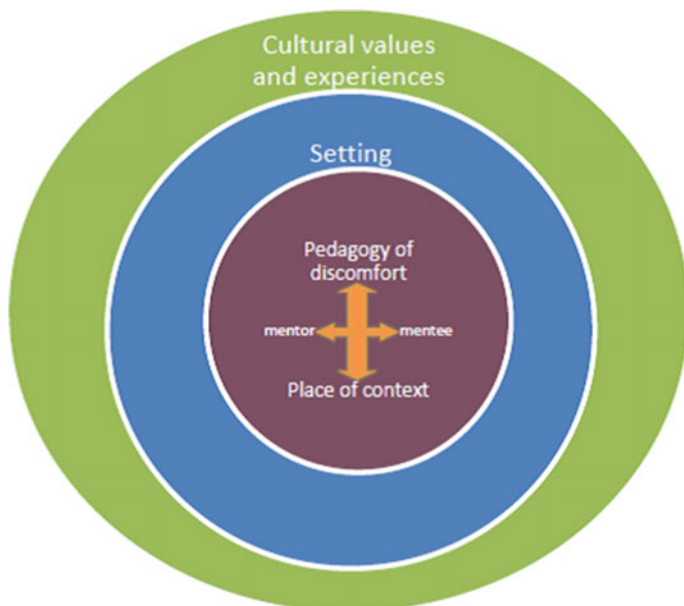

Fig. 15.1 Enacting mentoring within place of context. *Source* authors

Adopting a framework of pedagogy of discomfort within the place of context provides opportunities to question traditional notions of mentoring in ITE programs, particularly in the PEx context. Such questioning creates new possibilities and ways of mentoring pre-service teachers and shows that there are various ways a mentoring relationship can unfold. ITE programs need to be responsive to diverse pre-service teachers' backgrounds as they transition to university, and to think carefully about the supports and mentoring that students need when undertaking PEx. This requires the various stakeholders to question the status quo, and to examine and challenge the values, beliefs, and habits of teacher education and the role mentoring can play in supporting the next generation of teachers. This is important and necessary work to ensure that we have a diverse teacher workforce that is representative of the Australian community.

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Chapter 16
Developing a Model of "Vertical" Professional Mentoring Across the Teaching Continuum

Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn, Annie Agnew, and Sandra Moore

Abstract High-quality mentoring by practising teachers is vital to pre-service teachers' professional learning during placements in schools. The New South Wales Department of Education's Professional Experience Hub School Program supports a range of schools (Hub Schools) across the state to develop and lead practices such as high-quality mentoring. Hub Schools work collaboratively with university partners to develop sustainable practices for supporting professional practice growth for pre-service and supervising or supervising teachers, then share these practices with other schools in their networks and across the state. Evidence and understanding about how pre-service teachers use constructive feedback and become responsive mentees is varied and contextual (Langdon in Professional Development in Education 40:36–55, 2014; Phillips & Park Rogers in Studying Teacher Education 16:265–285, 2020). A further challenge for universities and schools working together to place pre-service teachers lies in deciding when early-career teachers are ready to take on the role of mentoring, as well as how to ensure that experienced supervising teachers continue to grow as mentors themselves. Another important issue is how pre-service teachers can be suitably prepared to be receptive and open to mentoring feedback, to enable professional growth. With such "problems of practice" in mind, in 2019 this inner-western Sydney Department of Education high school became a Hub School partner with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). The key emergent research question that guided this collaborative project was:

Can pre-service teachers' professional learning be enhanced through focussing on developing strong mentoring practices for all teachers? If so, what are effective mechanisms for this?

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_16

In this chapter, we share the story of the approach taken to establish and grow a model of effective vertical mentoring designed by staff at an inner-western Sydney Department of Education high school in partnership with colleagues from UTS and other local network secondary schools. We include critical examination of the key features for success, as well as analysis of barriers and problems encountered. The chapter concludes with practical suggestions for school-based and initial teacher educators who seek to develop productive mentoring relationships, to promote positive professional experiences across the career continuum through on-going school-university collaboration.

Keywords Constructive feedback · Mentoring · Professional growth · Professional practice

16.1 Mentoring for Teachers

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. The quality and assessment of PEx placements was a key issue raised in the consultation process with pre-service and supervising teachers prior to the implementation of the vertical mentoring program, with a focus on the impact of continuous development of practice supported by enduring connections with experienced teachers (Hoven & Baker, 2018; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Shanks, 2017).

Studies have shown that mentoring programs afford new teachers the ability to perform at a higher level in aspects of teaching such as keeping students on task, developing effective lesson plans, using appropriate questioning techniques, adjusting classroom activities to meet student interests, cultivating a positive classroom environment, and establishing successful classroom-management strategies (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schuck et al., 2018). When new teachers participate in a strong mentoring program, they are given the opportunity to experience consistent approaches to feedback and practice demonstration and pedagogical application; this provides a "bridge from being a student teacher to a new teacher" (Shanks, 2017, p. 1).

Effective in-school support draws on a broad range of teacher-mentoring approaches, and requires the mentors to be knowledgeable and competent in teaching and learning to teach (Hudson, 2013; Phillips & Rogers, 2020). Additionally, mentors need to be knowledgeable about the trajectories of pre-service teachers' learning about teaching and use this to identify areas of diagnostic focus. They need to be familiar with different kinds of mentoring approaches and be competent in flexibly integrating relevant strategies to achieve focussed mentoring of pre-service teachers. Finally, they need to be confident in examining the process and outcomes of mentoring practices in collaboration with pre-service teachers, teacher educators,

and colleagues, develop these practices, and contribute to the professional knowledge regarding integrated mentoring (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021).

In our Hub School, a program based on the concept of mentoring for new teachers was developed to support *all* teachers involved in the supervision of pre-service teachers during school placements. The mentoring program identified teachers across a range of years in practice, focussing on a vertical model that included experience in the classroom and the supervision of pre-service teachers. The supervising teacher is largely responsible for the development of the pre-service teacher, guiding them through the process of implementing theory into practice, and may feel unprepared and unsupported when issues arise during placements for managing the nuances of engagement on the part of the pre-service teacher (Bermudez, 2012; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). The supervising teacher may find themselves unsure of how to manage challenges when supervising a pre-service teacher, relying on personal experiences and perspectives and with limited professional development for implementing this process (Becher & Orland-Barak, 2016). Mentoring has been recognised as an effective means of professional learning (Spencer, 2007), with emphasis in more recent times focussing on the sharing of knowledge, peer support, and collective learning as integral to the program implementation (Ellis et al., 2020; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Accordingly, the vertical mentoring model (VMM) was developed as a response to the identified need for strong relationships and support for all teachers, particularly those involved in supervising pre-service teachers, as well as early-career teachers who are transitioning into the role of pre-service teacher supervision.

16.2 Whole-School Culture

Ultimately, the school leadership provides the environment to support the development of productive relationships between mentor and mentee by creating a culture that supports the teacher-mentoring process (Callahan, 2016; Kutsyuruba et al., 2017; Spencer, 2007). In a survey given to pre-service teachers placed at our Hub School in 2019, one respondent shared that they "felt sometimes like my questions were irritating people, and there were several times I was refused an observation or felt like I was getting in the way when observing. Some staff are incredibly supportive and lovely but others treated me like I was really annoying". Responses such as these highlighted the need for a whole-school focus on supporting pre-service teachers, rather than just focussing on the allocated supervising teachers.

The school has focussed on highlighting the value of mentoring pre-service teachers via the appointment in 2019 of a professional-experience coordinator (PExC) into a head teacher role, *Head Teacher Accreditation*, and including this position within the school's executive team. Faculty head teachers were actively supported by the principal, Head Teacher Accreditation, and senior executive to take on the supervision of pre-service teachers, to promote mentoring within their faculties and to foster mentoring of pre-service teachers as a collaborative responsibility

in all faculties and across the school. The PExC/Head Teacher Accreditation undertook to support and acknowledge those teachers who invited pre-service teachers to observe their lessons and to act as facilitator to arrange these observations. Supervising teachers who were experienced mentors also included pre-service teachers in whole-school professional-learning activities such as Quality Teaching Rounds and school professional-learning twilight sessions. Pre-service teachers were introduced to the principal and whole-school staff via staff morning teas and other whole-school events.

From the outset, it was recognised that mentor education should be integrated into the whole-school context, incorporate a well-balanced combination of theoretical and practical components, include rich possibilities for interaction (Tang & Chow, 2007; Timperley, 2001; White, 2008) and critical reflection (Tigelaar et al., 2008), and prepare for evidence-informed mentoring. When experienced supervising teachers were surveyed in 2019, as the school commenced in the Hub School Program, mentoring and support for supervising teachers was identified as an area for improvement, with explicit requests for "setting up a mentoring course within the school network" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2019).

Two experienced supervising teachers, including the PExC, had participated in a two-day University of Sydney professional-learning workshop, *Professional Development, Mentoring and Teacher Induction*), in 2015. These two teachers subsequently developed and delivered school-based professional-learning sessions for supervising teachers in 2016 and 2017. As a result, the school leadership identified value in mentoring early-career teachers, and already had high regard for teachers who volunteered to supervise pre-service teacher placements (Ellis et al., 2020; Spencer, 2007). Nevertheless, the school's PExC recognised that former supervising teachers were now declining supervision or appeared negatively affected by their previous experience. The VMM was therefore designed based on mentoring proficiency, teaching experience and ongoing professional learning rather than authority. Trust and participation across all levels of experience and school roles relied on an embedded flat hierarchy of collaboration and collegiality.

16.2.1 School-Based Induction for Teachers

Induction for all teaching staff new to our school is delivered by the PExC in the concurrent role of Head Teacher Accreditation. Early-career teachers and experienced teachers alike participate. The relationship, mentoring, and modelling of appropriate teaching practice is highly influential in the development of early-career and pre-service teachers' classroom practices (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). Supervising or supervising teachers are responsible for guiding new and emerging teachers through the process of connecting, applying, and expanding their learning from university into practice in school-based contexts. The induction program is developed and facilitated by the PExC and co-delivered by experienced teachers and school executives who are familiar with the school community and with NSW Education

Department policies, PEx requirements and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Formal and anecdotal feedback indicated that pre-service teachers could benefit from a similar induction to that already provided to other staff. One pre-service teacher suggested a “formal induction program into the operational aspects of the school (preferably before the practicum)” (PST post-PEx survey 2019) would be beneficial. In semester two 2019, the PExC adapted and extended the existing new-staff induction for delivery to pre-service teachers on a group basis each term prior to the start of their placement.

Collaborative sharing sessions for early-career teachers had been run by the PExC in the role of Head Teacher Accreditation following feedback from those completing induction. These sessions covered areas such as writing student reports, preparing NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Proficient Accreditation portfolios, and attending parent/student/teacher meetings, and any further individual topic requests, again run by experienced teachers and school leaders and facilitated by the PExC. In the VMM, these sharing sessions were extended to pre-service teachers as part of the ongoing induction process.

16.2.2 School-Based Collaborative Professional-Learning Communities

Starting in 2015, the school had developed a program of openness and peer-mentoring across other aspects of teaching practice, through the integration of Quality Teaching Rounds (QTRs) as a major component of the whole-school professional-learning program (Gore et al., 2015). Over 80% of teachers at the high school have participated in the school’s QTR program, and it is now strongly embedded as central to quality teaching and learning, promoting relational trust and collaboration. QTRs engage participants in debate and discussion about teaching through activities that introduce them to, and establish a high level of capacity for, coding, diagnosing, and refining classroom (and assessment) practice using the Quality Teaching instruments. QTRs are designed to support teachers in negotiating diverse views about what matters in teaching and learning in a collaborative environment (Gore et al., 2015).

Two experienced mentors, including the PExC, had been instrumental in introducing and championing QTRs. Other staff members have since been trained as trainers and delivered sessions for school participants. The school’s QTRs have been successfully recognised for 32 h of NESA-registered professional learning. The VMM was developed to reflect similar concepts of trust and peer collaboration, with the emphasis on collegial support and peer feedback in addition to building relationships within a community of practice.

16.3 Development of the Vertical Mentoring Model (VMM)

In 2020, expert supervising teachers were trained to deliver a professional-learning module: *Supervising Teachers for the Future*. New and existing supervising teachers were nominated to participate in the professional learning, especially targeting those who were supervising pre-service teachers in the semester of professional-learning delivery. The VMM was based on the pre-existing processes of assistance and professional learning at our Hub School, while addressing identified gaps and concerns raised by teachers in previous years. The model reflects current research focussing on effective mentoring for experienced, early-career, and pre-service teachers, and recognises that best practice is learned by engaging in mentoring itself (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Hoben, 2021). It was also recognised that mentor education should be well integrated into the educational context, balance theoretical and practical components, include rich possibilities for interaction and critical reflection, and prepare for evidence-informed mentoring. The VMM was developed to extend beyond supporting professional-experience supervision, becoming an embedded practice alongside QTRs for all aspects of teaching, classroom practice development, and well-being.

Key principles for the VMM focussed on the supervising teacher as a mentor facilitating the socialisation process that would support the pre-service teacher to integrate successfully into the school environment and the profession of teaching (Callahan, 2016; Hudson, 2013). A strong, well-developed mentor was seen as responsible for supporting reflective practices through dialogue about classroom management, relationships, and pedagogy in the classroom. In PEx placements prior to 2020, despite well-considered practices for selecting supervising teachers, feedback from Hub School surveys following placements indicated that some supervising teachers felt unprepared for the complexities that arose, and unsupported during professional experience. They felt confident in general classroom practice but did not feel well-equipped to work with pre-service teachers who were challenging, unprepared, or complex. These issues were identified with requests for additional mentoring to "…improve my abilities to have those difficult conversations and how to get more positive outcomes from those difficult personalities without the angst involved… being less personally/emotionally involved but getting the results" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2020).

In 2019, the role of the PExC was embedded more holistically across the PEx program at the school. The PExC managed university communication and pre-service teacher documentation and requirements, and developed and delivered pre-service teacher induction. The PExC supported supervising teachers and managed associated mandated professional learning. The school's post-placement survey in 2020 indicated that supervising teachers had been consulted prior to mentoring a pre-service teacher, and that they had willingly undertaken this role. Nevertheless, anecdotal conversations and feedback indicated that the issues of isolation and lack of confidence continued. Research indicated this could be resolved through extensive

professional learning and collegial support for supervising teachers (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2020; Hoven & Baker, 2018).

16.3.1 Professional Learning for Supervising Teachers

In New South Wales, supervising teachers are required to have a detailed knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at Graduate Level and expertise in mentoring, supervisory, and feedback skills (Hoven & Baker, 2018). Supervising teachers were given the option to complete the AITSL online Supervising Preservice Teachers course, or an accredited alternative. From 2016, the mandatory requirement was to complete Module 2: Practice Analysis (AITSL, 2011) or an accredited alternative. Research supports mentees demonstrating greater capacity to follow instructions and establish workable classroom routines when supervising teachers have received training (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ellis et al., 2020).

Pre-service teachers had also identified the requirement for their supervising teachers to undergo professional learning or "some sort of training for staff, even just a brief seminar, on pre-service teachers" (PST post-PEx survey 2019). In the second year of the Hub School Program, the PExC invited these expert supervising teachers to be trained as trainers for school-delivered professional learning: a one-day New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA)-accredited course delivered as six one-hour modules. This professional learning was developed by another Hub School team and had been successfully delivered across that Hub network, with significant focus on promoting discussion between the participants. The second implementation in 2021 included a case study of mentoring scenario where the pre-service teacher was at risk failure PST; the training was extended to include supervising teacher participants from other network schools.

16.4 VMM Pilot

The pilot implementation of our Hub School's VMM commenced in Semester 2 of 2020. Components identified included (1) professional learning for supervising teachers, (2) a pre-placement questionnaire for pre-service teachers, (3) pre-service teacher induction, (4) PExC support for supervising teachers, (5) networking of supervising teachers, and (6) weekly debriefing with the pre-service teachers.

The PExC was proactively supported by a small group of expert supervising teachers comprising three teaching professionals who had been highly active and influential in supervising pre-service teachers in the school: an experienced teacher who had supervised pre-service teachers for over 30 years and received university awards for her mentoring; a head teacher of a large teaching faculty with significant supervising experience; and a highly regarded teacher who had previously been an intern at the school and had since successfully supervised many pre-service teachers.

A pre-placement questionnaire for PSTs developed prior to the pilot was used to facilitate mentor matching and to raise the supervising teacher's and PExC's awareness of individual pre-service teachers' specific requirements. This questionnaire was included in communication to the pre-service teachers prior to commencement of placement and focussed on areas such as placement goals, contributing skills, and commitment to induction and PEx program initiatives. The PExC shared the responses with the supervising teacher, and reflected that this established a positive point to commence the mentoring relationship:"…thanks to the survey…I had a clear idea of what the student's expectations were" and that it helped supervising teachers be "…able to allocate and prepare the classes the PST would be taking prior to arriving" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021). This is in line with Schwille's (2008) temporal framework of mentoring practices, which emphasises the importance of identifying the "inside and outside" of teaching (p. 155), mentoring before and after classroom activities (such as lesson planning, resource preparation, and researching ideas), and teaching practices. Pre-service teacher respondents strongly reflected that they were happy with how they had developed during placement; for example, one commented that "being welcomed by staff helped me become more confident overall in my teaching and experience in this profession"; another said that "the support was incredible from all staff members" (PST post-PEx survey 2020/2021). Raising the profile of supervision of pre-service teachers across the whole school lifted the quality of interaction between pre-service teachers and the school community, with the pre-service teachers reporting that highlights had been "the support of the staffroom" and "the staff culture and overall welcoming reception from the school community. It was reassuring to receive advice and a kind smile from students and teachers inside and outside my faculty" (PST post-PEx survey 2020/2021).

Prior to the consolidated role of the PExC, pre-service teachers' induction had been completed individually by supervising teachers, who indicated that the process was time-intensive and repetitive. Requests were made to centralise the process within the school to "a focused, whole-school approach to induction within a school environment right at the beginning of the placement, [with] clear communication and expectations established between the pre-service teacher, their mentor(s) and the rest of the staffroom" (supervising teacher post PEx survey 2019). Existing induction programs were modified and tailored for pre-service teacher participants, including the development of a PEx edition of the school Staff Handbook, signoff of NSW Department of Education mandatory requirements and school health- and safety-specific requirements, and a school tour.

The development and delivery of induction for all pre-service teachers as a group by the PExC, with assistance from in-service school colleagues such as managers of information technology and work, health and safety, provided consistent information within the school context and met mandatory placement requirements. Pre-service teachers responded positively to the group sessions, sharing that the induction was "really informative and [it was] great to meet the teachers and other practicum students. I came away with a really positive vibe from the school and I look forward

to commencing my professional experience in a few weeks" (PST email correspondence 2021). One supervising teacher shared that "induction was useful for me as expectations were addressed at a whole-school level. It saved me time and stress as I didn't have to check PST mandatory training and certificates. It was helpful to have a school leader provide all the necessary information on school procedures and values. The induction made me feel supported in my role as a PST supervisor" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

The PExC role was further developed to support supervising teachers in administrative overheads, advocating and facilitating all areas of PEx, and establishing a community of expert supervising teachers within the school and across network schools. A key area of concern identified by supervising teachers was having difficult conversations with a pre-service teacher. Closer PExC contact with the supervising teachers greatly improved the quality of the placements, with supervising teachers reporting increased confidence in having what they found to be "challenging…difficult conversations with PSTs" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021). The PExC maintained regular contact with supervising teachers throughout the placements, which was identified as key to the success of the placement relationship with the pre-service teachers.

Surveys of supervising teachers identified that during placements they needed to "have someone [to] download/discuss issues with i.e. other mentors" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2019). Informal and professional debriefing was encouraged in small groups at staff morning teas, with an after-school get-together outside the school premises also arranged by the PExC. Active support from the PExC and other supervising teachers was engaged for pre-service teachers at risk of failure. When supervising teachers expressed concerns such as pre-service teachers being reluctant to take on and/or apply feedback, the PExC facilitated lesson observations by other supervising teachers who were briefed with the identified issues prior to the observations. Supervising teachers reported in surveys that those discussions with other supervising teachers, including the PExC, were useful and/or supportive, noting they "felt that [if] an issue emerged I would be supported by the coordinator as well as other experienced supervisors" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

Existing collaborative sharing sessions were adapted and extended to support pre-service teachers in the form of weekly debriefing focus groups. These sessions were semi-formal, led by the PExC with a nominated focus area. The focus areas were drawn from pre-identified topics such as preparing to complete the Teacher Performance Assessment, classroom management, differentiating lessons for individual student learning requirements, preparing for the first year of teaching, and other specific areas of concern raised by supervising teachers in relation to the pre-service teachers. Post-placement surveys (2020/2021) of both supervising and pre-service teachers found that "…the coordinator's weekly meetings with the PSTs were of benefit to supervisors as well as PSTs", with all pre-service teachers strongly agreeing that they found the weekly reflection meetings with other pre-service teachers and the PExC beneficial to their development. Supervising teachers similarly reported that "school initiatives and expectations were discussed at weekly meetings, leaving

me the opportunity to work with the pre-service teacher's teaching" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

Supervising teachers had previously indicated that having difficult conversations and dealing with pre-service teachers at risk of failure were the most challenging parts of their role as a supervising teacher, and were barriers to their ongoing mentoring of pre-service teachers. The professional-learning component of the VMM explicitly addressed these concerns through the provision of resources, strategies, and role plays, with a focus on the development of collaborative team dynamics for ongoing collegial support. Supervising teachers in the pilot were surveyed as to their completion of professional learning (Table 16.1).

Respondents considered the modules very or extremely helpful, with even experienced supervising teachers expressing that the professional learning was "useful for [revisiting] supporting PST wellbeing, coaching practices and managing critical conversations" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021). The delivery of the professional learning by experienced colleagues was key to its success: "PL [delivered] from experienced supervisors has been the most beneficial" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021). Participants in the professional learning reported that they were "more confident in having difficult and tough conversations with the pre-service teacher" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021), and completion of the professional learning promoted a willingness to mentor a pre-service teacher for first-time mentors; one wrote that they "felt prepared for any eventuality and was [therefore] confident going into my first placement" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

16.5 Limitations

Three limitations were identified in relation to our pilot project. First, participation in the Hub School Program enabled this school to fund the time and executive position of the PExC, which facilitated the pilot and associated research. To achieve sustainability, either ongoing funding or a centralised, systemic approach is recommended.

Second, as with much of the work of teaching and learning, a major area identified by supervising teachers is the time requirement for any additional activity within the teaching and learning cycle. Given that NSW DoE supervisors of early-career teachers are now provided with allocated time for their mentoring, this is suggested to be extended to teachers who are frequent supervisors of pre-service teachers.

Third, ideal pairings of pre-service and supervising teachers are often limited due to the availability of mentors/supervising teachers and the requirements of the PEx, as there is often a clash with the school calendar, the teaching area of the supervising and/or pre-service teachers, and/or teaching cycles of Higher School Certificate (HSC) classes or formal internal and external assessment schedules.

Table 16.1 Participant feedback from the 2021 Semester 1 professional learning

	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not so helpful	Not at all helpful	Total
Module 1: preparing for success	87.50% 7	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Module 2: using videos of practice to support classroom observation and ongoing professional growth?	62.50% 5	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Module 3: promoting professional growth in the classroom using the Australian Professional Teaching Standards	100.00% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Module 4: supporting wellbeing through positive leadership practices	75.00% 6	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Module 5: towards successful critical conversations	100.00% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8
Module 6: reflecting on leadership skills, models and research	75.00% 6	25.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8

Note Responses: N = 8

16.6 Looking to the Future

The pilot of the VMM was highly successful, with participating supervising teachers reporting that they would happily continue to mentor pre-service teachers—"I'd like the opportunity to apply what I learned again"—and noted that their participation inspired their own teaching by "revising my passion for teaching and building rapport

with the students"; experienced teachers noted that the observation helped them to be "aware of areas of my own teaching practice that I could strengthen when I was striving to model best practice" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

As the core of all teacher work is quality teaching and learning and success in student outcomes, the success of the pilot was strongly demonstrated by experienced teachers reporting, "I don't think I delivered a bad lesson during the placement because each lesson was geared towards a particular Standard that I wanted to demonstrate for the PST…. [O]bserving the PST in action in the classroom was of immense benefit [as] I became more aware of…the impact of strategies used by the PST (and ones that I would use myself)" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

Current extension of the shared pre-service teacher induction resources into other network schools and completed delivery of the supervising professional learning have been well received. A PExC from a network school reported that "the feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. All felt it was far more comprehensive and useful than any training offered online or by AITSL and have really benefited from it. Two of the three have supervised preservice teachers since attending the PL and what they learned improved the experience of both supervisors and preservice teachers significantly" (email correspondence semester 2, 2021).

16.7 Conclusion

Supervising pre-service teachers is a vital component of teacher education, and the importance of a community in practice is well recognised (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2020). In our Hub School, supervising teachers actively recognised the value to their own teaching: "…next to Quality Teaching Rounds, mentoring pre-service teachers is the best PL a teacher can hope for" (supervising teacher post-PEx survey 2021).

Mentor education is effective when it is integrated into the educational context, balances theoretical and practical components, includes rich possibilities for interaction and critical reflection and prepares for evidence-informed mentoring (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Such research informed the development and pilot of the VMM at our Hub School to provide a wide variety of supportive components that would ensure a positive experience for all involved. We contend that a focus on developing strong mentoring practices for all teachers is a key component of the development of a culture of school-wide mentoring. Other important components include the provision of pre-service teacher induction and professional learning for supervising teachers. Another effective element in our pilot VMM was scheduled debriefing sessions with PSTs that involved a number of supervising teachers and tailored content to individual pre-service teachers and PEx requirements. Finally, in our pilot VMM, the role of the PExC emerged as critical to providing ongoing positive support to supervising teachers, to enhance the quality of professional learning for all involved.

Acknowledgements We are grateful to the teachers and pre-service teachers who willingly participated in our Hub School's pilot VMM initiatives.

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Chapter 17
Developing a Sense of Community: Working in the Third Space in ITE

Nicole Hart, Wayne Cotton, Berlinda Cook, Sangeeta Hegde, Valerie Knezevic, and Lawrence Lau

Abstract 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; this professional work of educative mentoring and assessment is both an opportunity and a challenge for both school-based and initial teacher educators. This chapter is built around five reflective narratives that capture participant voice and provide detail for various innovative activities implemented by school-based and initial teacher educators collaboratively through the creation of a third space, in this case a school-university partnership established to support quality PEx. The participant voice collectively addressed the need for a review of traditional mentoring structures, the importance of professional mentoring conversations, and the need to establish a hybrid or third space as a site for collaboration and innovation. Consistent judgement of pre-service teachers during any placement depends on reconciling academic and practitioner knowledge and responsibilities; this can be provided through establishing a robust and sustainable community of practice.

Keywords Participant voice · Narrative · Community of practice · Professional experience

17.1 Introduction

In initial teacher education, universities and schools need to work closely together to ensure graduates are fully prepared to enter the teaching workforce. In recent years, a greater focus has been directed towards this important relationship, with specific funding being allocated to schools to work with universities to produce effective professional experiences for initial teacher education students.

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_17

Bringing together groups of people who share a common passion to explore ideas and grow practice (like producing quality placement experiences in initial teacher education) is referred to as developing a community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The three defining features of a CoP are the domain (i.e., what motivates and brings people together), the community (the relationships), and the practice (the investment of time). Mercieca (2016) explains this further by suggesting that the domain draws participants together, the community sustains the fellowship and learning, and the practice crystallises experiences and knowledge.

The foundations of this growth can be explained in part by Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (SLT) and Vygotsky's (2016) zone of proximal development (ZPD). These two theories both focus on the social context of the learning situation. SLT stresses the significance of observing, modelling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others; ZPD refers to a person's ability to successfully complete a task with the assistance of a more-capable other. These theories are particularly relevant for learning to occur within a CoP.

This chapter explores the development and life cycle of one specific CoP that emerged due to receiving funds and support through the New South Wales Department of Education's Professional Experience Hub School Program (NSW DoE, 2016). This collaborative program supported schools to lead best-practice professional experiences and to focus on producing innovative, sustainable, and quality professional experience (PEx) practices to share with other schools across the state.

The chapter presents five narratives from key members of this CoP. Each narrative describes the member's real-life experience of being involved in the CoP. These experiences include highlights, outcomes, benefits, and lessons learnt. The chapter concludes with a summary of collated themes that emerged from the five narratives.

17.2 Narratives

Narrative 1: Bonnie, Primary-School Principal

We have long held a commitment to continuous improvement, working in partnership with the whole school community to deliver a comprehensive education focussed on the whole child and developing the capacity of staff in meeting the varied and complex needs of all students. This widely acknowledged commitment to learning and system leadership contributed to our nomination as a PEx Hub school to join the "Great Teaching, Inspired Learning" initiative. Through this participation, our school has seen already-strong practice become even stronger: practices in inducting and mentoring pre-service teachers and placement supervisors practices in the giving and receiving of quality feedback, and a shift in school culture from professional bystander or professional obligation to professional responsibility and wholehearted engagement.

While there has always been a critical mass of staff who have willingly shared their strengths in volunteering to supervise and support pre-service teachers, over the past two years these numbers have grown, and I believe the reason for this is because

each of the supervising teachers received dedicated and targeted support from the in-school coordinators, each of whom is an exceptional communicator and connector of people. These coordinators exercised significant leadership in the organisation, delivery, and evaluation of a focussed induction program for both pre-service and supervising teachers that aimed to ensure that they had a thorough understanding of roles and responsibilities and knew where they could turn for additional support and that there were staff who cared about them as people and professionals.

In addition to this, every supervising teacher completed recognised professional learning such as the AITSL Supervisory modules. This helped build the capacity of all supervising teachers, improving their mentoring skills, and ensuring there was universal knowledge and skills for teachers in this role. Following the training and throughout the placement, the coordinators met with supervising teachers at regular intervals, individually and as a group, with and without their pre-service teachers. During this time, the coordinators supported both parties in determining short- and long-term goals for the placement and strategies to achieve them, facilitated reflective conversations, shared what was working well, sought feedback and looked for opportunities to bolster the program, socialised and strengthened interpersonal relationships, and took every opportunity to acknowledge the successes along the way and celebrate the journey.

Parallel to this, the coordinators arranged cumulative professional learning opportunities for staff, internal and external to the school, focussed on the elements of effective feedback. What began as an initiative to develop the knowledge and skills of supervising teachers to support their provision of quality written and verbal feedback to pre-service teachers quickly built an appetite and momentum for a larger inquiry into the benefits of a school culture focussed on feedback, including reciprocal feedback and feedback loops with students in the classroom, pre-service teachers, all staff, and the school community. This focus on feedback has further enhanced the Performance and Development Process (PDP) across the school. With each professional-learning opportunity and ensuing reflective conversation, staff could more clearly identify and draw the connections between the seeking of feedback, identifying their professional-learning goals, and aligning these to professional frameworks and standards appropriate to their career stage and experience. Further evidence of the shift in school culture in relation to professional confidence with the Teaching Standards, engagement with the PDP process, and a commitment to ongoing feedback and reflection, can be seen in the number of staff who considered seeking higher levels of accreditation.

This initiative afforded us countless opportunities for networking, collaboration, reflection, and school and system engagement. Our collective enthusiasm in seizing these opportunities and using every interaction to further our learning and continuous improvement resulted in a collective impact that's been even greater than our investment—an impact on individual, shared, and system practices. It has been our absolute personal and professional privilege to be part of this initiative and we're excited to see where the learning and work takes us next.

Narrative 2: Verity, Professional-Experience Coordinator—Primary School
I have been a professional-experience coordinator for one year, taking on the role in the second year of our three-year partnership. During this time, I have grown and developed my leadership and mentoring skills. The initiative has brought great learning opportunities to our entire staff, and the consistent support and open communication that we have received from our university partner has enabled us to undertake professional learning on effective feedback, aligned to the Teaching Standards. The professional learning developed with our university partner has shifted our school culture towards one that embraces open classrooms where no teacher feels inhibited or judged, and where there is clear understanding that observations develop a deeper understanding of the standards and are used to improve practice. This has supported the building of strong, trusting collegial relationships and the development and sharing of high-quality professional experience for pre-service teachers.

One aspect of the initiative that I am particularly proud of is the fact that we provided a high level of support not only to our university partner but to many other universities by accommodating their pre-service placements during challenging times throughout 2020 and across 2021. Our flexibility allowed pre-service teachers to progress and complete their degrees on time. We pride ourselves on our organisational abilities to maximise the expertise of our faculty to support a growing number of pre-service teachers while easing the burden on universities. Our vision is to become a renowned teaching school that produces an outstanding quality of next-generation teachers, and this is coming to fruition with the support of our university partner. The partnership is shifting our culture as a school and has proven to have many positive effects on our teaching staff, pre-service teachers, and students. Despite challenges with COVID-19, we still managed to reach out to our network of schools and share our initiatives as we continued to expand the network. We used 2020 to embed our initiatives and began to see our efforts come to fruition, which strengthened our standpoint to share and support our network schools in adopting these practices.

I have been appreciative of the funded day that I am released from class to undertake my role as coordinator. It has afforded me the opportunity to observe pre-service teachers and support supervising teachers. It has allowed me to analyse the pre-service teacher survey responses and address the learning needs identified in these responses. The collation and analysis of the pre-placement and post-placement surveys ensured that needs were met during the placement and evaluated areas of growth. This data informed future practices, which we continue to share with our community of schools. Our school has transformed in many aspects through this initiative, and we have shared with other schools and will continue to develop relationships and increase learning within our community of schools. Together, we have used this opportunity to make major changes to improve placements. Our aspirations, documented in our logic model, have been realised, and this has encouraged us to initiate opportunities to fulfil our larger overarching vision of becoming a renowned teaching school.

Narrative 3: Luke, Professional-Experience Coordinator—Primary School
One of the goals of participating in this initiative was to improve the quality of placements at our school as well as across our network of schools. In collaboration with our university partner, a logic model was developed to guide us to achieve our purpose. To reach our goal, one of the milestones was for pre-service teachers to be well informed and supported. The school's induction and support processes were developed to provide a holistic understanding of the school as well as consistent support for the pre-service teachers. An induction video was created to introduce our school and ignite their hearts and minds. It was important that they could identify our school values, were introduced to our school culture, and could imagine themselves being immersed in and contributing to it. An induction pack was also created that included a booklet, professional learning journal, key policies and procedures, emergency procedures, a school map, and additional information. To gather formative data, a survey was given to the pre-service teachers at an orientation meeting on the first day of placement, to identify their strengths and learning needs. Following this, they were formally introduced to the principal, staff, and school community in staff meetings and school assemblies.

To support pre-service teachers with their learning needs, in-class support, professional conversations, and professional-learning sessions were conducted throughout the placement. Lunch or morning tea was provided to supervising and pre-service teachers and members of the leadership team; this was a tangible symbol of hospitality and investment in relationship-building and strengthening partnerships across the learning community. In addition to this, small gifts were presented to both pre-service and supervising teachers in a school assembly as a gesture of appreciation and recognition of the contribution and achievement of all parties. Lastly, a post-placement survey was conducted to seek pre-service teachers' feedback to improve the quality of future placements. Feedback from these surveys was shared with the school community through the school newsletter.

Over the past two years, the number of pre-service and supervising teachers has grown significantly. Before participating as a PEx Hub School, we hosted 10 pre-service teachers on average annually. In 2019, after joining this program for only three terms, we hosted 19. In 2020, despite facing the challenges of COVID-19, we hosted 22. In 2021, 22 pre-service teachers have been placed in the first two terms alone, with the goal of hosting over 40 this year. It is overwhelming to witness this impact as the quality of placements has improved significantly. My own experience of being a supervising teacher was "lonely" before participating in this program. Through participating in this program, supervising teachers are well supported by coordinators and the school leadership team. Together, we can improve the quality of placements. It is difficult to express in words the importance of the coordinator role, as the gift of time, so important to improve the quality of any placement, has been critical to the success of this initiative. I recommend that every school have funding to support this role to invest in the future of education.

Narrative 4: Soraya, Professional-Experience Coordinator—Secondary School PEx is a crucial component in developing quality teachers, and it is the collective responsibility of schools and universities. School leaders have institutional knowledge, an understanding of the demands of teaching, and awareness of the individual needs of students, parents, and community. Universities possess expertise in research and theory. The quality union between universities and schools enhances the support to pre-service teachers in applying theoretical knowledge to practice. The efficacy and success of the collaboration between initial teacher education providers and schools depends on the quality of these partnerships. The Hub School initiatives have enhanced and strengthened these partnerships and allowed them to establish more formal relationships, [**if you mean "additional formal relationships", leave as is; if you mean "relationships that are more formal", then hyphenate "more-formal"**] which has resulted in greater cooperation between these two stakeholders. The substantive achievements have led to an improved common understanding of how to prepare pre-service teachers for our profession, whilst also broadening our understanding of the context and demands of each institution. It has confirmed our moral purpose that despite contextual differences, our intention to strengthen and promote our profession binds us together.

Ongoing collaboration and an understanding of the needs and respective roles of all stakeholders has seen the development of a professional process that has resulted in effective communication between the university, schools, and pre-service teachers. This collaboration has effected change beyond the space of PEx, opening areas of discourse in assessment, reporting, and program writing. Professional conversations, research, and evaluation have occurred across school and university spaces. These initiatives have strengthened teacher efficacy and capacity whilst also providing pre-service teachers and academics with authentic experiences in formative assessment and programming. I have developed an in-depth knowledge of university administrative requirements and was able to establish and maintain connections between supervising and pre-service teachers and tertiary mentors. The stronger professional relationships between the supervising teachers and tertiary mentors has developed a common understanding of the needs of schools and universities and provided opportunities to work collectively to improve the support structures for pre-service teachers by simultaneously building the capacity and confidence of supervising teachers and mentors through strengthening their understanding and use of standards to provide specific feedback that aligns directly to the quality teaching framework (NSWDET, 2003).

Each placement has been differentiated through a simulated PDP, allowing the pre-service teachers to identify learning and professional goals that align with those of the graduate teaching standards. Qualitative feedback evidences the success of this project inside the classroom where high standards were maintained through quality teaching by the pre-service teachers. In conjunction with the tertiary mentor and supervising teacher, I have been able to support pre-service teachers who are not meeting the required standards. This process has been underpinned by mutual respect and understanding whilst maintaining standards consistent with the values of public education. Early identification and a systematically developed structure

have enabled pre-service teachers to successfully complete their placements whilst modelling a cycle of improvement and growth.

Effective mentoring skills needed by supervising teachers have been further developed through evidence-based professional learning courses delivered by our university partner. These courses unpacked different models of mentoring and were instrumental in establishing the position of teacher mentor, whose role is primarily to nurture, advise, guide, encourage, and facilitate authentic learning experiences for pre-service teachers (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Cornu, 2005). In addition, the teacher mentor provides an extra layer of support for the supervising teachers, communicating regularly and providing leadership and professional learning where appropriate. While supervising teachers mentored the pre-service teachers to be classroom ready, teacher mentors focussed on their holistic development and negotiated their journey to be school-ready. This was guided through the pre-service teacher journal, which targeted aspects of the teaching role outside the classroom that have traditionally been positioned in the first year of teaching. Supervising teachers consistently engaged with reflective practice on all aspects of their teaching, and the collaborative nature of our approach ensured that the outcomes formed the catalyst for continued improvement. The celebrated success of this program has significantly improved teachers' willingness to become supervising teachers due to the supportive structure that underpins the organisation, implementation, and reflection of each placement. The primary focus was "teachers helping teachers", resulting in resourcing elements of the program through release time. Undoubtedly providing extended periods of time for the pre-service and supervising teachers to work collaboratively and develop positive relationships and mutual understanding is an outcome that underpins the success of the program. This has allowed supervising teachers to build positive relationships with pre-service teachers, understand external factors such as part-time jobs and university assessment requirements, familiarise pre-service teachers with school expectations, and model excellent teaching practice.

Additionally, supervising teachers have used this time to provide timely and constructive feedback with three important components: feed up, feedback, and feed forward (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This school-wide consistent formative assessment approach, with particular focus on teaching standards, has allowed pre-service teachers to achieve their goals. To further enrich the placement, 21st-century multi-modal learning spaces were created through a collaborative approach with the pre-service teachers and were made available to all of them to complement their planning when focussing on differentiation. Changes to learning spaces included more agile and responsive classroom furniture to facilitate learning in a variety of formations. The availability of innovative and reliable technology encouraged pre-service teachers to engage with the latest technology appropriate to their programming. Better facilitation of observation and team-teaching spaces was another feature of these multi-modal learning spaces, in which breakout rooms complemented the newly developed classrooms. These forms of technology were necessary to support self-reflection and encourage the use of modern technology to create authentic tasks and experiences for students. This strategy ensured flexibility and maximum use

of resources, allowing the budget to accommodate the purchase of additional technology resources, laptops, and filming equipment to assist pre-service teachers when completing their Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). I also collaborated with the university to establish consistent assessment practices during a final placement with the introduction of a TPA that included participating in training, moderation, and the actual marking of the assessment.

The influence of this partnership project also extended into connections with rural and remote schools, providing invaluable support, resources, and networks as remote schools hosted placements for the first time in a decade. It delivered a greater sense of connection between all stakeholders, rural and remote schools, university partners, and local network schools. To connect with rural and remote schools and build support structures for supervising teachers, a professional-learning module was developed and delivered. The impact of this initiative was measured through increased confidence and successful completion of placements by pre-service teachers in those schools. The link between a school-based initiative, a Future Teachers Club, provided the opportunity for school students to explore teaching and develop strong leadership skills. This was achieved by the student members of the club attending university lectures and tutorials that focussed on community engagement in assessment. Furthermore, expert supervising teachers collaborated with academics to mentor and prepare Master of Teaching pre-service teachers for their first placement, which alleviated some of their anxiety.

The future success of the program will depend on sustaining the collaborative and positive relationships between all stakeholders. Modelling our school's experiences and initiatives to the broader network of schools is a pathway to be explored. The evaluation of our school's model will allow for improvements and modifications for both pre-service and supervising teachers.

Narrative 5: Natalie, Professional-Experience Coordinator—University
The role of ITE in developing quality teachers for the future has produced sustained and longstanding debate and discussion (Hanushek, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Marshall et al., 2012; Meyer & French, 1965; Vescio et al., 2008; Wade, 1985; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework, released in 2012 by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, addressed the importance of designing an effective and sustainable system to foster a culture of professional practice and learning through reflection, feedback, goalsetting, and review, leading to growth for all teachers and ultimately influencing teacher quality. As PEx is a mandatory component of all initial teacher education courses in Australia, it is significant that securing quality placements has become increasingly difficult as the demand for places exceeds their availability, particularly in certain stages of learning and for specific subjects. It is a very labour-intensive and expensive process for both schools and providers in that a supervising teacher must be provided to mentor, support, and assess each pre-service teacher, and this is usually in addition to conducting their own teaching duties at the school. Initial teacher education providers have also traditionally provided support for these placements by allocating

a tertiary mentor to liaise with the supervising teacher to support the administrative and assessment practices of the placement.

In 2013 the NSW Government released "Great Teaching, Inspired Learning—A blueprint for action" (NSWDEC); a key issue raised in the document was the quality of placements and their assessment, including the role of supervising teachers. The paper outlined five outcomes and eight associated actions to improve teacher quality. Five of the eight actions related to mentoring, including Outcome 4.4, which states that teachers supervising placements will be required to undertake professional learning, and Outcome 4.7, which states that the assessment of PEx will be rigorous and consistent across initial teacher education programs. In direct response to these desired outcomes and actions, the PEx coordinators from our partnership schools have collaborated with academics from the university in recent years to co-assess the final year TPAs, which involved training and moderation sessions in addition to the marking of scripts. This opportunity provided the university with invaluable access to knowledge and insight into current school-based planning and assessment practice to inform initial-based teacher curriculum and pedagogical design. It also provided our school-based teacher educators with an opportunity to contribute to the theoretical assessment of pre-service teachers' classroom readiness in a tangible way and inform future revisions of the teaching-performance instrument.

PEx is an opportunity for professional learning by all participants (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006), but until recently there has been limited professional development available to teachers who undertake the mentoring of pre-service teachers. Despite this, supervising teachers continue to play a significant role as school-based teacher educators, yet remain unrecognised as a distinct professional group (Murray as cited in Leshem, 2014), as there is no distinction between the role of teacher and that of mentor in schools (Timperley, 2001). This is complicated by the fact that it is widely and uncritically accepted that a good teacher will make a good mentor (Schwille, 2008). Supervising teachers have reported significant benefits from mentoring when they participate in training where they can review their long-standing practices and assumptions (Graham, 2006), especially when these courses are associated with a university-school partnership program that provides them with opportunities to work collaboratively to discuss the progress of their pre-service teachers or their own teaching (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). I have worked collaboratively with our school-based PEx coordinators to deliver online professional learning at our partnership schools to address mentoring practices, the construction of feedback, and specifically how feedback can serve the building of professional learning plans for teachers. Participants provided feedback indicating that they valued the opportunity to share mentoring experiences with their peers, engage with evidence-based practice, and gain an insight into university practices in relation to the management of placements. This opportunity allowed me to gain an understanding of current school-based mentoring capacity and identify areas where additional tertiary support could be provided. Two specific areas emerged: the development of critical written feedback by supervising teachers (which aligns with the teaching standards) to enhance pre-service teachers' outcomes and inform the construction of the final report; and the management of pre-service teachers at

risk of failure. Professional relationships fostered during partnership meetings were critical to the success of these online sessions, which involved collaborative planning to customise the professional learning, the synchronous facilitation of groupwork, and the management of learning materials for participants by the school-based PEx coordinators at the school sites.

17.3 Building Bridges Through Transformative Talk in the Third Space

Supervising teachers must be acknowledged as capacity-builders for implementing reform as they simultaneously enrich their own practices in both mentoring and teaching, and the pre-service teachers' practice (Hudson, 2010). They will be more effective where they have support outside of the traditional mentoring triad (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009), specifically from other teachers in their schools or from external networks of peers (Whisnant et al., 2005); moreover, having a community to problem-solve and share ideas helps to build confidence and expertise over time (Bakhurst, 2009; Parise & Forret, 2008). It has been suggested that professional identity is shaped by participating in various CoPs, and that having a sense of identity is a crucial aspect of learning (Wenger, 1998). Avis (2009) points out the transformative nature of talk and explores the concept of co-configuration, whereby participants become learning partners through interdependency. Collegial dialogue informed by ideas, theory, inquiry, reflection, and co-participation in joint activity defines PEx as a CoP (Niesz, 2010) that provides opportunities for supervising teachers to observe and assess pre-service teachers with their peers using a framework of professional conversations (Schneider, 2008).

Schools and universities have been criticised for a perceived disconnect between coursework and fieldwork (Mason, 2013; Taylor et al., 2014); the establishment of a hybrid or third space as a site for collaboration and innovation could help to reconcile academic and practitioner knowledge (Robson & Mtika, 2017; Taylor et al., 2014) and understand the complex nature of liaison work (Martin et al., 2011; Zeichner et al., 2015). This third space could be framed by school-university-based partnerships that acknowledge the evaluative and educative roles of supervision and aim to distribute both workload and power to create equity for initial teacher educators (Leshem, 2014). Mentoring has been described as the second language of teaching (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010), with an effective mentor being one who can learn a new language (Orland-Barak as cited in Paulsen et al., 2015). This new language serves as a channel for communities that do not usually share practice (Niesz, 2010), and initial teacher educators must learn to use a common language to sustain professional conversations. A French study of initial teacher education suggests the need for joint training of school- and university-based mentors to combine their respective skills and construct a common dialogue or language (Cartaut & Bertone, 2009).

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 (Jones et al., 2016) with university-based teacher-education programs. There is also a need for collaboration between supervising teachers, which requires additional time and space for mentors to meet regularly during a placement. We learn, grow, and change through sustained practice or situated activity in a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and it is the differences between communities, and the subsequent bridges built between them, that hold the most promise for generating change and growth to shape new practices and identities, and, in this way, reconcile any differences (Niesz, 2010). This reinforces the critical need for continuing collaborative work between employers, universities, regulatory authorities, school leaders, and most importantly supervising teachers in schools (Leonard, 2012).

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Chapter 18
The Dynamics of Communities of Practice During Professional Placement: Early-Career Teacher Reflections

Debra Donnelly, Gideon Boadu, Marcus Neale, Peta O'Keefe, and Haylee Cummins

Abstract During professional placements, pre-service teachers draw on a variety of mechanisms to support their performance in schools as they develop their teacher identity, and explore ways to apply their theoretical and research-based knowledge acquired in their university studies. The pre-service teachers are supported in this endeavour by more-experienced teacher professionals who act as models, mentors, and advisors, and with whom the pre-service teachers work collaboratively. Using (Hadar & Brody in Teaching and Teacher Education 8:1641–1651, 2010) three-layer community of practice (CoP) model as the lens, this research explores the dynamics of this support and collaboration within professional placements and the placements' effectiveness as preparation for a teaching career. The research used survey and interview data from primary and secondary early-career teachers to capture their reflections in the light of their teacher career experience. The research suggests that mentoring and support for pre-service teachers is variable, but that at its best it is a whole-school concern and that the inclusion of pre-service teachers into teacher CoPs has benefits for both pre-service and practising teachers.

Keywords Community of practice · Professional placement · Dynamic · Reflection · Early career

18.1 Introduction

Pre-service teachers are faced with a myriad of challenges when on professional placement in schools as they explore ways to apply their theoretical and research-based knowledge acquired in their university studies, and work to develop their teacher identity. This chapter examines the variety of mechanisms available to support

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_18

their development using the conceptualisation of communities of practice (CoP). Giving prominence to the participant voices and interpretations, this phenomenological study sought the reflections of early-career primary and secondary school teachers (n = 102) about factors that affected their success and the satisfaction they felt with their field experiences, and the effectiveness of the preparation for their subsequent teaching career.

18.1.1 Communities of Practice in Schools

To explore the dynamics within professional placements, this research used Hadar and Brody's (2010) three-layer community of practice (CoP) model as the lens to explore the dynamics of pre-service teachers' experiences during professional placement. CoPs are defined as social organisations involving learning and participation. They represent a group people who share common interests with a view to improving practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014). These groups take many forms in scale, scope, and mode of interaction. In schools, these forms include faculty, stage, or whole-school groupings, and can have a subject, grade, or whole-school focus. They serve multiple purposes including professional learning, enhanced performance, and promotion of school improvement (Little, 2002; MacPhail et al., 2014). Within such groups, "each participant in the community of practice finds a unique place and gains a unique identity" (Wenger, 1998, p. 76), but work together to avoid isolationist practice and create spaces where the members learn from and with each other and attain professional growth (Byrk, 2016; Hadar & Brody, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the CoP is conceptualised as a network of pre-service teachers, experienced teachers, other school staff, and university supervisors working together in schools to improve practice during professional placements.

Hadar and Brody (2010) proposed a three-layer model to represent the workings of CoP, where each level leads on to the next. The first layer represents the *Breaking of Isolation.* At this stage there is space for safe discussion, social and professional interaction, and cross-faculty or cross-discipline collaboration. These bring a group together for professional connections and enhancement. This communication around the common connections then leads to a second layer, *Improvement of Teaching.* In this layer, teaching practice is enriched, and the group responds to new policies and initiatives.

Professional learning regarding research and teaching and a resultant increase in self-efficacy and competency provides the third layer of the model, *Professional Development*. Brody and Hadar (2010) argue that the multi-layered process leads to professional development with the adoption of new teaching dispositions and a stronger sense of efficacy. This model has been applied as an analytical lens to the data in this research (Fig. 18.1).

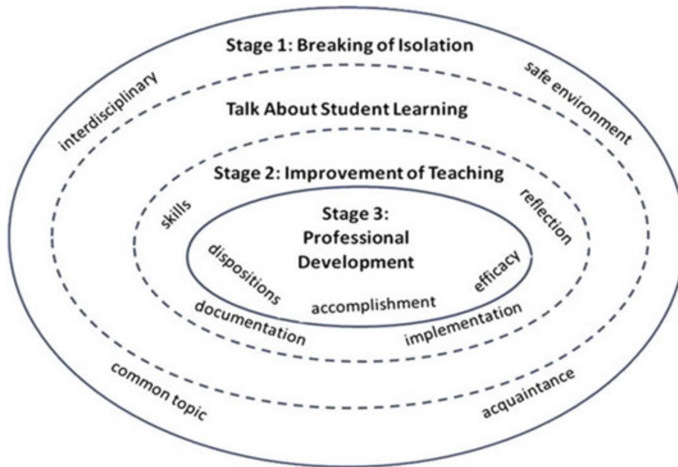

Fig. 18.1 Layered model of professional development based on the professional development community paradigm (Hadar & Brody, 2010)

18.1.2 Research Design and Data Analysis

This project is a phenomenological study, as it is primarily interested in "experiences of participants and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 16). To ensure the voices of participants are accurately represented, this study draws on verbatim extracts from the dataset. This chapter reports on the findings of Phase 1 of the project, which was to attain human-ethics approval (Approval number H-2020-0284) from the University of Newcastle, Australia, and to develop the following research questions:

1. Who or what forms pre-service teachers' communities of practice while they are on professional placement in schools?
2. What factors do early-career teachers report were positive contributors to their placement experience?

The primary data-collection methods included an online survey and individual semi-structured interviews. The survey provided data from a diverse group of 102 beginning teachers. Participants, who were drawn from the independent and public school sectors, taught in either primary or secondary contexts. The group's teaching experience was fairly evenly spread across the range of one to five years, with three reporting that they were yet to reach the first year mark. Ninety-eight percent of participants were located in Australia, with the vast majority (79%) teaching in New South Wales (NSW) schools. This concentration is not surprising, given that all the researchers are based in regional NSW, as are the majority of their network connections. The survey data was enhanced by the inclusion of requests for extended answers, such as "Please justify your response" and "Please give examples from your placement experiences". Inductive and deductive coding helped the researchers

make judgements and evaluations across the datasets and individual responses. The use of NVivo software facilitated the iterative process and enhanced researchers' reflectivity. The data was thematically coded followed by a round of theoretical coding derived from Hadar and Brody's (2010) three-layer model of CoP in teacher education (Patton, 2002).

18.2 Findings

18.2.1 Three Stages of the Hadar and Brody's Model

Stage 1: Breaking the Isolation

Eighty-six percent of students reported feeling welcomed at their placement school. Most participants reported feeling that they were in a safe environment where they were comfortable and connected to the staff through the common goal of providing positive learning outcomes for their classes. Some reported that their supervisors made great efforts to make them feel part of the school. This was the case for Participant 36, who explained, "My mentor was wonderful. Nothing was too much trouble when I arrived in the town, from school to general living information. She showed me around and enthusiastically introduced me to everyone." The majority of schools allowed the pre-service teachers entry into their CoP, and even engaged them in discussions about student learning and how the pre-service teachers would navigate their classroom encounters.

A small, but significant, group of 14% of participants reported that they were excluded by the teachers at their placement schools, and so did not reach the initial engagement level within the CoP. These participants expressed disappointment at their treatment during their PEx, and as a result several questioned their choice of career. Participant 79 had a very negative placement experience, as the supervisor was perceived to be uninterested and the pre-service teachers felt disrespected: "My CT [colleague teacher] was very dismissive and often unavailable to me. I sat down for a meeting to discuss my first lesson plans with my CT and she was literally shopping for clothing on her phone. I very much felt like 'a praccy' rather than someone who was part of the staff cohort…. I managed to finish but it was a miserable time." The experience of this fraction of participants with their teacher colleagues suggests that even though a CoP could be focussed on a common goal of sharing experience and improving practice, individual members of the community might not support all aspects of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Stage 2: Improvement of Teaching

When asked if they were satisfied with the level of support that they were given while on placement, 83% of participants answered yes. They cited the advice, direction, emotional support, and resource sharing of their teaching colleagues as effective assistance. These responses indicate that the majority of participants were able to

reach Stage 2 of the Hadar and Brody model, Improvement of Teaching, at least to some extent. They were novice teachers who had benefited from the interactions, guidance and classroom experiences of their more-experienced colleagues.

Again, a smaller but significant group of participants felt unsupported in their endeavours to become teachers. Those who did not feel well-supported complained of being treated with indifference, or worse, with distrust. This minority felt that they were not given clear direction and claimed that the university courses and the university supervisor were of little use to them in the reality of the classroom. They also complained that the university requirements for lesson plans and assignments were an impediment to their progress and not realistic in the "real world". Participant 4's view exemplifies this concern: "I feel like I asked for support and it wasn't provided. There was too much paperwork and uni [sic] assignments. I left my internship feeling really jaded and like I didn't have much more experience. My CT said 'goodbye' to me at the end of my prac [sic] through a window. That's a reflection of the relationship we had."

Stage 3: Professional Development

Participants rated "being part of the teaching community" at the bottom of their list of "best aspects of your professional placement". "Learning from more-experienced teachers" and "practising teaching skills" were at the top of the list. This suggests that the majority of these participants were not permitted entry into the final stage as a contributing member of the CoP when they were on professional placements. Although, as individuals, many participants grew in their professional knowledge, adopted new teaching dispositions, and gained a stronger sense of efficacy, few felt that they were allowed to contribute to the CoP, as they were generally viewed as novices with little to offer their more experienced colleagues. As Participant 77 expressed: "I like being a teacher much better than prac [sic] student. I didn't like always being judged and my ideas were not taken seriously."

However, three participants reported becoming valuable and respected members of the CoP. Participant 1 reflected that "one of the best aspects of the job is the wonderful sense of value and this collegiality that I experienced on placement and which I still experience today as a classroom teacher". Participant 32 reported, "My teacher introduced me to the staff, included me in [professional development] and [professional learning communities], [and] asked me to collaborate as I would be up with all the new ideas."

18.3 The Pre-service Teacher School Support Structure

Participants viewed a range of stakeholders as having a role in the success, or otherwise, of their PEx and, by extension, in their inclusion in the school community. These stakeholders were identified as: the supervising teachers; university supervisors; placement coordinators; other staff members; their pre-service teacher peers; and resource and advice sharing on social media. The following section of the paper

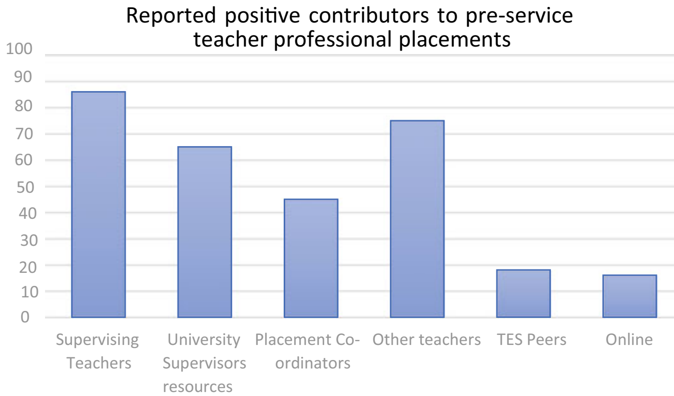

Fig. 18.2 Graph showing differing levels of reported professional placement support (n = 102)

provides synopses of each of these supports in terms of scale and, using the voices of participants, summarises the attributes of and experiences with each (Fig. 18.2).

18.4 The Supervising Teachers

The supervising teacher was viewed as the most influential contributor and the gatekeeper to the CoP and the primary support for the PEx. Most participants viewed this role as the one that set the tone of the placement experience. Eighty-six percent of the pre-service teachers graded their supervisor as supportive, indicating that they were "extremely helpful or supportive" (48%) or "very supportive and helpful" (27%). Three quarters of the participants scored their supervising teacher highly and cited a number of elements that contributed to the success of the experience.

Many participants described their supervising teacher as supportive, generous, and friendly. These supervisors were applauded for their caring and consistent approach and for working to solve performance issues, rather than just highlighting them. These comments were typical of many: "Both of my teachers were kind, respectful, and great leaders. They gave me advice that was solution-focussed and meshed well with the goals they set" (Participant 24). Participant 13 valued the balance between autonomy and support: "My ST [supervising teacher] was not overbearing and left me to my own devices, which is what I preferred. She was there when I needed her and always provided clear and helpful feedback. If there were any issues, she was there to help fix them immediately."

Sharing teaching plans and techniques as well as resources was much appreciated, as was constructive advice. Participant 14 reiterated these ideas but added another element, which was also mentioned by another 20% of participants: the importance of feeling trusted to teach the class and being given the freedom to find an independent

teaching style. This participant appreciated the opportunity and freedom to develop their own teaching style:

> My supervising teacher was extremely helpful, offering to share resources with me. She always gave constructive feedback, and boosted my self-confidence within myself. She backed me 100% of the way and trusted me with her class. She allowed me to teach in a manner that reflected my style while also providing expertise to further develop my understanding (Participant 14).

Twenty-two percent of respondents graded their supervisors as making the placement more stressful and difficult. The issues cited here often concerned lack of organisation, support, and trust. Participant 21 described it succinctly: "Feedback was degrading and never constructive." Some supervisors were criticised for being inconsistent and not treating the pre-service teachers as professionals. "[The supervisor] made conflicting requests, changed mind frequently, allowed students to talk to her while I was teaching, undermined student discipline measures, and made them think that I was not their real teacher." A few participants commented on the negative aspects of this issue, having supervisors who expected that they would mimic their teaching style and exclusively use strategies modelled by the supervisor or commonly used in the faculty. Participant 17 commented, "There was a lack of feedback. Felt like I was an inconvenience. Was only interested in me teaching their style, anything else was wrong. It was just an overload of information, requirements, and content over the 10 weeks which saw me getting, on average, about five hours of sleep each weekday night."

18.4.1 University Supervisors

Sixty-five percent of participants reported that their university supervisor contributed positively to their placement experience. Many of this group commented that their university supervisor was a source of support and encouragement and gave useful feedback on their teaching performance. Participant 36's report was typical of this group: "My uni supervisor was always supportive, held regular group and one-on-one meetings and always followed up, very impressed." And along the same lines, Participant 12 commented, "My university supervisor made a great deal of contribution—support, positive and critical feedback. Periodic visits to make sure we are on track and a really supportive attitude."

However, 35% judged their university supervisor as not making a positive contribution to their placement. A number of reasons were cited for this dissatisfaction. A few reported that the university supervisor was not aware of the job requirements. For example, Participant 26 commented, "The supervisor wasn't aware of the expectations of my placement so calls had to be made to the uni [sic] while he was there. The school was not impressed." Some saw the university supervisor as an unwanted interruption. The most extreme example of this was Participant 11: "We had fortnightly check-ins [with the university supervisor] which were a bit of a chinwag, and

most of my [school] supervisors hated it. The last thing they wanted to do at the end of a full day of teaching, and supervising me, was to sit down for an hour and speak with the university representative."

18.4.2 Placement Coordinators

Fifty-five percent of the group reported that the placement coordinator at the school did not contribute to their placement, and many acknowledged that they were unaware of the role. Comments from this group included "I never met this person." and "I can't remember there being a coordinator, I contacted the head teacher". Of the 45% who acknowledged that there was a placement coordinator in the school, a further 25% saw the role as having little impact on their experience. Several participants commented that the coordinator was of little to no help to them, while others saw the role as administrative. Many responded that the coordinator was a part of the welcome at the commencement of the placement, while Participant 15 recalled that the coordinator did the sign-off at the completion of the experience: "They made no contribution besides signing my final report, which they did not write."

In contrast to these reports of minimal to no involvement, three participants reported that their coordinators had played a major role in their school experience. These three coordinators ran professional-development and reflection sessions for the pre-service teachers and worked with the supervisors to mentor the novice teachers, giving them advice and helping them to become familiar with the school policies and systems. These three pre-service teachers expressed that this extra mentoring and support from the coordinator enriched their placement experience in the classroom and across the whole school, contributed significantly to the success of their placement, and enhanced their work readiness. Participant 10's comment captured the sentiment expressed by these pre-service teachers: "My coordinator was great. She was extremely helpful, supportive, and knowledgeable. I know from my pre-service teacher colleagues that this was not commonly offered, but it was highly valuable, and I feel it should be part of the placement program in all schools."

18.4.3 Other Members of Staff

The majority (75%) of participants acknowledged the contribution of other staff members to their placement experience. For three-quarters of the participants, support and involvement took the form of mentoring, classroom observations, resource sharing, and encouragement. One participant's comment provides a good summary of the supports reported by many:

> Yes, [the] head teacher was very hands-on and was able to provide lots of professional assistance. The other staff in the staff room were friendly and gave any advice and resources freely. They were open to me visiting their rooms to observe. Certain teachers purposely

demonstrated certain lessons or concepts for my benefit. They encouraged me to branch out and be involved in lots of activities (Partcipant 44).

A small group (1%) were undecided, and 16% reported that other staff members were not involved in their experience. Two participants were dissatisfied with the degree of support given by other members of staff: "I was supported to some extent but often felt very left to my own devices" (Participant 3); and "Yes, [there was support,] but could have been more. It felt like they were too busy to really pay attention at times" (Participant 27).

18.4.4 Other Supports

When asked who had been their other supports, a number of participants (18%) nominated the other students on placement at the school as support sand as members of the CoP: "It was great to have other students as company in the staffroom. I didn't know the other students before prac [sic] but we got close and helped each other find our way in the school and deal with the university requirements, which were too much" (Participant **[?]**). A small group (16%) discussed the support provided by online communities. "I was on my own in my school, so I found asking questions and complaining on social media good. My placement course had a group and I liked to hear how others were going and ask about things I was not sure of" (Participant 57). A few participants cited teacher professional groups and blogs as good places to get information and advice. As one participant acknowledged, "I subscribe to a whole lot of teacher resource websites. I use them to give me ideas for my lessons. They are good but sometimes it feels like overload" (Participant 58).

18.5 Conclusions

The responses from these practising teachers about their professional experience as preparation for their teaching career provide a mixed report card. On one hand, many viewed the experience as satisfactory, and some as excellent. Three-quarters of participants in Phase 1 of this project judged their professional experience as an adequate (11%) or better preparation for their teaching career. "A very good preparation" scored 32%, as did "an excellent and comprehensive preparation".

While 25% of participants saw their placements as "having some gaps and deficiencies as a preparation for my teaching career", no participant graded their placements as "a completely inadequate preparation for my teaching career". For these participants the placement was often viewed as an experience to be endured, rather than as a productive learning experience. An unsympathetic teaching environment, heavy loads (particularly the paperwork requirements from the school and university), and lack of support were cited as reasons for their poor experience.

The data indicates that while many participants were able to participate in the CoP of the faculty or school to some extent, most were not given opportunities to plan and collaborate with their colleagues to create new initiatives. As Participant 71 found, “Some teachers were reluctant to allow my independence as they didn’t want to have to re-work things when I left. They saw my ideas as interfering with their plans and so I pretty well had to go along with them.”

Perhaps, as some participants suggested, full membership of the CoP is limited by the impermanence of the pre-service teacher position in the school and the limited timeframe of the placements. Another likely contributing factor is the junior positioning of the pre-service teachers compared to their colleagues, which will be further explored in Phase 2 of this project. Nevertheless, multi-level collaboration is proffered as enriching for all members of a team (Driskell et al., 2018) and research suggests that that TES can bring new skills and perceptions that can enhance the entire professional learning community (Tican & Deniz, 2019). This necessitates due recognition of pre-service teachers as valuable members of the CoP.

It is clear that the major supports for the pre-service teachers on professional placements are the supervising teacher and the other staff members. Acceptance into this group sets the stage for developing the skills demanded in a contemporary school environment. It is these teachers who foster the development of the pre-service teachers by serving as models, mentors, and critics as the pre-service teachers assume the mantle of teacher. The attitude of this CoP to the pre-service teachers’ preparation, tuition, and classroom practice was seen usually to be led by the supervising and head teachers, and was cited as the most strongly determining factor in the success or otherwise of the placement.

The data indicates that the role of the university supervisor was not performed with consistent quality across the participant cohort. Many participants reported positive experiences, but over a third of participants said that the university supervisor was ineffectual and, in some cases, contributed to their placement problems. In some instances, it appears that the university supervisor was viewed as an intrusion, rather than as a useful source of feedback and advice, and as the conduit between the university and school processes and requirements. Further research focussed on the recruitment, training, and effective practice of this important contributor to the professional-placement experience is needed.

Another area of concern is the contribution and impact of the coordinator of the placement in schools. Eighty percent of the participants saw this role as having little or no impact on their placement experience. Recently a Department of Education review of PEx supported these findings (Loughland et al., 2021). It found that the placement coordination in schools varied in quality and generally had a low profile, and concluded that the effectiveness of the role depended on the quality and motivation of individual teachers who undertook it. Further, the review found that evidence suggested that the coordinator had the potential to raise the profile and status of professional experience as a core activity of the school and improve the quality and consistency of supervision. The placement coordinator was found to have an important role in creating inclusive opportunities for the pre-service teachers in their CoP; in many schools, this potential is untapped.

There are avenues for further research suggested by the Phase 1 findings of this project. Both the contribution of the pre-service teachers peer group when on placement and the supplementary role of social media resources and advice require closer investigation, as it appears that the benefits of both could be more consciously harnessed by pre-service teachers during their fieldwork experience. The addition of the teaching staff participants in Phase 2 of this study will provide multiple perspectives on the workings of school CoPs. Their insights and suggestions will be incorporated with the Phase 1 participant reports to gain a holistic picture of the workings of CoP in schools, and to identify ways to improve outcomes for the pre-service teachers and the school community.

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Chapter 19
Creating a Compulsory Subject Requiring Authentic Community Service Learning: A Framework for Change

Amy Tsiorvas and Michelle J. Eady

Abstract This chapter will explore the key themes that underpin university-designed subjects reflective of key service learning and community-based stakeholder engagement. These themes can be used to form a core element in any teacher-education degree that incorporates design, feedback, and implementation. The chapter will be supported through a case study of a compulsory subject that has been implemented at the University of Wollongong to provide a working example that other initial teacher education providers can use in their own course and subject design.

Keywords Teacher education · Work-integrated learning · Service learning · Community · Subject design

19.1 Introduction

Cultivating partnerships with communities through service learning is a vital aspect for preparing profession-ready graduates (Salam et al., 2019). Fostering students in the knowledge of how to give back to their community benefits not only society, but also the students themselves. These partnerships provide opportunities for students to learn more about critical issues in society that they may not have realised were important, and highlight issues arising that may be detrimental to the community (Bandy, 2016).

This chapter reports on an example of a service-learning subject designed and implemented in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong. This subject immerses pre-service teachers in a community/service-learning placement in an effort to enhance their sense of social equity and justice within society (UOW, 2019). This six-credit-point, final-year subject has the power to instil a sense of community engagement, providing students with an authentic opportunity to experience giving back to their community. The pre-service teachers who participate in this subject are given the opportunity to use this experience in their own classrooms. In

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_19

this way, pre-service teachers can pass this knowledge on to their own future students, embedding lessons learned through their experience into key learning areas in their classroom. In addition, the learning outcomes of this subject include the opportunity for pre-service teachers to recognise, be more discerning of, and address the equity issues and points of disadvantage in their future school communities.

19.2 Literature Review

The teaching profession is a career that makes a difference in the lives of children (Deringöl, 2020). According to Yenilmez et al. (2018), teaching is known to be one of the most preferred professions, and teaching children, specifically, is perceived to be one of the more motivating professions. However, many scholars have questioned whether the aspects of traditional teaching methods based on didactic lectures and studying textbooks are particularly effective in motivating pre-service teachers to learn their craft (Lai & Hui, 2021). As a result, many higher-education institutions endeavour to enhance their teacher-education programs to incorporate real-world learning opportunities and equip their students for the world of work. In doing so, higher-education institutions are ensuring that their graduates are global citizens who are prepared for work in a pluralistic world (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017; Lai & Hui, 2021). In an attempt to reach this goal, higher-education institutions embed work-integrated learning (WIL) practices, which include service learning, internships and placements, and forms of experiential learning.

Service learning, in which students participate in community-service activities as a path toward achieving learning outcomes, allows opportunities for students to learn skills and transfer theory to practice (Salam et al., 2019). Dewey (1938), who discussed service learning by explaining the importance of learning by doing, first raised its importance as a collective idea **[what's a collective idea?]**. Service learning provides many benefits for students, including enhanced academic performance, commitment, leadership, and workplace skills (Astin et al., 2000). It helps students to think more deeply about how they would face real-world problems, and to learn more about the industry in which they will work (Hart, 2015; Salam et al., 2019). The benefits for industry partners include students providing the workplace with new perspectives, and potentially providing avenues to innovative research outcomes from the partnering institution that can benefit local-economy partners (Simola, 2009). Salam et al. (2019) also assert that not only industry partners, but the entire community benefits from service-learning projects. In this way, the university, too, may benefit by creating partnerships for students and providing pathways for institutions to participate in higher-education-driven research that allows the university partner to collect data that influences the industry in question (Farooq, 2018). Service learning as an element of pre-service teacher training provides a connection to valuable knowledge and skills that future teachers can use to inform, recognise, and address real-world problems in their own classrooms (UOW, 2019).

The literature highlights the benefits of volunteering as a significant element in both strengthening university education and providing a foundation for graduates' future work (González et al., 2019). Volunteering programs have been shown to improve the education of schoolchildren, and in some cases their mental health has seen significant gains (Bochner, 2003). Bochner (2003) found that some service-learning experiences allowed these pre-service teachers to work with different cultural backgrounds, creating a relationship where both parties can strengthen their knowledge and create a sense of belonging for that child. Similarly, Soong (2013) saw a direct correlation between volunteer pre-service teachers immersing themselves in multi-cultural schools, thus enhancing their cross-cultural skills, and increasing their own employability. Ultimately, the literature, as discussed by Villardón-Gallego et al. (2018), points to a consensus that these opportunities lead to improvement for schoolchildren, through the enhanced skills and attitudes of pre-service teachers who have participated in service learning. However, service learning takes time and money; in some cases, the amount of travel time can extend the hours in the working day, leaving little time for paid work or university assessments (Hoskyn et al., 2020).

Recently, students have not been able to complete their service-learning opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Hoskyn et al., 2020). While service-learning opportunities have been negatively affected during this time, it is important to note that allowing students a service-learning placement both during and after a crisis presents a valuable learning experience. Service learning at such times provides an opportunity for students to experience perspectives other than their own, and allows them to better understand the issues within a community that may not have arisen during a standard service learning placement block. During times of crisis, service learning can become critical to the community, with many different volunteering opportunities for students that can expand their skills and provide invaluable experience in preparation for their world of work. These experiences can be in the form of students applying their knowledge and skills in a real work setting, ultimately improving future workplace performance (Aprile & Knight, 2020).

19.3 Context

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is a higher-education institution located on the south coast of New South Wales. This regional university is home to over 35,000 students on13 campuses globally, and offers 332 degrees (UOW, 2021). In 2020, UOW was ranked 31st in the world for social and economic impact, and second in Australia for graduate employer satisfaction (Times Higher Education, 2021; Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, 2021). Service learning and other work-integrated learning opportunities for students is one of the defining factors that has resulted in this impact.

The School of Education, housed within the Faculty of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (ASSH), introduced the implementation of service learning, as seen in this case study, over a decade ago. The purpose of this design was built on

the foundation of a substantial body of research suggesting that future teachers who engage in voluntary and community-based service learning as part of their teacher preparation develop skills that help them as teachers, citizens, and people (UOW, 2019). For the duration of this subject, students were able to undertake a community-service placement that alerted them to the moral imperative of working with community partners in areas of disadvantage, and assisted them in gaining a sense of social equity and justice. The subject facilitates students undertaking a placement in a community-based organisation such as a homework centre, disability service, Aboriginal mentoring service, youth and children's facility, aged-care home, soup kitchen, drug and homeless program, or refugee tutoring program, to name a few. The students are also required to participate in a series of campus-based workshops introducing social equity and justice issues in Australian society and the purpose and benefits of service learning for educators.

During the course of the subject, students are required to find placement opportunities in organisations that clearly work in areas of social equity and justice and provide ongoing support to the community. These self-sourced placements require students to spend a minimum of 30 h of service learning, which provides the basis for assessments in the subject. The model that underpins this subject is the Duncan and Kopperud (2008) learning cycle of Contemplation, Action, Reflection, and Commitment (CARC) (Fig. 19.1). Using the CARC model in this service-learning subject shows students the types of thinking that they can implement during service-learning experiences. Each phase can overlap the others as the placement progresses (Duncan & Kopperud, 2008).

While the placements are self-sourced, the subject coordinator provides students with a list of partner organisations that has been created based on past participation and new interest. The students can then choose their proposed service-learning placement. Students are also encouraged to reach out and form relationships with organisations beyond those on the suggested list that may be of particular interest to them. Templates of letters of introduction are provided for the students, which they can amend and personalise to help facilitate the process.

At the onset of the subject, the students are presented with a subject outline, which identifies for the students the subject learning outcomes from the School of Education, as well as a list of the aligning Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) (Table 19.1).

19.4 Assessment

Students are expected to research inequity and disadvantage in their first assessment task, which allows them to contemplate the existing challenges within Australian society. Through this process students choose a specific area and organisation, in which to engage in action (Fig. 19.1); specifically, to complete their 30 h of service learning.

The CARC Learning Cycle:
Contemplation, Action, Reflection, Commitment

Contemplation is to deliberate consciously about the challenges, needs and expectations of the service experience.

Action is the on-site work that you undertake when matched with a community partner.

Reflection is the lens through which you think critically about the experience, deeply considering how the action intentionally links to specific learning goals.

Commitment is a disciplined effort to act upon your belief in the communal necessity of service and in the benefits it affords all involved.

Duncan, D. & Kopperud, J. (2008). Service-Learning Companion. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Fig. 19.1 The CARC model introduced to students in this subject. *Source* authors

The students then complete and present a service-learning portfolio as both a 10-min presentation for (Part A) and written report for (Part B). In Part A, students share their experiences with their cohort as an opportunity for teaching their peers about a variety of social-equity issues in a person-centred way. This task has particular impact on the listeners due to its emotive and personal nature. The students are also required to design a one-page flyer or brochure about the service-learning partner organisation, including details such as organisation websites, upcoming dates and

Table 19.1 Learning outcomes met

Subject learning outcomes	Australian professional standards for teachers
1. Demonstrate a sensitivity to diversity and an understanding of social justice issues	1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 6.4, 7.3, 7.4
2. Demonstrate an ethic of service	1.4, 1.5, 2.4
3. Demonstrate caring and advocacy skills	3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 4.1, 7.1, 7.4
4. Demonstrate improved communication skills with colleagues, clients and service personnel	3.5
5. Reflect on experiences from a community perspective	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 4.3, 6.3, 7.3
6. Identify, gather, and critically evaluate data through personal and academic research, applying this knowledge to pedagogy and becoming informed, responsible citizens	1.2, 1.3,1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.2

events, and other pertinent information, and to share this electronically with their tutorial group at the University.

In Part B of the assessment, students are scaffolded through the process of writing a report, and encouraged to reflect on questions that have arisen during this subject. Topics include justice, power, exclusion/inclusion, and Australian society, and the act of reflection highlights the role of educators committed to teaching about social-equity issues. It also requires students to discuss the importance of volunteer work and service learning in a class setting within the school environment and community as a whole. Students are encouraged to use their skills of analysis and reflection to identify and articulate some of the key learnings from their service-learning experience. The students are encouraged to use the CARC model headings as part of their reflection portfolio, and to respond to specific questions using the CARC model for guidance.

At the onset of the service-learning placement, both the students and collaborating organisations are provided with an information handbook in preparation for the service-learning experience. Students are also provided with a list of the potential opportunities that their service-learning experience placement could provide. **[these dot points aren't suggestions or tips; they're just outcomes]** The students are told that their placement can provide opportunities to:

- Learn to act autonomously, responsibly and appropriately
- Learn to work with others and understand working relationships
- Gain confidence in thinking critically and communicating with members of communities beyond education
- Broaden your horizons through exposure to new ideas, cultures and career paths
- Enhance your knowledge of the social justice and/ or equity awareness
- (UOW, 2019, p. 6).

They are also urged to ensure good communication with their tutor and supervisor, and wit the Professional Experience Unit (which coordinates their placement) (UOW,

2019, p. 6). The students are encouraged to add what they learn from their placement to their resumes, curriculum vitae, or personal professional development plans.

Some of the feedback and lessons learned in the development of this subject are summarised in the next section.

19.5 Feedback and Benefits

The benefits of this subject are demonstrated by unsolicited comments from both students and community partners. For example, one student said, “I loved how we got the freedom to go out and choose what organisation we wanted to work with and what we are passionate about working with.” This statement in particular shows how giving students an opportunity to take initiative sparked a sense of self-direction that fuelled a spirit of engagement with the community partner. Linking back to previous research conducted by Hart (2015) and Salam et al. (2019), giving students – in this case, pre-service teachers—the control to make their own decisions in regards to their placement allows them to engage in community partnerships where they feel they can gain the most skills in simultaneously helping to solve real-world problems and learning about school systems. This also facilitates confidence in self-identified areas in which they feel they need to upskill (Brewer et al., 2021).

Another comment came from a student who chose the area of mental health in schools for their service-learning placement. The student reported that the students in the service-learning context began to open up and have conversations with them, which showed that mutual trust was blossoming within the building relationship. The student explained:

> Not only did I start to see these young, shy students come out of their shell, but they were also so much more able to trust us and tell us about their family life, whereas before they felt they would just burden us with that. It was great to be able to show them we are here to listen and support them, because sometimes just talking to someone really helps…. We also discussed many celebrities who have mental illnesses and how it doesn’t stop them from being successful or being who they want to be…. It was really rewarding.

These pre-service teachers were able to clarify the rewarding factors of service learning with regard to the experience gained in this subject and the partnerships that evolved during their placement. This supports the notion that the opportunities for engagement in these types of volunteering experiences greatly expand the skills graduates need to be more employable (Gonzalez et al., 2019). One student agreed: “This experience has made us be more confident about our duty of care in our future classrooms and taking on the role of being the adult in the room.”

The students were not the only ones who benefited from service-learning opportunities. Community partners that have been involved in the service-learning subject over the years have also commented and sent emails to thank the university, and explained benefits to the community industries involved; for example, one principal from a local primary school commented in an email:

> The opportunity to mentor pre-service teachers in the work that we do is highly valuable for us. Not only does it allow for more hands on deck, it also gives us a chance to share the purpose and importance of our organisation and cause, and hopefully this not only educates the student but, through their role in schools, teaches the next generation about this important issue in our society.

While no formal research was undertaken as part of writing this chapter, the ongoing positive comments and feedback from both community-based organisations and university students leads us to believe that there is room—and need—for such research. One of the issues concerning academics who are involved in organising authentic partnerships between students and communities is that most often these academics are allocated neither the time nor the resources for conducting formal research. It is our hope that the importance and relevance of this type of learning will be acknowledged by a wider administrative audience, and that time will be allotted for this important research to take place.

19.6 Discussion

The importance of designing and offering subjects that provide opportunities for university students to engage actively in society and give back to community not only benefits students but creates empowering partnerships between the community and the university. In a pluralistic society, this is a skill that is in constant demand, and ensuring that universities are equipping their students in preparation for graduation with these opportunities has been shown to be invaluable for their future careers (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017; Lai & Hui, 2021). In the case of our example, the subject was designed to help develop pre-service teachers and engage them in areas in which they may not be confident, that they need to learn, or in which they can upskill (Howlett & Cohan, 2016; González et al., 2019). Universities are preparing global citizens and leaders of our society. Post pandemos, universities are revisiting the concept of humanistic education and the student as a whole, rather than operating as mere degree factories (Eady et al., 2021). There is an emphasis placed on students to engage with the community and learn by doing, as it prepares them for a productive career and experience in collaborating and engaging with societal issues. This, in turn, ultimately empowers students to make a change (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Creating quality partnerships through service learning within communities includes industry partners, university students, community members, and even young people, including school-aged children. A study found that 96% of higher-education students agreed or strongly agreed that the service-learning opportunities provided to them strengthened their skills, classroom practices, and studies (Hidenbrand & Schultz, 2015). These findings were echoed as a factor in this subject, as one of the students expressed that their future classroom applications have grown from the skills that they gained in this rich, meaningful, and relevant service-learning opportunity.

The CARC model, scaffolded by the subject coordinator, assisted students in this subject to critically think and expand their knowledge, and develop strategies for future analysis in the classroom. These authors suggest that this model be used in other service-learning applications across a diverse range of disciplines. Using this framework promoted discussion in the classroom about how these future teachers could use a model such as this as part of action research in their own classroom settings (Duncan & Kopperud, 2008). The creation and use of theoretical frameworks in service learning is an important way that students can make meaningful connections to society.

19.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an insight into a subject offered by the School of Education in the Faculty of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Wollongong. This subject fosters students' confidence in strengthening their future work skills and promote community partnerships and initiatives through participating in service learning. Encouraging partnerships between universities through service learning has been shown to be a beneficial aspect in preparing quality, career-ready graduates. While there was no formal research conducted in this case study, this exploratory service-learning approach is worth further investigation using the theories and methods discussed. Perhaps, as a result, universities can look forward to producing work-ready individuals who feel confident, enthusiastic, and equipped to pursue the daily challenges, obstacles, and successes that all communities face (Salam et al., 2019).

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Part V
Professional-Development Learning Through Initial Teacher Education Partnerships

Chapter 20
Practicum Experiences in Special Schools: A Case Study

Monica Wong, Chrissy Monteleone, Miriam Tanti, and Kelly-Mariee Lorusso

Abstract Initial teacher education programs in New South Wales have included a dedicated special education unit to build the capacity of pre-service teachers to meet the diverse needs of complex learners. Pre-service teachers who have completed these types of units develop a good theoretical understanding of inclusive education, and their professional development can be enhanced through professional experience and practicums in inclusive and special-education settings (e.g., Lancaster and Bain in Int J Disability, Dev Educ 54:245–256, 2007); Tindall et al. in Eur Phys Educ Rev 21:206–221, 2015; Walton and Rusznyak in Teach Teach Educ 36:112–120, 2013). This chapter outlines a pilot project to place pre-service teachers in a School for Specific Purposes. The case study of one pre-service teacher during her 20-day placement and the development of insights about inclusive and special education are discussed.

Keywords Teacher education · Inclusive education · Special education · Professional experience · Differentiation · Behaviour management

20.1 Background

Since 1994, initial teacher education programs in New South Wales have included a mandatory dedicated special-education unit that specifies the skills and knowledge pre-service teachers are required to develop, as *Students with Disability* is a priority area (Board of Studies, 2014; New South Wales Education Standards Authority, 2017). More recently, the New South Wales Parliament inquired into and reported on the provision of education to students with disability or special needs in government and non-government schools in the state (New South Wales Parliment. Legislative Council. Portfolio Committee No. 3—Education, 2017). Contributors to the inquiry

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_20

were concerned with the adequacy of teacher education and training in meeting the learning needs of students within mainstream and other educational settings, and with the fact that teachers themselves did not feel equipped to cater for the learning needs of students with disability and complex learning needs. Inquiry contributors also emphasised the importance of stronger integration of special education across initial teacher education courses, including a greater focus on differentiation (NSW Portfolio Committee No. 3—Education, 2017).

Australian Catholic University's commitment to improve pre-service teacher preparedness to cater for the diverse learning needs of all students has been previously explored. Final-year undergraduate pre-service teachers participated in a year-long Special Education Immersion Project, working in the area of special education in mainstream schools. This experience increased their depth of knowledge and skills to respond to student needs (Grima-Farrell et al., 2014). To provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to work with students with disability by completing a PEx in a School for Specific Purpose (SSP), ACU has formed the SSP Hub with six SSPs across metropolitan Sydney. These schools provide intensive support in a dedicated setting for students with moderate to high learning and support needs (New South Wales Department of Education, 2021). The first stage of this initiative was to pilot the placement of pre-service teachers in special-education settings in preparation for future placement of pre-service teachers who wish to apply for dual recognition as a primary and special-education specialist teacher. Consideration of two questions guided this study:

What learnings do pre-service teachers report as they reflect on their PEx at an SSP?

What affects a successful PEx in an SSP?

20.2 Review of the Literature

Content-based approaches and the field experiences embedded within these approaches are the common methods for preparing pre-service teachers to teach in inclusive settings. Content-based approaches present them with information about inclusive and special education. This allows for the infusion of inclusive educational concepts, values, and strategies into all course units and activities (Symeonidou, 2017). Another approach, which is a requirement in NSW, is the inclusion of a dedicated special-education unit within an initial teacher education course (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019; New South Wales Education Standards Authority, December 2017; Symeonidou, 2017). This special/inclusive education unit provides pre-service teachers with information about disabilities and inclusion, including the history, laws, and legislation of inclusive education, disabilities and their categories, and attitudes, beliefs, and/or stereotypes of disabilities and persons with disabilities (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019).

20.2.1 Field Experiences Embedded Within Content-Based Approaches

Pre-service teachers believe that authentic experiences of teaching students with disabilities will improve their skills to teach in inclusive settings (Civitillo et al., 2016). Indeed, genuine opportunities and authentic experiences of direct contact with various learners, such as students with disability, are recommended during initial teacher education to facilitate the development of "more realistic and…-more positive perceptions about inclusion" (Forlin, 2010, p. 167). Short-term field experiences in inclusive education settings with students with disability, as part of content-based units, have included conducting interviews, observations, field trips, working with students with disability, and completing reports or case studies on field experiences (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019). These experiences with individuals with disability have been shown to help alleviate pre-service teachers' negative feelings about teaching students with disability as they observe, trial, and implement various teaching strategies they have learned (Tindall et al., 2015). In Tindall's (2015) study, Irish pre-service teachers reported "nervousness, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy and fear of the unknown" (p. 212) before working with individuals with disability in a 10-week, on-campus, structured program to engage children and young people with physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities in physical activities including dance, games, and health-related activities. Each pre-service teacher was paired with a child or young person with whom they worked for an hour each week. As the program continued, the pre-service teachers reported that they were more comfortable and confident working with children and young people with disability as they developed a greater understanding of content-based theories and were able to engage in professional discussions about the children in their class.

An Australian study by Lancaster and Bain (2007) reported on 125 pre-service teachers who completed a seven-week, content-based unit and were then involved in one of three forms of additional experience. One group of primary-education pre-service teachers undertook a *one-to-one student mentoring* experience with "at-risk" secondary-school students. After completing 14 hours of mentoring training, they were each were assigned two high school students (mentees) and spent one hour with each mentee for seven weeks, working on the mentees' study goals, developing action plans, and enhancing students' social skills. A second group of primary-education pre-service teachers undertook an *inclusive classroom-support* experience after additional training in communication, transition, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and assistive technologies. They participated in weekly one-hour inclusive classroom support for seven weeks working with individual students or small groups on literacy and numeracy skills. The final group, consisting of early-childhood degree students, after completing the content-based unit, received a *content-based extension* comprising six weeks of lectures and tutorials in early intervention, language development, and the topics covered by the inclusive classroom-support group. Pre-test and post-test data showed that greater gains in self-efficacy, specifically toward pre-service teachers' future interactions with people who have a disability, were

reported by the *inclusive classroom-support* and *content-based extension* groups (Lancaster & Bain, 2007). This study validates the importance of the type of school-based experience undertaken and targeted content in coursework.

20.2.2 Practicum in Schools

A practicum is a placement within a school context over a *sustained* period, which counts towards the number of field placement days to meet the requirements of the degree and registration as a teacher. Studies are limited that examine the effects on pre-service teachers undertaking practicums where the focus is on teaching and learning for students with disability in mainstream settings and special education settings, but those available demonstrate growth in their teaching practice (Peebles & Mendaglio, 2014; Walton & Rusznyak, 2013; Weaven & Hemmings, 2007).

In a western Canadian study, Peebles and Mendaglio (2014) report on 141 pre-service teachers who completed a three-week placement after their compulsory 10-week inclusive education course work. Those who worked with and planned for individual students and smaller groups of students in the class during the placement reported greater gains in self-efficacy for teaching in inclusive classrooms than those who spent more time observing students with disability. They also made significant gains in *inclusive instruction*, such as providing appropriate challenges for students and increased confidence in designing learning tasks to accommodate the individual needs of students with disability, and *managing behaviour*, including making student behaviour expectations clear and controlling disruptive behaviour. The greatest gain in managing behaviour resulted from the experiences from the practicum.

Walton and Rusznyak (2013) explored the benefits of 15 Bachelor of Education pre-service teachers undertaking a PEx in a special-education setting in South Africa. During their three-week practicum, the pre-service teachers worked in schools that "provide supportive learning for students with learning difficulties and other low to moderate level support needs" and "serve students with moderate to severe cognitive and other disabilities who have moderate to high learning support needs" (Walton & Rusznyak, 2013, p. 115). They had held preconceptions that the similarities between mainstream and special schools would be limited to the structure of the school day, and that they would be dealing with children. During the placement, they were surprised by the variation among students with a particular disability and the prevalence of multiple disabilities, yet learning was no different than that of students without disability. They acknowledged that the experience magnified aspects of teaching that were not readily noticed in a mainstream setting. This included strategies for effective learning, a focus on content mastery, lesson pacing, and behaviour management. The researchers reported that the pre-service teachers were unanimous in saying they had benefited from their placement in a special school, which provided clarity about what they learned in university and helped them develop new knowledge and skills.

Support for pre-service teachers is essential during their PEx to ensure positive experiences. An Australian study by Weaven and Hemmings (2007) examined the experiences of three primary pre-service teachers undertaking their final practicum (one-term internship) for their Bachelor of Education, in which they took full responsibility for their mainstream inclusive class, which had one to two students with disability. The pre-service teachers, working closely with school personnel, were able to develop consistent classroom practices and practise specific behaviour-management strategies. A support system comprising the school mentor, classroom teacher, university liaison lecturer, peers, family, and friends allowed for a range of formal and informal discussions. The pre-service teachers reported that this helped them cope with the stress and demands of the classroom and keep things in perspective (Weaven & Hemmings, 2007). In another study, conducted by Grima-Farrell et al., (2014), fourth-year pre-service teachers employed to work with students with disability two hours per day, four days per week over the school year said that access to the support system via email, phone or social media as questions arose was invaluable.

Overall, the literature has suggested that content-based units, field experience, and practicums all have the potential to improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical practices and readiness for meeting the challenges of teaching. Research suggests that experiences with students with disability need to involve teaching small groups or individual students with support structures in place.

20.3 The Study

20.3.1 Background and Context

The pre-service teachers in this study were completing a four-year Bachelor of Education (Primary), which includes a minimum of 80 days supervised professional experience. They commenced their practicums in their second year, completing two practicums of 10 and 15 days respectively; one 20-day practicum in their third year, and a final 35-day practicum in their fourth year. The expectations for the third practicum included:

- Days 1 and 2: observation and small-group teaching
- Days 3 to 5: Two to three lessons/learning experiences each day across various KLAs
- Week 2: Three to four lessons/learning experiences each day and responsibility and management of classroom routines
- Week 3: Half-day continuous teaching with management and responsibility for beginning or closure of class/school day and associated routines
- Week 4: Full-day teaching with associated teacher role/duties; working collaboratively with colleagues and teacher aides; and practicum reflection, self-auditing, and evaluation.

20.3.2 The School Context

An expression of interest to undertake a practicum placement in a SSP was distributed to third-year pre-service teachers. They were requested to provide a short statement explaining why they wished to engage in a PEx at an SSP. This statement was reviewed with the student's academic transcript by the University Professional Experience Coordinator (PExC), who was also the ACU Hub coordinator. Eight pre-service teachers were selected to participate in a placement across the Hub.

20.3.3 Preparing Pre-service Teachers for PEx

All pre-service teachers at ACU engage in a general PEx briefing in which specific placement requirements are discussed. The eight pre-service teachers also attended an additional two-hour briefing session to orientate them to the SSP context. The presenters included an SSP school principal and the University PExC for the practicum (one of the chapter authors). The program for the session included:

- Understanding learners in an SSP setting
- Virtual tour of an SSP
- Person-centred language
- Key Word Signing—where a combination of manual signs and natural gestures are used to support normal speech (Key Word Sign, n.d.).

The orientation provided a platform for the presenters, supservising teachers, ACU tertiary supervisor, and pre-service teachers to meet and ask questions. The pre-service teachers were also informed that their placement would be part of a research study. They were provided with a participant information letter and signed a form giving their permission to participate, as approved by the ACU Research Ethics Committee (217-59H) and the State Education Research Application Process (SERAP) (2017393). They were also informed that non-participation would not affect their PEx placement or grades. They were also invited to complete a survey of their attitudes towards inclusion constructed from other instruments (Gething & Wheeler, 1992; Kraska & Boyle, 2014; Loreman et al., 2007; Saloviita, 2015).

20.3.4 Data Collection

The data-collection process requested participants to reflect individually on questions at specific intervals during their placement (Fig. 20.1).

Participants were asked to record their feelings, experiences and concerns, and any significant events related to the special-education setting and their placement by responding to the following four questions at Times 2, 3, 4, and 5.

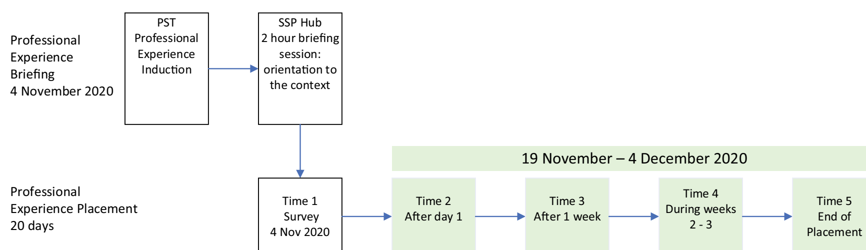

Fig. 20.1 Practicum/professional experience timeline. *Source* authors

1. Describe one specific thing you learnt in the classroom today and how this made you feel (such as a moment you had a positive impact on a student or a situation in which you gained new skills/knowledge).
2. Describe one specific challenge you faced in the classroom today and how this made you feel (such as a moment you found hard or a situation you were uncertain about how to deal with). Explain how you dealt with this challenge.
3. Describe one specific concern you have in relation to working with students with disabilities and how this makes you feel (such as any ongoing worries or questions you have).
4. Are there any other memorable or notable things you want to mention in relation to your time in the classroom today?

The questions promoted "reflection on action" and "reflection in action" (Dewey, 1933; Ryan & Ryan, 2013). Participants audio-recorded their responses, which were then uploaded to a secure data portal and transcribed.

20.3.5 Data Analysis

A case-study approach allows for the exploration of a phenomenon, in context and with various sources of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). Within this study, qualitative data was used to explore a single case study. Bianca (pseudonym) was selected, as her reflections were extensive and frequent, allowing for in-depth data analysis. A detailed and systematic examination of Bianca's reflections were undertaken to identify themes, patterns, and biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

20.4 Findings and Discussion

Bianca was placed at an SSP with pre-service teachers B and C for a 20-day teaching block. Her class comprised six boys, their classroom teacher, who was present during the duration of the practicum, and a learning-support officer for the majority of the

time. Bianca's survey response indicated that she had completed her compulsory special-education unit and three inclusive-education units, which focussed on attitudes and inclusion, families and disability, and positive behaviour support. She had had frequent past interactions with persons with disability whilst volunteering at a primary school with a special-needs unit, was comfortable around people with disability, and strongly agreed that they are valuable members of society. When asked for a definition of inclusive education, Bianca suggested, "For students who need additional and one-on-one support due to mental or physical limitations". She also recognised that it was her job as a teacher to provide alternative materials and lessons for students with disability, but was unsure whether students with disability in her class would create more stress. A goal of her PEx in an SSP was to learn "how to teach in a classroom with two or more students who need extra support".

20.4.1 What Learnings Does a Pre-service Teacher Report as They Reflect on Their PEx at an SSP?

Each of Bianca's reflections covered multiple themes. However, three themes were selected and discussed, with examples drawn from her reflections. Bianca's reflections demonstrate her perceptions of learning in her classroom, managing behaviour, and fostering student engagement. Throughout her reflections, Bianca acknowledged her professional-learning needs and understood that many of the practices in working with students with disability required time and experience.

20.4.2 Classroom/Behaviour Management

Bianca reported that the classroom was chaotic, and that was what she had expected. By Week 2, Bianca's confidence was growing and she was gaining an understanding of the factors that affected her students' behaviour. Within her reflection, Bianca described a situation during a lesson she was teaching when student A was tired and emotional, and did not want to engage or learn. Student A was making loud noises (banging on his chair, jumping up and down in his chair) that made the other students upset and anxious. Bianca attempted to keep the other students in the class engaged in the activity whilst trying to manage student A. After the incident Bianca checked with her supervising teacher on her course of action. Bianca's supervising teacher was ready to intervene but allowed Bianca to deal with the situation on her own and praised her action in maintaining the engagement of the other students. By the following week, when student S grabbed student F's face, Bianca did not categorise the incident as a major challenge. Bianca talked to student S, reminding him to use gentle hands and that there are "other ways to calm ourselves down if we're feeling upset or feeling angry or anxious". She recognised the complexity of

the situation, and had gained an understanding of her students and their behaviours and the appropriate methods for managing each student. Further evidence of Bianca's management concerns lessening as a result of practicum is through the language in her reflections, which changed from "trying to cater for all the students in quite a short space of time can get a bit chaotic" in describing her class on her first day to managing a major challenge—"I haven't actually been put in the position where I've had to deal with it before during a lesson"—to managing a physical interaction between two students: "so that was probably a challenge of today. Probably wasn't that bad. It could be worse, but it was just a small challenge".

20.4.3 Fostering Student Engagement/Relationships

Bianca's initial thoughts had been that teaching and learning would be different in an SSP: in a mainstream classroom, students are paying attention, but teaching would be different in this placement as the students in her class "don't have that ability so they're all doing different activities". She was also concerned that she would not be able to engage the students and complete lessons or activities with them, and that this would result in no or limited learning. Bianca was also worried about how she would communicate with her students, as some students' verbal communication was limited, but she knew the school used sign language and that she would need to learn the common words used in the classroom. As part of Bianca's orientation, she received an introduction to Key Word Sign. By the end of the first week of placement Bianca recounted sitting down with a student with whom she had not spent much time, and his learning capacity exceeded her expectations. She was pleased that a relationship was forming between her and her student, and she was thinking on her feet to find another activity to challenge the student.

Bianca was provided with the opportunity to re-teach a planned lesson to another class that included students across different age ranges. Bianca re-delivered her ukulele lesson to students in pre-service teacher B's classroom. The lesson introduced students to the ukulele, included sing-along ukulele nursey rhymes, colouring in a picture of a ukulele, and tracing the word Ukulele. The students also played the ukulele and made musical shakers. Bianca realised that the student who was dancing behind the rest of the girls was paying attention and engaged in the lesson, but that she demonstrated it in a different way. Her placement allowed her to recognise that learning and engagement do not look the same for every student, and that knowing her students will enable her to cater for their individual learning needs.

20.4.4 What Affects a Successful PEx in an SSP?

Bianca expressed that the first day of the placement posed some challenges. Bianca felt that she was an intruder in an already established class with routines and

structures: "…when I first came into the classroom, I could feel there's a bit of attention…the teacher expressed to me that [the students] are not very good with change."

Bianca's supervising teacher provided explicit support but also stepped back to allow Bianca to make decisions, as described above. This increased Bianca's confidence: "It was really nice hearing from my teacher that what I'd done was the right way of going about it."

In her final reflection, Bianca stated that she really enjoyed the PEx, felt she had had a positive impact on the students in her class, and felt a sense of closeness and mutual trust. Bianca said the school was like a small family, where the staff at the school really cared about the students and "want nothing but the best for them". She also acknowledged that "everyone cares about everyone, and I think that's a really hard quality in a whole community to have", and that she received "constant everyday support from all the teachers". Bianca also mentioned that the other pre-service teachers provided support through chats in the mornings and afternoons and during breaks in the day. Her final words demonstrate her increased confidence, her growth as a teacher, and her pride in completing her practicum in an SSP:

> I've learned so much about myself in this prac. I am so much stronger than I think I am…. I'm able to have that connection with students and teachers so much quicker than I thought…there's multiple things that happened at this school and things that I witnessed on a day-to-day basis and a lot of things that just didn't faze me like I thought they would.

20.5 Conclusion

This chapter reported on a PEx that was the "lived" experience of one pre-service teacher placed in a SSP. Two questions were considered. The first was: *What learnings do pre-service teachers report as they reflect on their placement at an SSP?* In answering this question, Bianca's goal for the placement of "How to teach in a classroom with two or more students who need extra support" was fulfilled. Her comparison of SSP classrooms with mainstream classrooms is consistent with research by Walton and Rusznyak (2013). Feelings of inadequacy and whether she would provide successful learning opportunities for students with disabilities was voiced at the commencement of the placement. However, like the pre-service teachers in the study conducted by Tindall et al. (2015), this pre-service teacher became more confident and comfortable working with students with disability. Skills in managing behaviour and de-escalating situations became evident as the placement progressed. The PEx provided an opportunity for the pre-service teacher to understand the students' individual learning needs and behaviours, and to identify different types of engagement to address some of the specific skills within the *Students with Disability* priority area.

The second question, *What affects a successful placement in an SSP?*, aligned with the findings of Lancaster and Bain (2007) and Weaven and Hemmings (2007). According to Lancaster and Bain (2007) the type and duration of a PEx and other school-based experiences are important. A 20-day block PEx with specific teaching

expectations enabled the pre-service teacher in this study to develop confidence and behaviour-management skills. This is likely to be different for other pre-service teachers, depending on their previous experience with students with disability. The support of a supervising teacher who allowed the pre-service teacher to make decisions was crucial in making the pre-service teacher feel part of the school community. Weaven and Hemmings (2007) found that lack of support can instil a sense of isolation for the pre-service teacher, and in extreme cases has a negative effect on their well-being. The reflection by the pre-service teacher in this case demonstrated the care exhibited by staff at her school every day. Ongoing praise was also provided by the staff, and this increased her confidence. The importance of the peer-support structure was evident in this placement. Like the pre-service teachers in Weaven and Hemmings's (2007) study, providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to debrief with other pre-service teachers and discuss experiences in the classroom allows them to keep their feelings and concerns in perspective.

As the placement of general education pre-service teachers in an SSP is new to this institution, this case study provides two areas for considerations. First, at least two pre-service teachers should be placed in each SSP, as this would enable them to share frustrations, anxieties, and concerns with one another. Second, a short, specific, content-based behaviour-management and communications course could be developed for pre-service teachers to complete prior to placement. Discussion of a range of scenarios that they may encounter could improve their preparedness and alleviate some of their fears. However, further analysis of data from other participants and feedback from Hub School PEx coordinators and mentors is needed to identify and verify areas for consideration, improvement, and inclusion prior to the next round of placements. This initiative has the potential to empower pre-service teachers to work in multiple ways to respond to the needs of their students in a range of contexts.

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Chapter 21
The Hub System: An Effective Work-Integrated Learning Partnership

Chrissy Monteleone, Therese Barrington, Miriam Tanti, Monica Wong, Carmela Giamboi, and Meredith Weaver

Abstract This chapter explores a partnership between a university and a community of schools to develop profession-ready teachers through work-integrated learning (WIL). Viewed through the lens of the leaders of the partnership, the authors investigated factors to which the success of this program can be attributed. A systems-thinking approach (Senge, The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. Doubleday, New York, 2006) was used to analyse the interview data. Evidence emerged that suggested that the leaders of this partnership contributed to its success by developing strong relationships in which multi-dimensional views were valued. The chapter raises practical implications for the sustainability and replication of this partnership model.

Keywords Professional experience · Systems thinking · School-university partnerships · Leader · Work-integrated learning

21.1 Introduction

To bridge the nexus between the university and school to support pre-service teacher development, a work-integrated learning (WIL) network was initiated by an education sector of the state government. In initial teacher education courses, WIL is an opportunity for pre-service teachers to apply their disciplinary knowledge within a school-based context (Smith, 2012; Zegwaard, 2014), which provides a platform for mutual benefits for schools and universities. For the purpose of this chapter, a WIL experience includes completing a school-based professional experience (PEx) placement during the course of an initial teacher education degree. WIL is commonly referred to as professional experience in school-based contexts; therefore, the term

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_21

is used interchangeably in this chapter. The Hub model referred to in this chapter includes one university, one Hub School and several Spoke Schools.

In the initiation and growth of the Hub network, three main leadership roles emerged across both systems: the principal of the Hub School, a Hub School-based Hub Professional Experience Coordinator (PExC), and a tertiary coordinator. This chapter identifies how each of the leaders contributed to the success of the Hub network, in relation to a systems-thinking approach (Senge, 2006). The overarching research question is: What are the reasons for the success of the Hub network? We first explore the roles of each of these leaders through their perspectives.

21.1.1 The Roles of the Leaders

The three main leaders of the Hub—the principal, the PExC, and the university coordinator—all have specific roles within the Hub network. The principal of the Hub School has taken on the roles of building networks, communicating with other principals to bring other schools (spoke schools) on board, managing logistics, creating a space, and developing the Hub network through distributed leadership. Within the Hub School, the two PExCs coordinate the WIL program across the network of Spoke Schools, negotiating with their principals, teachers, and leaders, and with the university coordinator. The PExCs have the role of selecting and mentoring supervising (mentor) teachers from the 17 Spoke Schools, ensuring the induction and ongoing care of pre-service teachers, and liaising between the Spoke Schools and university. The tertiary coordinator liaises with all of the stakeholders—sector, principal, PExCs and university, facilitates professional learning for the supervising teachers, and prepares the pre-service teachers.

These three roles do not work in silos; they overlap at particular intervals to support pre-service teachers before, during, and after PEx. Figure 21.1 shows the interrelatedness of all of the roles; however, only the three key roles of Hub principal, university coordinator, and Hub PExC are discussed in this chapter.

The following vignettes highlight the workings of the Hub network, its growth, and the roles of the leaders through the lens of each of these leaders: the principal, the PExC. and the university coordinator.

21.1.2 Through the Lens of the Principal

About three weeks into the school year, the staff at the Hub School begin to hear about the pre-service teachers who will be joining their network. They call it a Hub, and with that comes a buzz of excitement, success stories and challenges. Karly (principal), checks in with Carol and Myra (PExCs) to discuss how the Hub network is coming together. The discussion includes the Community of Schools (Spoke Schools) that are involved that year, the supervising teachers who have engaged in professional

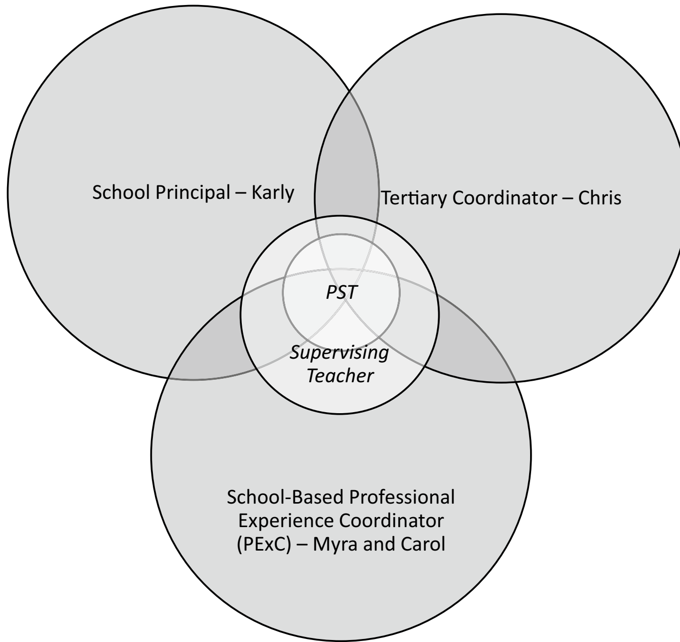

Fig. 21.1 University and school PEx Hub partnership model. *Source* authors

learning facilitated by Chris (university coordinator), the pre-service teachers' stage in their degree, and the support programs that will be in place for both the mentors and the pre-service teachers.

Karly reflects on the growth of the Hub network over the past seven years. In the past, or in a more traditional model, there would have been ad-hoc pre-service teacher placements at her school, with only a few teachers volunteering to mentor a student. A lot has changed from that model to what is happening now. Karly recalls what she wrote in the expression of interest she sent to the sector, ultimately, wanting to work with a university to develop profession-ready teachers, improving mentoring practices, and making the most of the already formed network of Spoke Schools in the area. What followed was an initial meeting at the end of the school year with the staff from the university and the sector, where outcomes and suggestions were discussed. Karen reflects on her initial thinking about how the Hub cannot just be her school, and how a network has evolved to include 17 Spoke Schools. The conversation with Chris often includes a discussion about a sustainable approach and ways to shift the traditional model. It is through constant review and feedback that the team reexamine a deep-rooted model of professional experience to arrive at one that includes a strong nexus between Spoke Schools in this Hub network and the university. Karly reflects on other successes that were achieved over the years, the most significant being the development of staff to move into middle and senior leadership positions in her school and other Spoke Schools in the Hub network.

21.1.3 Through the Lens of the Professional-Experience Coordinators (PExCs)

Myra (PExC) and Carol (PExC) arrive at school early to facilitate the pre-service teachers' induction. Prior to the Hub, it was a case of putting your hand up if you wanted to mentor a "praccie" (pre-service teacher,) and Myra had found that it was always the same teachers year after year. She looks over at the tertiary coordinator, Chris, who facilitates professional learning for the supervising teachers, visits their school early in the placements to supports the supervising teacher and herself when difficulties arise, and has been a mentor to her. The collaborative relationship that they share is replicated throughout the Hub network in the relationships between herself and the supervising teachers, and between the supervising teachers and the pre-service teachers.

21.1.4 Through the Lens of the Tertiary Coordinator

Chris prepares for her school visit, which is a new inclusion in this model. She recalls how much has changed: academic staff school visits, changes to terminology, more-efficient practices. Chris signs in at the door and lists the supervising teachers' names. This is also a change: they are no longer "supervising teachers"; instead, the model has supported the significant shift from supervisor to mentor teachers. The purpose of Chris's visit is to check in with the pre-service and mentor teachers.

Chris visits the first three classes, checking in on the pre-service teachers, having a look at their daybook plans, their teaching folders, and, most importantly, how they are working with the students. Chris also touches base with each mentor, all of whom she had previously met and worked with when she facilitated the mentoring professional learning. It's great to hear how the mentors are using strategies Chris and the PExC shared with them during the professional learning.

Before leaving the school, Chris pops into the deputy principal's office. Kay was in the PExC role prior to Myra and Carol before being promoted. As deputy principal, Kay still has oversight of the Hub network. Just as Chris is about to leave, Karly, the school principal, mentions that a Spoke School is seeking a graduate teacher for the following year. Chris feels confident in suggesting two of the current pre-service teachers whom she has just observed, and who are completing their final-year placements and are ready for employment.

21.2 Literature Review

To understand possible successes of the Hub network as a partnership between a school system and a university, it is necessary to understand the benefits of WIL using a systems-thinking approach (Senge, 2006).

21.2.1 Work-Integrated Learning in This Context

WIL is a common term associated with the practical components of academic learning that are applicable to a particular workplace. For initial teacher education degrees, WIL refers to professional experience in a school and is a valued and mandated component of building profession-ready teachers (TEMAG, 2015). No-one can ignore that PEx experiences differ at different universities and in a variety of schools settings (Patrick et al., 2008; Zegwaard, 2014). Previous studies have highlighted the need for WIL to include a strong commitment from the school and the university to cultivate a community that works together on a shared vision (Ure et al., 2017). In most initial teacher education programs, the school-based teachers take on the role of supervising teachers to make a significant contribution to the development of pre-service teachers' practices during their WIL experience (Ambrosetti, 2014; Singh & Mahomed, 2013).

WIL is a reciprocal relationship between the university and the school or school system. For a school, the opportunity to have a pre-service teacher for WIL assists with future employment of graduates and the upskilling of staff (Ambrosetti, 2014; Singh & Mahomed, 2013). In addition, the establishment of a WIL partnership with a university connects coursework with industry within a real-world context (Zegwaard, 2014). Pre-service teachers benefit from the reciprocity of WIL. Studies have identified that effective WIL experiences provide a pre-service teacher with personal benefits that allow for the opportunity to build a professional identity and the interpersonal skills required in the profession (Campbell & Zegwaard, 2011; Trede, 2012).

As a WIL relationship includes complex and purposeful strategies from each stakeholder, a consideration of the way a WIL program is successfully executed can be viewed in light of systems thinking (Senge, 2006).

21.2.2 A WIL Partnership Within and Across Systems

In supporting pre-service teachers to develop their practice, an effective WIL partnership supports the processes and outcomes of two systems: that of the university and the schools. Schools and universities are recognised to be highly complex learning organisations with interconnected processes and functions and the desire for standardised outcomes (Bui & Baruch, 2010; Shaked & Schechter, 2020). Systems

thinking is a means of strengthening success in such complex organisations and making sense of how parts function together, acting as networks of interactions (Senge, 2006). Whilst there are many definitions for systems thinking, the two common conceptions in these definitions are "the ability to see the whole beyond its parts and to see the parts in the context of the whole" (Shaked & Schechter, 2020, p. 107). Shaked and Schechter (2016) have explored four practical ways that leaders could adopt systems thinking:

(1) seeing wholes—taking an holistic perspective, understanding the big picture rather than just the parts.
(2) using a multi-dimensional view—seeing several aspects of a given view, understanding the multiple positions of the different stakeholders.
(3) influencing indirectly—using an indirect approach when dealing with tasks or challenges, not always needing to deal with every issue directly.
(4) assessing significance—evaluating the significance of each aspect in terms of its significance in the whole system.

The research literature on systems thinking in education systems suggests that, given the complexity of such systems, leaders and teachers could benefit from a systems-thinking approach (Fullan, 2005; Senge, 2012). Sustainable educational reform requires a system-wide focus (Daly & Finnigan, 2016) supported by systems thinking (Fullan, 2005). Systems thinking may support teachers' collective learning (Cheng, 2011) and the development of professional-learning communities (Wells & Keane, 2008). Leaders who adopt a holistic approach, using systems thinking, are more likely to work collaboratively, support and mentor other leaders within and beyond the school, and develop relationships that ensure trust and commitment (Pang & Pisapia, 2012; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). The present study reviews the adoption of a systems-thinking approach by the leaders of the WIL partnerships within the Hub network.

21.3 Methodology

This study investigated the question: What are the reasons for the success of the Hub network? To address this question, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the four leaders of the Hub: the principal, Karly, who initiated and facilitated the Hub network as a community of Spoke Schools involved in delivering quality teacher placements; the two PExCs, Myra and Carol, in the schools; and the university coordinator, Chris. An interpretative paradigm (Denzin et al., 2006), together with a constructivist epistemology, allowed us to explore the views of these leaders and the context in which these views were developed and expressed (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). The data collection took place four years into the establishment of the Hub network, when roles had been well established. The theoretical framework of systems thinking (Senge, 2006) allowed for an exploration of the ways that the leaders' systems-thinking approach has contributed to the success of the Hub.

21.4 Findings

The data analysis included all four themes of systems thinking: seeing wholes; using a multi-dimensional view; influencing indirectly; and assessing significance. However, the findings of greatest significance, which are those reported on in this chapter, align particularly with the theme that the Hub leaders adopt a multi-dimensional view.

For this project to be successful, it was necessary for all the leaders to understand multiple perspectives, including those of the principals of the Hub spoke schools, the PExCs, the supervising teachers, the pre-service teachers, and the university, including the need to consider mandatory program requirements.

21.4.1 Principal

In instigating the Hub network, the principal took into account the needs and perspectives of the systems of both the university and the school system. She took time to engage in direct dialogue about the mandatory requirements from the university perspective. She was also aware of the needs of other Spoke Schools, and instigated conversations with other principals to invite them into the program. Particularly, she targeted schools where the principal had had difficulty getting casual and temporary teachers, as she recognised they would understand the need for such an initiative as the Hub program.

In understanding the varying demands and needs of each of the partners in the network, the choice of PExC became pivotal to the success of the program. The principal saw this role as extremely challenging, requiring the PExC to understand the perspectives of "being a teacher, being a leader, and being a representative of the…[school system]", and to understand how to work with other members of the network within and outside the school. This influenced the decision to choose two teachers to work collaboratively, taking on this middle leadership role in a partnership. In this respect, the principal not only considered taking a multi-dimensional view herself, but saw the importance of the other members of the leadership team, including middle leaders, taking this systems-thinking approach.

21.4.2 The PExCs

The PExCs hold a unique position in that they are the key personnel connecting each of the other Spoke Schools. It is exclusive in this project that the PExC interacts across the network with Spoke Schools, rather than the traditional model of working just within the school. They were thus able to understand, empathise, and enact the requirements of the education system, schools in the Hub network, the other school-based professional experience coordinators, the supervising teachers, and the

pre-service teachers on WIL. The Spoke School PExCs are also aware of the role of the university and schools in supporting the development of profession-ready graduates.

Myra and Carol understand the needs of each of the Spoke Schools in the Hub network and support the school-based PExC and the supervising teachers so they can provide the best possible WIL experience for the pre-service teachers. Aware of the time constraints on teachers, PExCs provide concise communications and have created support resources for the supervising teachers. Importantly, they recognise that these resources need to be flexible for the school-based coordinator and the mentors to apply in their own context. They identify their role as:

> ...[having] an understanding that each Spoke School, as every child, is different, so you cannot impose the same model on each of them. You give them the standard, the mandatory, and what we believe our best practice, examples of induction and then they apply it to their specific and individual context. This is part of the innovation in this role, that PExCs know how to look for gaps.

For the PExCs, taking a multi-dimensional view involves streamlining processes to ensure quality and flexibility for each Spoke School.

21.4.3 The University Coordinator

The university coordinator has expressed the need to understand the multiple points of view of those engaged in the Hub network. This awareness of the different points of view is evident in the PExCs being reflexive and responsive to each Spoke School's context in varying connections within the partnership. This includes the establishment of the Hub project within each Spoke School:

> In our profession, we work with people, so we need to be very conscious of the various ways people operate. And schools also have their own intricacies and ways of being [that are] quite unique to their context. We cannot pick up the model and place it elsewhere without modification, and expect it to work. What needs to be considered is where the Spoke School is at, where the teachers are at in the school, their experience of mentoring, coaching, their own experience themselves in having a mentor or coach (positive and or negative), and how we build on those particular skill sets so that we can look at positive mentoring relationships with [pre-service teachers]…we have to judge where they're at and then the support needs to be considered.

The university coordinator responds to context and focusses on a variety of options to meet the challenges, an important aspect of systems thinking (Shaked & Schechter, 2020). Chris shows awareness and implements differing support for Spoke Schools, the supervising teachers, the school WIL coordinator (PExC), the pre-service teachers, and the university supervisors. When an issue arises, she sees her role as negotiating a way forward between the implementation of the education system's policy and procedures and those of the university (including accreditation requirements), ensuring that she is also meeting the needs of the school and communicating to the Hub PExCs. One way of streamlining responses to issues that may arise

during PEx placements in the Hub network has been to identify non-typical scenarios. These case studies, that have been "developed straight from the Hub network", are used in the professional learning to come to an agreement or shared understanding of how to deal with a range of issues within the policies of the school and system.

The university coordinator is responsive to context and focusses on a variety of options to meet contemporary challenges, an important aspect of systems thinking (Shaked & Schechter, 2020). This is evident in her explanation of the evolution of the project over the years:

> What has happened with the colleagues in schools is [that] there have been changes. And because of that it's not the goals or the direction of the projects have changed, but the ways in which we operate with individuals…. The relationship needs to be tailored so that it meets and builds on people's strengths, both for myself and for colleagues. It's very reciprocal so you know [that] when an issue is brought to our attention, we consider it, together. There is no, sort of, direct response. It's very much negotiated. And there's a professional nature around it, so everything we do has to be considered in alignment with what is the school's policy and strategic direction? What's the university's strategic direction as well? How do we find that middle ground? I think what we were doing is we've got two totally different contexts, [and] even though we're both in education we operate very differently. It's two spaces and somehow we found a middle, and the middle includes understanding of each other spaces.

The collaborative and respectful relationships the leaders have with all members of the Hub network, including the other leaders, the supervising teachers, and the pre-service teachers, indicates their ability to adopt multi-dimensional views and influence indirectly.

21.5 Discussion: Has Systems Thinking by the Leaders Supported the Success of the Hub Network?

The Hub network is clearly an effective WIL partnership within a number of systems; specifically, the education sector to which the schools belong and the university. The principal, the PExCs, and the university coordinator each understand the importance of this initiative and have adopted a systems-thinking approach as outlined by Shaked and Schechter (2020), particularly by using a multi-dimensional view (Shaked & Schechter, 2020).

The vision of the Hub network is clearly shared by each of the leaders, and their passion for this goal is evident in their long-term commitment to the Hub network, and in their articulation of the values and vision associated with quality teacher education. In discussing the shared vision, and its enaction to form the Hub network, the leaders also have maintained a systems-thinking approach (Shaked & Schechter, 2020). Changes and innovations are considered with the perspective of working "towards seeing the big picture and not only its individual parts" (Shaked & Schechter, 2020, p. 109).

Each of these leaders is aware of and responsive to the differing views, needs, contexts, and experiences of the different members of the Hub network, as well as

the system requirements. The Hub leaders are responsive to the leadership by having effective coordinators who have built relationships between the members, a key factor to the success of this WIL partnership. Adapting to the varying experiences, contexts, and needs of its members has created a strong foundation for learning for the members of the Hub network, whilst also balancing the needs of the systems in which the Hub network is situated. The diverse views of the members are acknowledged by the leaders, who have adopted the multi-dimensional view advocated for systems thinking. The Hub leaders have also been able to assess the significance of the elements of the Hub network within the systems involved, a key aspect of systems thinking (Shaked & Schechter, 2017). This awareness of context, adaptation, and innovation has ensured the continued success of the Hub network as a WIL partnership between systems.

21.5.1 A Sustainable Approach to Solving the Problem

It is evident that all members of the Hub network see value in their role within it. Essential to the expansion and success of the network has been a clear agenda, towards which all members are striving. In a sense, it could be considered sustainable with long-term goals. The idea of profession-ready teachers is not a short-term goal and requires consistency in solving challenges and obstacles. Therefore, it could be determined that a driver behind this model includes the problem-solving strategies mastered for sustainability. The sustainability issue within this model includes identifying personnel in both the university and school systems that are equipped with all that is required to balance a systems-thinking approach across a number of contexts and for all stakeholders.

21.5.2 Can the Hub Network Be Replicated?

The imperative for the education sector and the university to ensure quality graduate teachers has led other education sectors to look at the success of the Hub network, with a view to replicating it with Spoke Schools. Some attempts at replication are occurring within the school system of the Hub Schools.

21.6 Conclusion

There is now a logistic model that provides all stakeholders with an initial understanding of the interactions between each of the Hub Schools and the University. However, understanding the logistics is not enough to replicate the model. For this to be successful, the new WIL partnership requires more than an adoption of the

tools and a commitment by the system to ensuring resources of time and personnel. The success of the Hub network is in the leaders' systems-thinking approach. They need to have a shared, holistic vision and passion to ensure that quality teachers provide great teaching for all pre-service teachers as well as school students. The leaders of any Hub network need to engage in respectful, collaborative relationships where multiple views are heard, negotiate the tasks and challenges indirectly, and ensure that evaluation allows for adaptation and innovation as the new Hub network develops.

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Chapter 22
Using a Mixed-Reality Micro-teaching Program to Support "at Risk" Pre-service Teachers

Debra Donnelly, John Fischetti, Susan Ledger, and Gideon Boadu

Abstract Pre-service teachers attain a higher sense of professional preparedness and self- efficacy as a result of the impact of vicarious experiences, hands-on teaching activities, verbal instruction, and feedback from experienced teachers (Clark and Newberry in Asia–Pac J Teach Educ 47:32–47, 2019). In a regional Australian university, pre-service teachers who had not attained the required placement performance standards were supported by a program that combined these elements with micro-teaching in a virtual environment that allows them to rehearse classroom performances with interactive student avatars. This paper reports on a research project that used surveys and self-made filmic responses to gauge the impact of this targeted and needs-based intervention. Results indicate that the program supported underperforming pre-service teachers to become more confident and skilful in the classroom environment.

Keywords Micro-teaching · Virtual · Avatars · Intervention · Confidence

22.1 Introduction

Despite the evidence that pre-service teachers have an awareness of the difficulty of their chosen profession (Watt et al., 2014), the transition from initial teacher education to classroom practice is often not smooth, as pre-service teachers confront tensions between theoretical knowledge and its application in practice. As many pre-service and graduate teachers come to find that their high expectations are unrealistic, they face a situation that can cause them to "redefine" their notions of teaching. Weinstein (1988) calls this realisation "reality shock". The gap between teacher expectation and classroom reality can lower teacher morale and lead to teacher burnout in the early years of teaching.

While it is impracticable for teacher educators and teacher-education programs to change the conditions pre-service teachers experience in school contexts, it is possible

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_22

to assist them to manage the expectations they have about the teaching profession (Buchanan et al., 2013; Voss & Kunter, 2019). To understand, and possibly overcome, the reality shock, it is imperative to consider prospective teachers' conceptions of the teaching profession (Weinstein, 1988). Further, pre-service teachers' reality shock and its associated attrition rates also require teacher educators to reconsider their approaches to developing pre-service teachers' resilience to help them navigate the demands and challenges of the teaching profession (Schuck et al., 2012).

In a regional Australian university, a program known as Teach Ready was developed to support pre-service teachers who had not attained the required placement performance standards, and so risked being excluded from the teacher-training programs. Initial trials found that this group of students had difficulty in producing and enacting effective teaching episodes in both traditional and the abridged micro-teaching formats. It was observed that without guidance these pre-service teachers independently developed ineffective micro-lessons that were unstructured and lacked clear teaching strategies. Further, feedback indicated that their teaching demeanor often lacked confidence and their oral communication skills and questioning techniques were under-developed.

The Teach Ready program used micro-teaching episodes in a virtual environment termed Micro-teaching 2.0 (Ledger & Fischetti, 2020), which sees pre-service teachers rehearsing classroom performances with interactive student avatars. Preparation for these virtual encounters as made using a Cognitive Apprenticeship approach to model, scaffold, and practice the skills of the classroom. This staged approach was coupled with shared reflection on their previous teaching placements, which in some cases has been a stressful and demoralising experience. These, along with the input from highly accomplished teachers and peer feedback, aimed to improve the teaching performance of this under-performing group.

22.2 Micro-teaching in Teacher Education

Traditionally, teacher education has been characterised by face-to-face practice, where pre-service teachers learn the theory of teaching in university classrooms and embark on enacting the theory by teaching within practical placements in schools under the guidance of a supervising teacher (Brown, 1999; Dieker et al., 2014). For a long time, this practice has been the method for assessing pre-service teachers' performance. However, advocates have been vocal against the reliance on the teaching-practice approach to teacher preparation and have sought for alternatives to augment it. The move to alternative approaches was predicated on the fact that pre-service teachers tend to copy the habits and methods of in-service teachers without judgement, and make ill-advised or ineffective instructional decisions, which can put students at risk (Brown, 1999). To mitigate this risk, micro-teaching sessions in which teacher candidates engage in reflective teaching experiences with their peers have been implemented widely in teacher-education programs to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching practice. Primarily, micro-teaching provides a scenario-based

approach to practice and rehearse specific elements of teaching. It offers opportunity for increased feedback to improve practice and to maximise pre-service teachers' preparation for actual teaching practice (Dixon et al., 2019). It also addresses some variabilities associated with real-life experiences associated with PEx placements (Ledger & Fischetti, 2020). Even though peer-based micro-teaching is noted for its role in developing pre-service teachers' skills and reflective practice, it has been criticised as not sufficiently replicating real teaching situations, such as engaging with school students and managing behaviour issues (Dieker et al., 2014).

22.3 Technology-Driven Teacher Education

With the rapid advancement of modern technology, educators have sought to make the most of the opportunities presented by technology-based environments for education and training (Kaufman & Ireland, 2016; Ledger & Fischetti, 2020). Virtual environments hold great promise for supporting the preparation of future teachers, as they build skills and confidence in teaching and classroom management in unrushed, less pressured, and relatively risk-free environments (Dalgarno et al., 2016; Ledger et al., 2019; McGarr, 2020). Consequently, several higher-education institutions around the world are investing time and funds in virtual environments to achieve highly functional and flexible teaching and learning systems (Dalgarno et al., 2011; Dieker et al., 2015; Gregory et al., 2015). For example, in Australia, some universities employ simulated teaching environments such as TeachLivE™ and SIMLab™, which present real-life opportunities for teacher candidates to rehearse teaching skills and improve teaching quality in a synchronous virtual environment (Ledger et al., 2019; Rappa, 2019).

"Mixed reality," as it is termed, integrates lifelike elements into a virtual space It represents a set of technologies that provides access to and interaction with a real-life environment mostly through auditory and visual media (Kirkley & Kirkley, 2005). Of the several mixed-reality technologies in use, TeachLivE appears to be gaining increased application in teacher-education programs, perhaps due to its facility to influence thinking about how teachers are trained across multiple disciplines TeachLivE employs a 3D animation modelling technique and artificial intelligence to create and control avatars whose humanlike characteristics provide a safe ground for rehearsal and reflection. With the aid of a white board or projection screen, pre-service teachers engage with avatar students virtually on a target topic, content, or skill (Dieker et al., 2015). Off-site interactors manipulate the avatar students to engage with the pre-service teacher to create an immersive experience comparable to the experience in a real classroom.

22.4 Australian Research on Mixed Reality in Teacher Education

In Australia, Ledger et al. (2019) mixed-methods study showed that the simulated teaching environment affected pre-service teachers' teaching styles, self-confidence, and teaching quality. Further, Ledger and Fischetti (2020) introduced the concept of Micro-teaching 2.0, which combines traditional micro-teaching and human-in-the-loop simulation technology to create opportunities for practice, rehearsal, and reflection on teaching. Results showed that the implementation of Micro-teaching 2.0 presented opportunities for the identification of strengths and weaknesses, which improved their self-efficacy and professional preparation. Likewise, a study by Rappa (2019) on the application of SIMLab to teacher education revealed that the simulation experience was effective in building pre-service teachers' capacities to navigate complex teaching situations, and that the opportunity for multiple trials enabled them to reflect on their practice and receive feedback from university supervisors.

22.5 Cognitive Apprenticeship Approach to Course Design

The Teach Ready program used the cognitive apprenticeship framework (Collins et al., 1989; Collins et al., 1991) in its teaching design. As the name suggests, this framework incorporates the traditional and well-established model of apprentice training, based on observation, coaching, and imitation, with cognitive modelling protocols. The framework elucidates a progressive learning design from modelling to coaching and collaboration, and finally to fading of support, independent problem-based exploration, and reflection (Parkes & Muldoon, 2010). These elements were integrated into a series of workshops, as outlined in Appendix 1, followed by mixed-reality micro-teaching sessions. The phases of the Teach Ready program are described in Figure 22.1.

22.5.1 Debrief and Cognitive Modelling

A cognitive modelling strategy with experts serving as cognitive role models is a key characteristic of a cognitive apprenticeship approach. The expert situates abstract tasks in authentic contexts, highlighting the relevance, and uses varied examples, while articulating the underlying tenets. The experts explain guiding principles, narrate deliberative processes, and outline procedures, in the process disclosing the cognitions that would usually remain invisible and inaccessible to the novice (Collins, 1991).

This approach saw the delivery of a series of pre-teaching workshops in the Teach Ready program that served as a debrief of past teaching experiences, an instructional

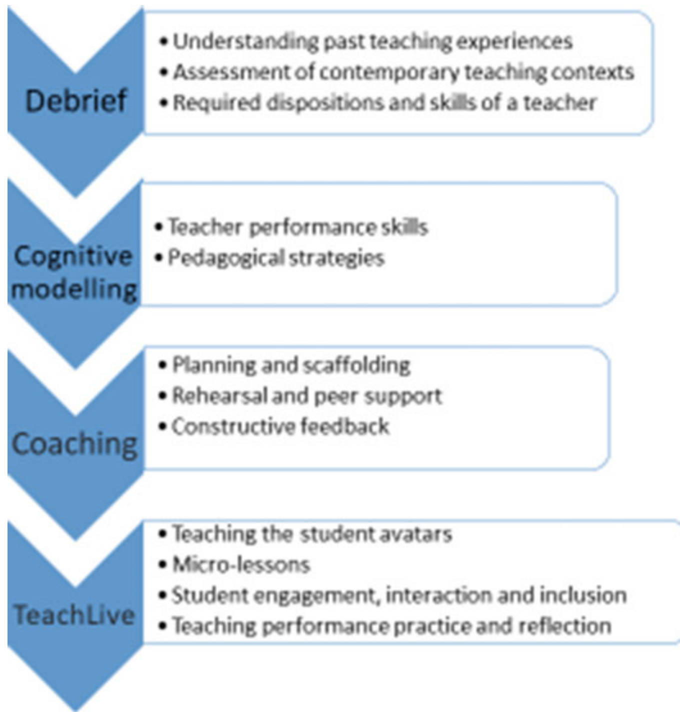

Fig. 22.1 A diagrammatic representation of the teach ready program. *Source* authors

workshop, coaching, and communal preparation time. The group explored the challenges of professional placement and devised strategies for using opportunities and navigating the challenges in school environments. The workshop instruction used explicit teaching to theorise, demonstrate, and exemplify a particular teaching skill, and then shifted to scripting and applied rehearsal.

22.5.2 Coaching, Rehearsal, and Feedback

The next phase of the learning design features coaching. In this phase, the expert observes students while they attempt a task and offers hints, feedback, modelling, and reminders to bring the novice performance closer to that of the expert. Coaching is interactive, targets specific problems or issues that arise in the performance of the set task, and allows the novice to develop heuristic strategies through problem-solving while still under expert guidance.

Graphic organisers, in the form of planning templates, are used to facilitate structuring and skill praxis. The templates feature temporal and strategic prompts that scaffold the phases of micro-teaching performance and provide a lesson sequence.

The pre-service teachers are encouraged to script the lesson and highlight key words and phrases, and to use these annotations in a paired peer rehearsal activity. These scaffolds deconstruct the tasks so the students can gain confidence by achievement and, by practice, develop the required "strategic knowledge" of the expert (Collins et al., 1991, p. 13).

Multi-level collaboration is another feature of this coaching phase. The pre-service teachers not only learn from their coaches/lecturers and from their own explorations, they learn with and from each other. Informal tutoring and support relationships in the peer group provide students with further avenues of guidance and encouragement, and through critiquing one another's work, the students articulate their knowledge, reasoning, and problem-solving processes, and the group learning outcomes are enhanced. The coaching phase is pivotal to the success of the endeavour, with the tasks being pitched just beyond the competence of the learner. This phase concludes with the supports for learning being "faded" as the novice develops disciplinary understanding and skills to execute the work of the expert effectively.

In preparing for the micro-teaching, the pre-service teachers are encouraged to develop their lessons following the structure outlined in the template. Then they rehearse their presentations of the lesson with a peer partner, who in turn presents their work. The partners then use a tuning protocol to give "warm" and "cool" feedback on their lesson and performance, which is then incorporated into the lesson planning. Hattie and Clarke (2019, p. 5) claim that feedback is "arguably the most critical and powerful aspect of teaching and learning". This feedback loop helps the pre-service teachers to use constructive criticism and work to improve aspects of their preparation and performance. At this stage, the pre-service teachers are moving to independence and are responsible for the development of their plan and the organisation of any required teaching resources.

22.5.3 Teaching Simulation

Prepared for their micro-lesson by the program as described, the pre-service teachers teach the avatars their planned micro-lesson. These avatars' behaviour can be pre-set from cooperative to disruptive, and the pre-service teachers are challenged by an increase in intensity at each encounter. Feedback is given by peers and mentors, and a reflective evaluation is written for each teaching session.

22.6 Research Design and Analysis

Evaluation on the preparation, performance, and reflection of the Teach Ready program was gathered in the form of pre and post surveys and Flipgrid film responses ($n = 35$).

This research project sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the cognitive apprenticeship scaffolded approach enhance the teaching performance of under-performing pre-service teachers? If so, can effective elements of the support program be identified?
2. Does mixed-reality micro-teaching assist this group? If so, in what ways?

22.6.1 Data Gathering and Analysis

Multiple data-collection activities and analysis were conducted. The data was gathered in two stages. The entire cohort (n = 35) completed pre and post surveys and were asked to film a response to their experience in Flipgrid. The pre-program survey ascertained the participants' preparations for and expectations of the program, while the post-program survey provided a reflective space in which they could visit the perceptions of the experiences and what they learned about teaching practice.

Fewer than half of the participants submitted the Flipgrid short "to-camera" film summations of the program and the Teach Ready experience. The numerical data was analysed using percentages, and the qualitative responses were transcribed and coded using NVivo software, which enabled "trees" of interrelated ideas and themes to be identified and developed.

22.6.2 Limitations of the Study

It is acknowledged that this research has some limitations. This was a small-scale project, and it is possible that such a purposive sampling method could skew the data. As participants were self-selected, it was probably those who felt more positively connected to the Teach Ready program who volunteered to fill in the survey and who filmed their responses to the micro-teaching experience. Another threat to the integrity of the data is the degree to which the respondents gave honest answers. When a group of pre-service teachers are asked questions about a recent program, some may give the answers that they think a researcher would want to hear, making it at least possible that some of the answers will be influenced by what the respondent views as "best practice". Also, although the Flipgrid short films were a novel way to collect data, more than half of the participants did not comply with the request to produce a response, and so their data from this source was lost to the project. However, the results so far are thought to be of sufficient interest that the decision was taken to publish the preliminary findings at this early stage of the research, with the intention of a follow-up paper when these pre-service teachers return to school to repeat their placements. It should also be noted that some of the researchers were involved in the design of the intervention, but not in the collection of the data.

22.7 Preliminary Findings

The analysis of the surveys and Flipgrid clips demonstrated that the cohort of PSTs aligned broadly with the demographics of the Teacher Education student population, being predominately female (65%) and aged between 18 and 25 (70%). Overall, the group was very positive about the workshop program and the subsequent mixed reality teaching. When asked to evaluate improvements, 93% claimed that their planning for engagement and success of diverse learners had been augmented, and 92% believed that the experience had boosted their confidence in their teaching performance. 86% thought that they had more strategies for classroom management while 90% reported that their ability to accept feedback and reflect on their own performance had improved.

When asked whether the Teach Ready program had been a worthwhile undertaking, all participants ticked "yes". When asked to choose one benefit of the Teach Ready program and justify their choice, the responses indicated that many found choosing just one benefit was difficult. Many were of the opinion that reflecting on their experiences, planning lessons, and practising delivering those lessons in the mixed-reality environment improved their chances of success when next they were in front of a real class (Fig. 22.2). The most popular response was that the program enhanced their teaching-performance skills in areas such as implementation of teaching strategies, explanation skills, and teacher demeanor. As Participant 34 explained, "It helped build teaching manner and to think on my feet. I believe that it offers us as teachers an opportunity to test our own skills and how we may present content." Another 16% believed that the most important impact was on confidence levels, as had been found in previous research (Ledger & Fischetti, 2020; McGarr, 2020). Participant 9 gave the opinion that "the main benefit is that a teacher can gain confidence over their voice, presentation, and being put on the spot. I feel this would translate very easily into the real classroom environment". Some participants (8%) saw the mixed-reality environment as a beneficial practice space, and described it as having a "realistic feel" (Participant 4) and being "risk-free" (Participant 12). Participant 11 concluded that the benefits were "gaining wonderful teaching experience where it felt like I was working with real-life people that responded and challenged my teaching. This is a fantastic way to reflect the classroom environment and not have to worry about pleasing supervisors". Twelve percent found that interacting with the avatars made them aware of the diversity of a contemporary classroom and the importance of being sensitive to the individual differences in the student population. Participant 3 expressed the sentiment of these responses: "I got a feel for and understanding of what a real life classroom would be like. Gives a better understanding of the diversity of students you may find in a classroom and that you have to take notice of everyone."

The development of a critical appraisal of teaching planning and performance was also suggested as a benefit of this program (13%). Self, peer and expert evaluation for improvement was a feature of the Teach Ready program and several participants commented that they had learnt to be more resilient in the face of critical feedback.

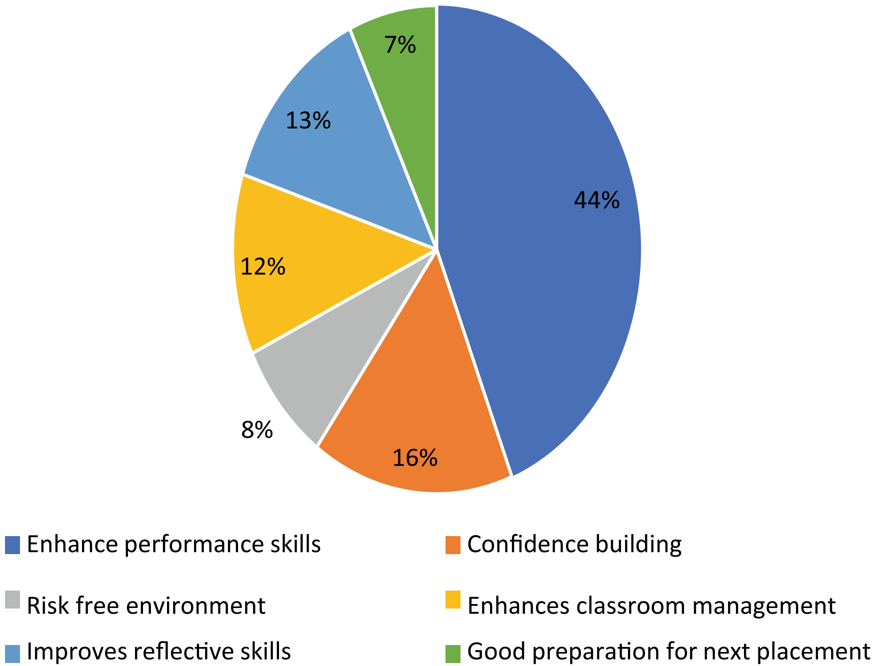

Fig. 22.2 Benefits of the teach ready program (n = 35). *Source* authors

Participant 22 was one of this group; "I am better at taking what I am doing wrong and not getting too upset.

Having an expert watching and providing feedback was incredibly helpful and I liked the comments on the chat [in Zoom]." All these participants had failed to reach the required performance levels in their professional placement, but only 7% saw preparation for next professional placement in schools as the main benefit of the Teach Ready program.

Participant 27 saw the online teaching workshops and mixed reality teaching experiences as an opportunity to improve during the Covid-19 Pandemic:

> It [the Teach Ready program] is a great and safe way to think about and practice my teaching skills and ability to interact with students. Because of the COVID-19 situation my practical placement was cancelled this semester, so teaching in a virtual classroom was a great way to compensate for the real-life experience with teaching that I had missed out on. It's useful to help training teachers keep in the loop of teaching especially when there are such large gaps between pracs [professional placements].

22.8 Conclusion

Initial teacher education programs and their accreditors require that all pre-service teachers attain the graduate stage of the APSTs. This study investigated the impact of a support program that aimed to assist a group of students who were deemed “at risk” of not meeting these standards. The data supported that the Teach Ready program went some way to addressing their needs, built self-efficacy and helped mitigate the perceived “reality shock”. The research found that the program was helpful in supporting students to be more confident and skilful in the classroom environment. The cognitive apprenticeship approach of modelling, support, and coaching along with independent performance proved effective in deconstructing the teaching tasks. The digital micro-teaching sessions gave pre-service teachers opportunities to enact a lesson, interact with and direct students, and reflect on their performance. The group dynamic helped the pre-service teachers to analyse their previous misunderstandings and shortcomings and practice to improve. These results suggest that teaching skills can be improved by carefully crafted lessons that model skills and strategies and scaffold rehearsals.

The shared experience of the group members was conducive to reflection and the discussion led by expert and experienced school-teachers provided an authentic platform for the resolution of issues and for coming to terms with the realities of contemporary education. The workshops featured demonstration and rehearsal of presentation skills, such as voice and pace, and explicit instruction in skills such as explanation and questioning. The mixed-reality teaching session reinforced these skills and allowed the pre-service teachers to experience some success in their classroom encounters and practice enacting strategies. Feedback and support from the staff and peers invigorated the process, and most of the cohort believed that the Teach Ready program was an important part of their preparation for returning to schools.

This research project has succeeded in establishing baseline data for the Teach Ready program. The use of the qualitative methodologies of surveys, interview sand self-made film responses have allowed the voices of what had been underperforming pre-service teachers to be heard, and structured instruction and practice have enhanced their confidence and teaching performance skills, and so increased their chances of success on their next placement. The data allows the drawing of some conclusions, but this work is a preliminary foray into this important development in teacher education. The findings suggest several avenues for further investigations, and have implications for initial teacher education agendas more broadly, with arguably the most significant being the need for consistent attention to virtual teaching environments, and their integration into initial teacher education programs. Following the result that mixed-reality learning environments present opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop confidence, which can increase their chances of success in real classroom teaching, the next step of the project investigates the successes and failures of the subsequent placement experience and follows another group on their Teach Ready journey.

Appendix 1

Teach Ready workshop program outline

	Workshop focus	Teaching skills	Activities	Resources
1	• Introducing a topic • Accessing student prior knowledge	• Beginning a lesson • Presentation skills: voice, pace, eye contact, demeanour • Levels of questioning • Organising and implementing an activity	• Class discussion: Placement de-brief and aims of teach ready • Developing questions, practice, review • Explanation—using graphic organisers in teaching • Rehearsal of using a KWL to access prior student knowledge • Individual development of micro-lesson, scripting • Peer rehearsal and tuning protocol	• Notes on questioning techniques • KWL template • YouTube tutorial KWL • Lesson template
2	• Enacting a multi-stage activity • Collaborative learning	• Presentation skills: voice, pace, eye contact, demeanour • Explanation skills • Interacting and building rapport • Organising and implementing an activity • Responding to student contributions • Concluding a lesson	• Rehearsal of using a Think, Pair, Share to promote engagement and class collaboration • Individual – development of micro-lesson, scripting • Peer rehearsal and tuning protocol	• Notes on graphic organisers • Notes on class groupings • Think, Pair, Share template • YouTube tutorial Think, Pair, Share • Micro-lesson template
3	• Enacting a multi-stage activity • Visual analysis protocols	• Presentation skills: voice, pace, eye contact, demeanour • Interacting and building rapport • Organising and implementing an activity • Responding to student contributions • Making a summary of learning	• Rehearsal of using a See, Think, Wonder strategy to analyse images • Individual – development of micro- lesson, scripting • Peer rehearsal and tuning protocol	• Notes on visual literacy • Notes on See, Think, Wonder strategy • See, Think, Wonder template • YouTube tutorial See, Think, Wonder • Selection of images • Micro-lesson template

(continued)

(continued)

	Workshop focus	Teaching skills	Activities	Resources
4	• Constructing a discussion and debate	• Presentation skills: voice, pace, eye contact, demeanour • Interacting and building rapport • Questioning • Enacting a staged activity • Responding to student contributions • Summarising class findings	• Rehearsal of using T Chart to promote discussion and debate • Individual—development of micro- lesson, scripting • Peer rehearsal and tuning protocol	• T-chart template • YouTube tutorial using a T chart • Micro-lesson template
5	• Evaluating and improving lessons and teaching performance • Concluding a topic	• Presentation skills: voice, pace, eye contact, demeanour • Reflective skills • Questioning • Enacting a staged activity • Summarising class learning	• Using SWOT analysis to reflection on Teach Ready Program • Individual – development of micro- lesson, scripting • Peer rehearsal and tuning protocol	• SWOT template • YouTube tutorial using SWOT analysis • Micro-lesson template

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Chapter 23
Supporting Classroom Teachers Who Supervise Education Students on WIL Placements: A Case Study

Noelene Weatherby-Fell and Michelle J. Eady

Abstract This chapter presents a case-study approach to examine ways to support classroom teachers who engage with universities in the capacity of classroom supervisor for pre-service teachers during their work-integrated learning experiences. The chapter will provide a snapshot of actions and activities developed alongside classroom teachers to establish a wider community of practice, and present evidence to encourage universities to focus on school-university partnerships in meaningful and collaborative ways.

Keywords Teacher education · Supervising classroom teacher · Professional learning · Work-integrated learning · Placements

23.1 Introduction

In the discipline of education, it is a requirement for pre-service teachers to undertake work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences in order to successfully graduate (New South Wales Education Standards Authority [NESA], 2017). These placements are known by a variety of different terms, such as work placement, practicum, work-based learning, professional experience, etc. In order for these WIL placements to be successful for the pre-service teacher, a partnership between the school and higher-education institution must exist, in which supervising teachers are there to mentor and support the pre-service teacher. Historically, these placement periods are known to be one of the most influential factors in preparing pre-service teachers for the world of work (Clark & Yinger, 1977).

It is important to understand the ways in which supervising teachers can be supported when engaging with pre-service teachers in their initial teacher education degree. Recent literature has discussed the disconnect between work-based learning and theory/coursework in higher-education institution settings (Diacopoulos & Butler, 2020). Classroom teachers have described the context of supervising as

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_23

a challenging and intimidating experience (Williams, 2013). However, providing an opportunity for these partnerships between universities and schools to flourish is beneficial to school staff, university academics, pre-service teachers and school students alike. This chapter showcases an example of how universities can meaningfully support supervising classroom teachers and create successful WIL experiences for all stakeholders.

23.2 Background

One of the most important goals of a tertiary institution is preparing graduates for their future careers. In the mid-1980s, there was a major peak in understanding how educators and higher-education institutions can best support university graduates' employability skills across the disciplines (Barnett, 2009; Peach & Matthews, 2011). An important element in achieving this goal was the prevalence of embedding WIL experiences within higher-education degrees (Billett, 2011; Universities Australia et al., 2015). It has been well documented in the literature that WIL improves personal growth, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and lifelong learning abilities in university graduates (Freudenberg et al., 2013).

In New South Wales, Australia, pre-service teachers studying education as an undergraduate program are required to complete 80 days of WIL professional experience (PEx) over the course of their degree (Hoskyn et al., 2020; NESA, 2017). Those enrolled in a graduate entry program, such as a Master of Teaching, will complete a minimum of 60 days. Pre-service teachers must demonstrate and provide evidence as to how they are meeting the criteria of the graduate standards, as presented within the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). The process for achieving accreditation entails a written statement in response to core questions related to teaching and learning, and a personal suitability interview responding to the pre-service teachers' knowledge and understanding of the APST. It is also expected that they are cognisant of the three dimensions of the NSW Quality Teaching Model, which has been defined as a "consistent pedagogical framework within which all NSW teachers and schools can operate" (NSW DET, 2003, p. 5). It is paramount that these pre-service teachers are able to understand and practice these requirements both in the higher-education setting and in authentic classroom settings during the course of their degree.

The importance of pre-service teachers meeting all of the graduate requirements for their degree leads to the question of how practising classroom teachers are being mentored to support pre-service teachers, and how higher-education institutions can support supervising classroom teachers in this process. It has been seen that when a supervising teacher shows and practises resilience on placement, the pre-service teachers themselves build their own self efficacy and resilience as a result (Beutel et al., 2019; Hoskyn et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to investigate the ways in which higher-education institutions can support classroom teachers and minimise the noted feelings of confrontation and anxiety that many classroom teachers experience

when considering welcoming a pre-service teacher into their environment (Williams, 2013). Successful WIL experiences for both the pre-service and supervising classroom teachers result in a significant amount of personal and professional growth for both parties (Ronfeldt, 2012) and encourage quality learning environments to flourish (Bastian et al., 2020).

23.2.1 History of Preparing Supervising Teachers

In 2002, the Department of Education Science and Training Australia reported a high instance of pre-service teachers who felt dissatisfied with teacher-education programs and completed their studies feeling underprepared for their careers as new teachers (Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002). The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) developed an online training program consisting of four modules, stipulating that "the minimum requirement is Practice Analysis Module 2 which can contribute towards your [the teacher's] maintenance of accreditation hours" (AITSL, 2017, para 4). In 2012, the Supervising Preservice Teacher (SPT) program was developed in partnership with the NSW Institute of Teachers (currently NESA) and the Queensland College of Teachers, with input from a number of higher-education providers and other stakeholders, and commenced in 2013. The four modules, developed in flexible mode, focussed on the following aspects: effective partnerships, analysis of practice, making judgements, and how to unpack the Graduate Standards (AITSL, 2017).

23.2.2 Great Teaching, Inspired Learning Blueprint for Action in NSW

The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL) Blueprint for Action plan (2013) was developed to improve the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes in NSW schools. It included a number of key actions designed to improve the quality of WIL placements for pre-service teachers. In particular, Action 4.4 noted "Professional learning for professional experience supervisors" (CESE, 2018), which involved engagement in relevant learning about mentoring.

An initiative from GTIL was to develop the Professional Experience Framework in alliance with key stakeholders in the field. The framework includes documents relating to best-practice guidelines for initial teacher education providers, schools and school systems, and teacher-education systems, with focus areas of development, information and communication, professional commitment, clear expectations, fair and ethical practice, and professional judgement (Document 1). Accompanying documents addressed common roles and responsibilities (Document 2), a common

report template (Document 3), an evidence guide for supervising teachers (Document 4), and data-exchange guidelines (Document 5). This framework emphasised the importance of schools and universities working together in partnership to foster excellent graduate teachers.

23.3 Context of the Study

The School of Education at the University of Wollongong (UOW), in consultation with the Department of Education Hub School project, developed workshops that provided accredited professional learning for practising classroom teachers focussing on the APST (AITSL, 2011) and supervision of pre-service teachers through the learning of these standards during professional experience (PEx). Initial activities undertaken within the UOW Hub Partnerships included professional learning on action research and associated activities with final-year pre-service teachers, the importance of mentoring and mentoring conversations (drawing on the work of Peter and Sue Hudson and their Mentoring for Effective Teaching (MET) model (2013)), and the process of lesson study.

In attending to professional learning, the NSW Department of Education specifically note within a discussion on teacher quality and accreditation that "to support the development of excellent, staff members supervising professional experience in schools will have undertaken relevant professional learning to underpin their knowledge and skills" (NSW Government website, 2021). One way that practising teachers could obtain this professional learning was through a workshop developed at UOW. Building on a tradition of secure relationships and partnerships with schools, initial presentations and discussions with school leaders and interested teachers in 2015 led to the establishment of processes of university-school responsibilities in supporting pre-service teachers. These included the importance of reciprocal learning relationships and recognition of the importance of a shared responsibility and commitment to preparing pre-service teachers for the profession (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Zeichner, 2010). Activities involved the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and attitudes amongst the participants regarding the importance of mentoring. In drawing on the "tried and true" examples of, and strategies for, effective mentoring experiences, consideration of the mentoring through the lens of the mentee (learner), mentor, and an observer were presented for discussion. Similarly, acknowledging the challenges to effective supervision and mentoring practices, where the phrase "if only we had time…" was the focus of another discussion point, the questions posed included:

- In the busyness of our days, what are the *challenges* to mentoring experiences and our role as a mentor?
- What disrupts the *flow* of our good intentions regarding the development of a mentoring relationship?

These workshops were designed to support both in-school PEx coordinators and supervising classroom teachers, and provided opportunities for consolidating the

intentions of the university and individual schools to support aspects relating to the challenges of supervising (and issues related to consistent teacher judgement) and mentoring (supporting and guiding).

The developed workshops drew on specific APST standards (including 6.1.2. Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs; 6.2.2 Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice targeted to professional needs and school and /or system priorities; and 7.4.2 Participate in professional and community networks and forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice), and completion of the module was recognised by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). The workshops were offered to local school teachers in a variety of modes, including on-campus opportunities (both at Wollongong and our regional campuses) outside of school hours, and on-site at individual schools; they took about two hours (with supplementary reflection activities provided for participants)..The latter were offered as professional learning with interested participants and as whole-school activities embedded within dedicated professional-learning days. Activities included assessment of pre-service teachers, with reference to the APST and citing the Graduate Teacher standards, with a focus on common feedback observations including aspects such as motivating, directing, and focussing attention, supporting individual students, responding to disruptive behaviours, and using instructional formats and learning activities. An example of the layout of the module can be seen in Table 23.1.

In Australia, all educators working in childhood services must be accredited with NESA (n.d.) to be approved to teach in NSW. It was important for the participants that accreditation with the NESA was approved through engaging in the workshop. In this way, teachers were able to gain valuable skills needed to supervise

Table 23.1 Supervising professional experience: APST and mentoring

Outline of aims • Strengthening relationships between UOW and local schools and supporting teacher professional learning
Context • Rigorous and consistent support and assessment of pre-service teachers on PEx across initial teacher education programs
Content • Role of supervising teachers—school-based teacher educators and mentors • Reflections on own experiences as a pre-service and a supervising teacher • Sharing of pre-service teachers' feedback about their supervising teachers and linking theory and practice • Genuine mentoring conversations (the importance of feedback and feedforward) • The APST-Classroom Practice Continuum (AITSL) • Tools to support supervising and pre-service teachers • Professional Experience Reports (NESA) and Performance rankings: Graduate Teacher Evidence Guide (NESA) and consistent teacher judgement, including an analysis of selected examples of professional experience report comments and alignment with indicators provided within the descriptors • UOW PEx processes and procedures

pre-service teachers and to benefit from the accredited professional learning. There were a variety of topics and strategies that these workshops provided. They included providing an overview of the UOW PEx program and how the APST can be used to provide feedback, mentor, and assess pre-service teachers. The workshops provided resources for teachers to use to support the supervision of pre-service teachers during the WIL experience. Part of the university's role is to ensure that the pre-service teachers are gaining the most from their WIL experiences (Albareda-Tiana et al., 2018). Therefore, ensuring that the workshop participants were provided with appropriate resources and support resulted in a partnership effort for the benefit of pre-service teachers. The workshop used real examples and exemplars of PEx reports to help classroom teachers understand the alignment between the NSW Department of Education's expectations (NESA, document 3) and the UOW assessment criteria.

Workshop participants focussed on the elements of having pre-service teachers in the classroom that can be celebrated, the challenges that can be faced, the practical applications of supervising teachers and their schools, and the importance of the aligning of pre-service teachers' needs with a movement towards accreditation.

23.4 Benefits and Lessons Learned

A number of benefits were noted as a result of this series of workshops. There were four themes that derived from the feedback and comments of the participants: harnessing knowledge that will result in an improvement in effective mentoring practices, an opportunity for sharing contextual school needs in a community of practice, an opportunity for discussing ongoing professional learning, and the introduction to new resources in relation to WIL in the PEx context of initial teacher education.

23.4.1 Harnessing Knowledge

During the course of the workshops, the participants were prompted to acknowledge the importance of consistent teacher judgement to improve the knowledge and practice of pre-service teachers. The participants were also encouraged to consider the impacts that they have on developing pre-service teachers. Part of the workshop for example, focussed on pre-service and classroom teacher relationships and provided the participants with the tools needed to identify types of tension that could occur with pre-service teachers, and how to resolve these issues when they arise. This was an important element of the workshop because for the most part, these mentorships are incredibly successful and valuable; however, there is a fine line past which the relationship can become difficult and both parties begin to feel tension. This has been noted in one of the resources (Hudson & Hudson, 2018) used as a foundation of this workshop; the participants were also provided with additional literature to expand their knowledge in this area.

23.4.2 Sharing in a Community of Practice

The beauty of communal gatherings of school teachers and administration is the common ground and contextual familiarity that participants bring to the workshop. These gatherings have the opportunity to build communities of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991), bringing together like-minded individuals with common pedagogies, goals and future visions. In these CoPs, experienced staff can discuss the value of the enthusiasm, motivation, young ideas, and discussion of current educational theories brought to schools by PEx students. The experiences of these colleagues can encourage others in the workshop to appreciate the knowledge and skills that pre-service teachers bring to the school and foster a newfound enthusiasm and willingness to be part of a third-space partnership (Zeichner, 2010).

23.4.3 Discussion of Professional Learning

Discussions are known to be a powerful tool in education (Reisman et al., 2018). The workshops provided opportunities for the teaching professionals to discuss their own ongoing professional learning. This could be in the form of a Master of Education qualification or other programs supporting higher levels of accreditation avenues available at the university. The participants agreed that the discussions surrounding professional-learning qualifications and the possibilities of upskilling were an important reminder for practising teachers to consider in their own journey of further study and professional improvement.

Other topics of professional discussion included opportunities to team teach, which could be new to some supervising teachers. The option of a more experienced educator partnering with a newly qualified teacher to mentor a pre-service teacher would enable both parties to grow as educators in team teaching and mentoring students. These examples present the opportunity for practising educators to share and reflect on their own practice. This, in turn, links back to the importance of professional conversations, where valuable learning for educators takes place.

23.4.4 PEx Mentoring Resources

Resources for ongoing professional learning included the provision of documents presented during the workshops, such as the Classroom Practice Continuum (AITSL), Document 4—Professional Experience—Evidence Guide for Supervising Teachers (NESA), copies of UOW Professional Experience documentation, and personal annotations to the presented content. Early iterations of these workshops included activities from the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching funded resource *Project Evidence*, a professional-learning website designed to support teacher education.

23.5 Challenges of Mentoring

During the time of the workshops, the participants openly discussed the ongoing challenges of having pre-service teachers in the classroom. These include the perceived negative impact on some school students when a pre-service teacher visits the classroom. While there is a wide acceptance that pre-service teachers are still learning and do not have the full skill set of a practising teacher, it can be difficult within a supervising teachers' classroom if the students are being negatively affected (Stites et al., 2019). Differentiation, for example, is not always easy, especially for a pre-service teacher; however, it can become a stress on a classroom teacher if the pre-service teacher is struggling with the concept. The CoP was able to refocus this misconception and reframe it as a benefit for the pre-service teacher to develop their skills and for the classroom teacher to revisit plans and articulate differentiation practices to the pre-service teachers. This secure alignment may be celebrated when supervising teachers are able to facilitate the nexus between theory and practice, making the connection between university study and quality teaching practice visible.

Another topic of discussion regarding the challenges of mentoring pre-service teachers was the problem of a lack of time for effective mentoring practices. An ongoing hurdle for teachers in general is what is known as the crowded curriculum (Ferguson-Patrick et al., 2018). A discussion point in the workshops was how difficult it can be to teach everything that is required in a term when one is also mentoring a pre-service teacher. These challenges increase with the time that the pre-service teachers are allocated to a class. For example, a six-week internship may cause a stress to the classroom teacher when they need to fulfil a large number of duties within a 10-week period. As teachers are constantly juggling the idea of a crowded curriculum as well as staff meetings, professional-development afternoons, and reports, the question arose of how difficult it can be to provide rich feedback to pre-service teachers when there is constantly something else that requires the classroom teacher's attention. In a similar vein, the number of daily tasks for which classroom teachers are responsible can make it seem impossible to write what seems to be a major final PEx report for the pre-service teacher. This is especially relevant if the PEx report is due at the same time as the classroom teachers' report cards.

All of these challenges provided rich discussions within the workshops, as well as sharing a safe space where there was university staff to share insights and help alleviate some of the fears associated with acquiring a pre-service teacher. Ultimately, the classroom teachers who attended the workshops were there because they wanted to provide a consistent experience for pre-service teachers across their schools, which the workshops aimed to facilitate. The sincere desire to provide guidance and support to the next generation of teachers cannot be underestimated.

23.6 Take-Away Message

The goal of the university-provided workshop was to rekindle an enthusiasm in classroom teachers for welcoming pre-service teachers into their schools. Becoming a supervising teacher to support pre-service teachers undertaking a teacher degree is a responsibility that is of great value and importance (Pianta et al., 2012). However, it is also important to ensure that mentoring is done effectively. As Hobson et al. (2009) discussed, when mentoring is done in a poor or unsupportive manner, it does the pre-service teacher a disservice. This point was thoroughly discussed and agreed upon with all participants of the workshops. The workshops instilled the realisation that even though the participants had graduated their degree and were working in a school, the university was still there in a partnership to support them in their roles. Many of these participants discussed making a difference through the new generations of teachers. A benefit of mentoring is a positive impact on developing a career-ready graduate. Participants relished the opportunity to learn more about professionalism and their role of immersing a pre-service teacher into their classroom while creating respectful boundaries.

There is a well-known concept: *paying it forward* and *paying it back*. The participants of this workshop discussed how being involved in placements can result in the pre-service teachers paying it forward in the future when becoming a supervising teacher themselves, or paying it back to the school by applying for casual days and full time work, and even volunteering.

23.7 Recommendations for the Future

These workshops shared a way in which universities can still make an impact on both their own pre-service teachers and their alumni, and foster wider community partnerships (in this case, between the university and local schools).

It is important to provide supervising teachers the opportunity to access workshops such as this one to develop knowledge, share in a community of practice, discuss professional learning, and provide PEx mentoring resources. Teachers were able to meet one another, inspire the uptake of pre-service teachers in schools, share difficulties with and concerns about mentoring, and learn from one another and the academics and professional staff in the university partnership. This allowed for rich discussions and critical reflections on their own practice.

Overall, there are many ways institutions can improve initial teacher education, and there needs to be more emphasis on opportunities to support these partnerships to create a positive synergy between placements and the university.

23.8 Conclusion

The University of Wollongong School of Education, in consultation with the Department of Education Hub School project, developed workshops providing accredited professional learning to assist classroom teachers in effective mentoring of pre-service teachers across all schools. There were many benefits in the feedback given by participants, and challenges of mentoring were discussed. This work complies with Hudson and Hudson (2018), who suggest that for pre-service teachers to feel comfortable and successful in their future careers, it is important to develop more school-university partnerships to support excellence in the preparation of future educators. UOW will continue to embark on these partnerships, expanding the community of practice necessary to develop excellent teachers.

Acknowledgements Project Evidence was generated through an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) grant (2011–2013): Sim, C., Freiberg, J., White, S., Allard, A., Le Cornu, R., & Carter, B. (2012). Using Professional Standards: Assessing work integrated learning in initial teacher education [online resource]. Melbourne, Vic: ALTC. Available from: http://www.teacherevidence.net.

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Chapter 24
Mentoring for a Positive Professional Experience: A Sydney Primary School and UTS Hub School Collaboration

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Abstract The *Mentoring for a Positive Professional Experience: UTS Hub School Collaboration* project aimed to explore best practices in setting stakeholders up for a successful professional experience at its primary Hub School partner. Key staff from UTS and the Hub School partner aimed to build a professional experience (PEx) model in which all pre-service teachers could achieve the Graduate Teaching Standard 4.7 regardless of the context. A concurrent aim was to identify key staff who could set up and coordinate a rigorous program of induction, reflection, and professional learning for both pre-service and supervising teachers. The professional-experience coordinator (PExC) would coordinate opportunities for pre-service teachers to be immersed in the school and share their effective practices with neighbouring partner schools. Overall, the PExC was highly instrumental in coordinating the PEx and facilitating the induction and professional learning programs. The success of the PEx was further driven by its culture of excellence and strong mentoring focus, and by the school's solid partnership with the initial teacher education provider.

Keywords Mentoring · School partnership · Culture of excellence

24.1 Introduction

Graduate teachers who can quickly adjust to the classroom and school settings are better able to transition into the workforce. Schools and universities can develop work-ready graduate teacher readiness by supporting them through their initial induction into Australian schools. To ensure the quality of PEx programs, the NSW Government has implemented the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL) initiative (Department of Education and Communities, 2013). Action 4 of the initiative, which relates to professional experience, is most relevant to this project. This action

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_24

states: “All teacher education students will receive high quality professional experience as part of their teacher education.” 4.1 further specifies that a new framework is to be developed that establishes expectations to guide high-quality placements. There is also an emphasis on showcasing high-quality professional experience through specialist experience in schools, as noted in 4.2. The Framework for High-Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools is a response to the GTIL action 4.1 and provides a framework that ensures quality professional experience (PEx) (Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW, n.d.). Both documents indicate that a successful PEx depends on a well-structured and resourced program, effective communication, and professional commitment and collaboration between universities and schools. The school’s “Setting up for Success” approach to PEx adopts the GTIL’s reforms by aiming to strengthen professional experience through school-university partnerships and to establish effective practices to ensure pre-service teachers are graduate-ready (Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016). The following question guided the project:

What are the key factors for high-quality professional experience that benefits teacher-education students, the host school and the school community in general?

24.2 Establishing Communities of Practice in PEx

This PEx project demonstrated the value of developing strong professional-learning communities to maximise the benefits of PEx for all stakeholders. It provides one key example of how communities of practice (CoP) can prioritise the learning through dialogue and inquiry that arises from practice, and displays the key factors of effective CoP, which include “knowledge generated and shared within a social and cultural context; understanding and experience are in constant interaction, dissemination of knowledge occurs in practice environments, and reflection and critical thinking is enabled through interaction” (Sim, 2010, p. 20). The University of Technology Sydney’s (UTS) primary Hub School partner’s model of pre-service teacher supervision accordingly incorporates the three aspects of a successful PEx model, SMILE (Shared Mentoring in Instructional Learning Environments): to build “(a) a culture of critical reflection within authentic classroom experiences, (b) a community of collaboration and learning, and (c) repertoires of practice through shared mentoring” (Chizhik et al., 2017, p. 33).

In these communities, the professional-experience coordinators (PExCs) took on a central role as “leaders of learning” within the school, as they positioned learning at the “centre of their practices” (Le Cornu, 2012, p. 19). Effective PExCs identified themselves as “learning partners”, as they valued the “learning relationships and learning conversations” required for the ongoing development of all staff (Le Cornu, 2012, p. 19). The PExC is accordingly vital for establishing this “culture of discourse”, which is inherent to effective learning, reflective practice, and pre-service teacher development (Mutton & Butcher, 2008). With adequate support, the

PExCs play a crucial role in "reculturing" professional experience through facilitating changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and practices that go beyond traditional views of the PEx model (Le Cornu, 2012, p. 28). Parsell similarly notes that the PExC "is central to training and inducting the next cohort of employees for schools, and as such, should be recognised as a necessary activity in all schools". At the school, the learning culture was further guided by the principal's leadership and evident through the school's culture of professional learning, mentoring, and excellent teaching and learning. This learning-orientated community helped pre-service teachers integrate into a "culture of discourse" so that they could better engage in conversations about effective practice (Ewing, 2002; Mutton & Butcher, 2008).

The executive team of the PEx Hub School secured two assistant principals in non-teaching roles as the PExCs. Attributing a high level of status to the PExC role indicates support from leadership and contributes to its success. A non-teaching position is also a significant part of the PExC role. For example, Spooner-Lane (2017)'s study found that beginning teachers who were mentored by an expert teacher with full teaching release were able to achieve greater student achievement over the following two years (Spooner-Lane, 2017). The study also found that pre-service teachers' development was maximised if supervising teachers could invest in quality and concentrated time for their supervisory work. Due to their non-teaching roles, the PExCs had adequate time to liaise with universities and support the pre-service and supervising teachers through regular reflection and professional-learning sessions. The PExCs also maximised opportunities for pre-service teachers to participate in broader school activities, such as the Primary School Sports Association (PSSA), Talented Art, Intensive Reading, dance, choir, and involvement in excursions, camps, carnivals, and special events, Quality Teaching Rounds with other pre-service teachers, whole-school staff meetings, and weekly team planning meetings/data discussions days. The pre-service teachers felt comfortable engaging in these activities, having been supported with a thorough induction process coordinated by the PExCs (Carter, 2012, p. 107). This whole-school approach to PEx enabled a shared model of mentoring (Le Cornu, 2010).

24.2.1 The Primary Hub School's Professional-Experience Program

UTS's primary Hub School partner is a public school located in Sydney's west, with 91% of its students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. It has a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and is one of the highest-performing schools in the local area. The school was selected as a Centre for Excellence for its high-quality practices in 2011. In the same year, it was nominated to be a lighthouse school for demonstrating best practices within Years 1 and 2. A teacher who was to be accredited at the Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) level was nominated to undertake work in providing mentoring for its early-career teachers. This initiative

was then extended to pre-service teachers. The PEx Hub School project was initiated when the school became UTS's Hub School partner in 2015; it expanded upon the successful processes established in the school. The key aspects of the PEx program were:

- Strong support from the principal for the PEx program
- Elevated status of the PExC in the school (assistant principals/non-teaching role/mentoring)
- Strategic allocation of resources to support the PExC (adjust class sizes, redirect funds)
- Regular and purposeful input from the university tertiary supervisor
- Careful selection of supervising teachers to mentor pre-service teachers
- Development of strong pre-service and supervising teacher induction process
- Ongoing professional learning for pre-service and supervising teachers (based on issues arising from practice)
- Weekly reflection sessions for pre-service teachers
- Involving pre-service teachers in a wide range of school activities
- Sharing effective practices/resources with partnering schools
- Ongoing data collection to inform effective delivery of PEx (including surveys for pre-service and supervising teachers, and for partner schools).

24.2.2 The Professional Experience coordinator's Role

Central to the school's PEx was the early identification of key staff to establish and coordinate effective practices. The role of the PExC was elevated so that their work could be acknowledged and accounted for through the resourcing of the PEx program. The principal appointed the assistant principals in the non-teaching PExC role. Both were chosen as they possessed the traits of a quality teacher and mentor and had the capacity to work collaboratively with other teachers to ensure the best-quality outcomes. They took on the role historically played by an external university tertiary supervisor in that they supported both the pre-service and supervising teachers with a thorough induction and professional-learning program. Their responsibilities extended beyond the limited and traditionally administrative role of liaising with the universities. They worked closely with the UTS university supervisor to build a framework to support pre-service teachers in the early years of their career. Establishing these non-teaching positions was critical, as it gave the PExCs adequate time to support the pre-service teachers.

24.2.3 Mentor Teachers

The school's culture of mentoring is firmly rooted in its mindset towards excellence and its focus on professional learning. Teachers at the school are accustomed to

observing and reflecting on their own and each other's teaching. The PExCs carefully selected the supervising teachers based on their effective mentoring skills. These supervising teachers underwent an induction process in which they were briefed about their respective pre-service teachers, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and the PEx Framework. They also undertook PEx mentoring courses accredited by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) at the Proficient and Highly Accomplished level in preparation for supervising pre-service teachers. Mentoring occurred at both a whole-school and individual-teacher level and involved teachers ranging from highly experienced to early-career. Most teachers were involved in mentoring in some capacity, as pre-service teachers were invited to observe as many different classes as possible. The goals of the mentoring course were as follows:

(a) Apply processes of critical self-reflection to enhance their own classroom practice;
(b) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of mentoring in developing teacher-education students;
(c) Select a range of suitable teaching experiences and guide and support the teacher-education student in all phases of their professional experience;
(d) Provide high-quality, formative, and constructive advice both informally and as written feedback to the teacher-education student; and,
(e) Apply the Graduate Teaching Standards to the professional-experience report.

24.2.4 Professional Experience Induction Program and Professional Learning

The PEx program has a formal induction process for both pre-service and supervising teachers. The induction process for pre-service teachers includes:

- Pre-placement contact with universities/supervising teachers/pre-service teachers
- Orientation to the school and important policies
- Ongoing reflection meetings held weekly with all pre-service teachers (where they could share the highs and lows for the week or conduct a short professional-learning session)
- Opportunities to visit other classes, school programs (as noted above).

The supervising teacher's induction folder includes the details of the pre-service teacher, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and A Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools. The supervising teachers additionally undertake mentoring workshops delivered by the PExCs and the university supervisor. The supervising teachers' induction and professional learning include a supervising-teacher information folder and professional learning for current and future supervising teachers (AITSL online module 1 and 2, school-based professional learning, university partners providing professional learning, supervising teachers' reflection meetings).

24.2.5 The University and School Partnership

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) reforms endorse strong partnerships between initial teacher education providers and schools to develop classroom-ready teachers. The partnership between UTS and their primary hub school was maintained through UTS's tertiary supervisor, who regularly visited the school and communicated via email, phone, or EDMODO© (a global education network that helps learners reach their full potential by connecting them with the relevant people and resources). The Quality Teaching Rounds at the school were facilitated by UTS's tertiary supervisor, and was extended in 2017 to incorporate a group of five final-year UTS pre-service teachers. The UTS tertiary supervisor delivered professional learning on effective mentoring to supervising teachers and PExCs across the Hub to ensure consistent and high-quality pre-service teacher supervision. UTS staff also assisted with the evaluation of the school's PEx. They guided schools in the data-collection process and encouraged them to proactively collect data to inform their practices. This data was to be incorporated into the following years' outcomes and milestones for the Hub project. Partner schools were encouraged to develop the specific outcomes and milestones that were unique to their contexts. And finally, the tertiary supervisor provided support when staff encountered difficult situations or needed to address complex or unsatisfactory matters regarding pre-service teachers' professionalism and performance.

24.2.6 Working with Partner Schools

To ensure that a larger group of pre-service teachers could benefit from high quality PEx, the school decided to share their resources and effective practices with their Hub partner schools. These schools were both primary and secondary, and included schools located in areas near the Hub. Each of these partner schools was allocated $5,000 to assist in developing their PEx program. Personnel from the Hub school were provided with on-the-spot and just-in-time support from UTS and its primary Hub School staff. NESA-registered mentoring and other relevant courses developed by UTS and its primary Hub School partner were offered to participating schools as a part of the GTIL Hub School initiative. This equipped PExCs across partner schools with the tools, strategies, and resources to support pre-service and early-career teachers. These PExCs adopted many of the practices implemented by the primary Hub School partner staff, such as pre-service and supervising teacher surveys and induction packs. The success of these initiatives and the pre-service teachers' workplace readiness were assessed through surveys and forums. The intended outcomes of these partnerships were:

- Fostering a strong, sustainable network between PExCs across a range of schools.
- Providing high-quality professional learning for pre-service and supervising teachers and school staff.

- Ensuring that pre-service teachers have a highly successful placement that has a positive effect on student learning.
- Equipping pre-service teachers with effective teaching skills to enhance student outcomes.

24.3 Methodology

Research data was collected from pre-service and supervising teachers, the tertiary supervisor, the school's executive team, and PEx partner schools. The data-collection instruments included surveys undertaken by the pre-service and supervising teachers. The pre-service teachers completed three surveys altogether, one after their first week, the second during the middle and the final one at the end of their placement. The supervising teachers completed one survey at the conclusion of the PEx placement. These surveys were collected for three years from 2016–2018. Supervising teachers in 2017 and 2018 completed one survey at the end of their placement. The PExCs also recorded anecdotal notes from both formal and informal meetings with the pre-service teachers, and collected exit passes completed by the pre-service teachers after their professional-learning workshops. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2017 and 2019, respectively, with the executive team at the school speaking about their mentoring model, the data-collection process, the number of pre-service teachers, the types of resources and services offered to the pre-service teachers in the induction process, and the professional learning offered to staff. Further data was collected from the Hub Schools' PExCs after each NESA-accredited mentoring professional-learning session in the form of open-ended survey questions (Table 24.1).

Table 24.1 Number of surveys collected from participating pre-service and supervising teachers across 2016–2018

Number of participants	2016	2017	2018
Pre-service teachers	1st week: 22 Mid-point: 13 End point: 8	1st week: 21 Mid-point: 15 End point: 12	1st week: 17 Mid-point: 6 End point: 8
Supervising teachers	N/A	25	11

24.4 Findings

24.4.1 The Pre-service Teachers' Experience of PEx

Overall, the PST survey revealed that undertaking professional experience at UTS's primary Hub School was a highly beneficial experience. The results of the pre-practicum pre-service teacher survey indicated that 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they experienced a positive pre-induction and induction (communication prior to placement, warm greetings, information folder, tour of school) and a supportive relationship with the supervising teacher. A further 90% strongly agreed or agreed that they could find and access relevant classroom resources, computers, and photocopiers. An equally positive response was found in the mid-practicum surveys regarding positive relationships with supervising teachers. The end-of-placement surveys provided further strong evidence relating to the success of their PEx placement. Every respondent strongly agreed or agreed that they felt supported by the supervising teacher, PExC, and school staff in general, developed their understanding of teaching, and became more effective teachers because of their placement. Aspects of the PEx that they noted as being particularly helpful included being able to participate in other school activities (i.e., planning days and visiting the support unit and other classes), mentor-teacher feedback and encouragement in practical teaching skills, and the supportive role of the PExC. The supportive framework enabled a significant shift in the respondents' identity, where they felt "like a teacher" rather than "like a 'prac' student". The whole-school approach to mentoring was also appreciated, with respondents commenting that it was "the most supportive and approachable school" they have experienced. The carefully designed PEx was pivotal in helping them develop a positive beginner-teacher identity; for example, one respondent commented that "seeing myselfimprove and becoming a more confident teacher" was the highlight of her placement.

Areas identified for further improvement included developing confidence through explicit teaching (i.e., clear instructions and explanations, scaffolding, and visual cues, particularly with lower grades) and the need for better organisation via clear lesson planning and implementation (differentiation and time management). Respondents also expressed a keenness to acquire a deeper knowledge of the syllabus and programming. Topics of interest included how to embed literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, reading skills (including phonics, guided reading, and reading recovery), and classroom management (organisation, setting clear expectations, communication strategies, managing small-group instruction, strategies to gain student attention, use of positive reinforcement, reward systems, and voice control). Respondents expressed a desire to enhance higher-order thinking skills, such as metacognition and self-reflection, through developing critical questions.

24.4.2 The Supervising Teachers' Experiences of PEx

The experiences of the supervising teachers were equally positive according to the survey data collected from the 25 teachers in 2017 and 11 teachers in 2018 (36 in total). Overall, 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were consulted with and were willing to mentor a pre-service teacher, felt supported by the PExC and could discuss any concerns about the PST with them, and were provided adequate modelling and explanations of teaching strategies for the pre-service teacher. Every respondent also strongly agreed or agreed that they could develop their teaching and reflective practice through having a pre-service teacher and would be happy to continue mentoring them. A further 97% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were provided with all the necessary documentation about their pre-service teacher from the beginning of the placement and referred to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers through the PEx. Ninety percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the pre-service teachers were proactive in their learning, and 86% strongly agreed or agreed that they referred to the Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools during the PEx.

The PExCs used the 2017 data to strengthen their practices in 2018, which led to a 10% increase from 2017 to 2018 in supervising teachers strongly agreeing to take on a pre-service. There was also an increase in the supervising teachers' familiarity with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools. In 2018, all supervising teachers referred to the APST and all but one referred to the Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools (Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW, n.d.).

24.4.3 The Connection Between the Hub School and Partner Schools

UTS's primary Hub sShool partner shared its resources with a network of schools to help them strengthen their successful PEx programs. The Hub School partners indicated positive developments to their respective programs because of their partnership, noting that they could work more effectively with pre-service teachers; for example, one PExC remarked, "We now have a program that is clear and structured, and tailored to provide ongoing support to pre-service teachers and mentor teachers." The professional-learning sessions were positively regarded as invigorating their learning communities, with one PExC describing the sessions as "great networking opportunities to share ideas and discuss issues that schools face".

The resources shared by UTS's primary Hub School partner alleviated any concerns over additional workload, with one PExC from a partner school commenting, "We feel supported by them and are appreciative of the resources and

advice they so willingly share." The PExCs from participating schools believed that these quality-assurance structures, such as the intensive induction program, would "ensure pre-service teachers from all universities are provided with the same level of support and direction at all times of their practicum" (Cecil Hills HS PEC, Term 1, 2017). A funding contribution of $5,000 was given to each school to allow staff to be released from their teaching commitments to attend these professional-learning and networking sessions, and to "plan, create resources and respond to University correspondence in a timely manner". School staff used EDMODO© to share the experiences and resources developed through the Hub. The professional learning provided to partner schools allowed them to expand on their PEx programs by helping them develop an induction process and accompanying package to be provided to pre-service teachers prior to the PEx; to elevate the role of the PExC through providing additional time and funding; engage in data collection through initiating beginning, mid- and end of placement surveys and interviews for all stakeholders to enhance professional experience; and to collect, evaluate and share evidence of PEx with PExCs and principals of Hub partner schools.

24.5 Discussion: Developing a Positive Teaching Identity Through Communities of Practice

Strengthening their CoPs allowed school and UTS staff to help pre-service teachers develop positive beginner-teacher identities. For example, a whole-school approach to PEx established by the PExC allowed the pre-service teachers to see themselves as a teacher rather than a student, and to develop a positive beginner-teacher identity. In her study on pre-service teachers' experiences in regional schools, Carter (2012) examined how they can thrive and develop as teachers through a sense of belonging to their communities. She found that they can accelerate their learning by reflecting on issues arising "in situ" and by analysing critical incidents that occurred in their placements, thus mirroring the authentic reflective practice inherent to quality teaching. Generating CoPs within PEx enables pre-service teachers to engage "as active participants in the practice of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities". Those who completed PEx at the school were given the opportunity to safely and confidently negotiate their border-crossing skills and to move from student to teacher (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Such communities are invaluable, as teaching is a social practice, and both pre-service and supervising teachers can benefit from reciprocal learning relationships that help affirm a positive teaching identity and practice (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). This partnership ultimately allows pre-service teachers to develop and solidify their teacher identity, in addition to helping supervising teachers to better recognise and affirm their professional expertise.

Despite its importance, implementing a successful PEx can be challenging. Not only are schools less likely to take on pre-service teachers when they cannot see

the benefits (Bloomfield, 2009), the quality of supervision can be sporadic, as the competency levels of supervising teachers vary (Brett et al., 2018). These challenges can be structural, as supervising teachers may receive inadequate formal training to prepare them for their mentoring work (Hudson et al., 2013). When they feel under-equipped or are not given enough support to deal with the needs of pre-service teachers, they may be less likely to volunteer to take them on or be reluctant to support new colleagues. Mentors without adequate formal training are also less able to provide direct feedback or to change the mentee's beliefs and teaching practices (Roehrig et al., 2008). The PExCs ensured that supervising teachers were adequately supported in their mentoring practices through an induction process that familiarised them with their pre-service teachers. They were supported by the PExCs through their open-door policy and were provided with NESA-accredited professional learning to develop their mentoring skills. The tertiary supervisor further affirmed the supervising teachers' work by helping to facilitate the mentoring workshops, as well as helping to set up Quality Teaching Rounds within the school.

Supervising teachers can have a profound impact on pre-service teacher development as they open their classrooms and share their rich practical-knowledge base (Le Cornu, 2012). They can become "providers of feedback, gatekeepers of the profession, modelers of practice, supporters of reflection, gleaners of knowledge, purveyors of context, convenors of relation, agent of socialisation, advocates of the practical, abiders of change, and [still find time to be] teachers of children" (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 163), and can help beginner teachers reframe problems through a more nuanced perspective (Athanases & Achinstein, 2003). The supervising teachers' high-quality supervision of the pre-service teachers was evident through the high levels of pre-service teachers' satisfaction. It was clear that the supervising teachers had given them detailed feedback, as they could clearly articulate areas of improvement and further growth required for their PEx placement. Not only were the supervising teachers able to provide critical, regular, and timely feedback, they enabled pre-service teachers to make—and learn from—their mistakes. By doing so, they were "promot[ing] authentic participation, critical reflection, interpretation and professional agency" (He, 2009, p. 272). The impact of effective mentoring is equally evident in Davis and Higdon (2008)'s study, which found that beginner teachers mentored by an on-site mentor experienced greater growth in their classroom practices as they received regular, high-quality feedback. A trusting and caring mentoring relationship is thus essential for helping beginner teachers develop their confidence and sense of autonomy (Hallam et al., 2012). It can have a far-reaching impact by setting up a critical foundation of reflexivity and efficacy that can help beginner teachers navigate the complexities of teaching.

The benefits of PEx for schools were clearly evident in the PEx survey data, with supervising teachers describing positive growth in their practices. Almost all respondents in both 2017 and 2018 strongly agreed or agreed that having a pre-service teacher "heightened [their] awareness of [their] own teaching and reflective practices." All respondents also strongly agreed or agreed to continue mentoring pre-service teachers, with most strongly agreeing. Such findings suggest that a well-delivered PEx can be beneficial to mentor teachers' professional growth. Peters's

(2011) study similarly found that 96% of supervising teachers regarded mentoring experience to be either very beneficial or beneficial, as they could help train pre-service teachers, showcase their practice, enhance their own reflective skills and professional learning, and gain support in the classroom. Peters (2011) documents how having pre-service teachers helped supervising teachers feel confident about their own teaching by allowing them to recognise and appreciate the expertise the pre-service teachers had to offer. Walkington (2007) provided an extensive list of potential benefits that supervising teachers could gain from working with pre-service teachers; these included having another teacher in the classroom as an additional resource, experiencing the pleasure and satisfaction of sharing their knowledge, developing a respect for their years of experience and opportunities to evaluate their own practices through reflecting with their pre-service teacher, and learning from the pre-service teachers' perspectives inspired by current research that they brought from their university studies. And finally, it was found that teachers who "gave back" to the profession could have long-term positive outcomes for schools, teachers, and students by shifting mindsets towards lifelong learning, with supervising teachers more likely to participate in professional learning as a result of their mentoring experiences (Hudson et al., 2013).

Mentoring beginning teachers not only helps supervising teachers keep their practice up to date through collaboration and shared learning, it also can affirm the vision of school leaders who feel empowered to lead and innovate through sustaining a culture of improvement. School leaders are central to the development of schools as learning communities, and principals such as Daryl have embraced PEx to enhance the school's learning-orientated culture. Le Cornu (2010) found that school-wide approaches to professional experience are beneficial for all practitioners, ranging from experienced teachers to early-career teachers, by positioning all participants as reflective agents in creating an environment of excellent teaching and learning (Certo, 2005; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). Reciprocity, in which all stakeholders benefit from and value what others bring into a partnership, was identified by Kruger et al. (2009) in her study of 35 Australian school/university teacher-education partnerships as being significant to success. This mutuality of PEx is important to acknowledge, as schools may be reluctant to take on pre-service teachers if they are unaware of mentoring's long-term benefits to their own learning culture.

24.6 Conclusion

The main findings of UTS's PEx Hub project highlighted that the greatest impact on the pre-service and supervising teachers and the school was the development of positive and supportive communities of practice. In these communities, the role of the supervising teachers and the PExCs were particularly significant in shaping beginner teachers' identities and practices (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Supervising teachers provided the positive encouragement and support, as well as the constructive feedback, that enabled the pre-service teachers to reflect on and improve their

own practices (Ambrosetti, 2014). The supervising teachers were able to have such a positive impact due to the support and processes established by the PExCs, who guided the PEx program at the school. Furthermore, it was evident that the supervising teachers and PExCs equally benefited from mentoring pre-service teachers, as this provided them with professional-development opportunities (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). For example, as supervising teachers provided constructive feedback to pre-service teachers, they could critique and reflect on their own teaching practices (Hudson & Hudson, 2010).

Overall, this Hub School project demonstrates the significance of CoPs in a successful PEx program. It illustrates the valuable role played by the PExC in leading a successful PEx program, which includes mentoring conversations, pre-service teachers' exposure to a diverse range of teaching and learning experiences, access to school resources, and opportunities for reflection. This program has been sustainable at the school as the PExCs already lead the professional-development and professional-learning processes. Thus, the mentoring of the pre-service teachers is encompassed within the school's existing culture of excellent teaching and lifelong learning.

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Chapter 25
Teaching for the Future Professional Partnership: The Professional Experience Hub School Perspective

Angela Fenton and Paul Grover

Abstract This chapter focusses on the implementation and research findings of a four-year New South Wales teacher-education professional-experience (PEx) Hub project conducted in partnership with Charles Sturt University's School of Education (Albury campus), the NSW Department of Education, and an Australian regional secondary school. The project employed an innovative, collaborative, and strengths-based model of PEx. Pre-service teachers were embedded into the school well in advance of more-traditional placement models. Additional opportunities for student support, peer coaching, enhanced collaborative strategies, and planning and self-reflection were provided by the Hub school and university partner as part of the model. The initiatives of the in-school professional-experience coordinators (PExCs), in conjunction with the university partner, allowed pre-service teachers multiple opportunities to be immersed in the school community; this assisted them in developing a strong sense of the profession of teaching, particularly in relation to professional identity, professional respect, and professional confidence. This chapter focusses on the project through the lens of the PExCs and the school supervising teachers. The chapter outlines particular positive opportunities and challenges for professional-experience enhancement (for all stakeholders) and the strengths-based strategies that emerged and developed before and during the project. A strengths-based framework (Fenton, 2013) to qualitative research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) was used. An embedded, multiple case study method enabled rich descriptions while researching the complexity of the school-based context. Qualitative methods, including strengths-based, informal, face-to-face interviews (Fenton, 2013), a school-based research assistant, and electronic semi-structured interviews (Fenton, 2013), were used to gather data to produce this case study (Yin, 2014). The chapter will outline the strategies implemented and research recommendations to enhance the significant milestone event of PEx for all stakeholders: school-based coordinators and supervising teachers, university educators, and pre-service teachers.

Keywords Professional experience · Teacher education · Pre-service teachers · University-school partnerships · Supervising teachers

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_25

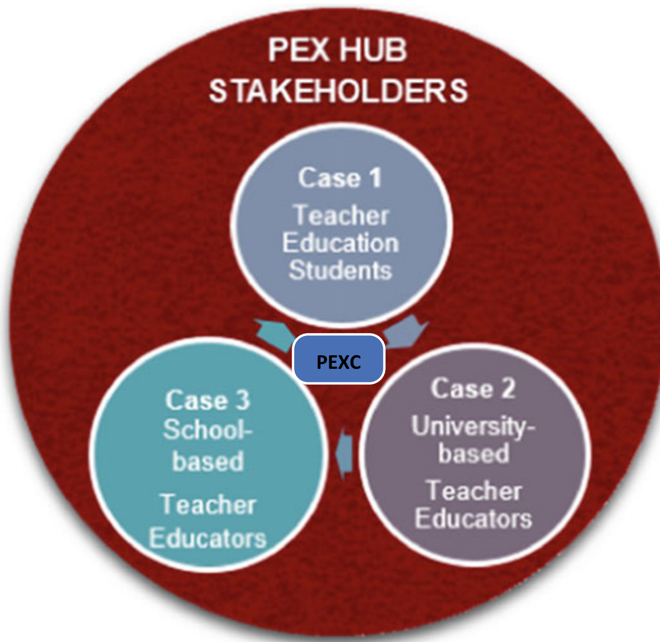

Fig. 25.1 The embedded case study model identifying the role of the in-school professional experience coordinator (PExC) (Source: authors)

25.1 Introduction

This chapter explores outcomes from an initial teacher education, professional experience (PEx) project situated in an Australian regional secondary school context. The project gave an opportunity to research an enhanced model of PEx collaboratively with pre-service teachers, school-based teacher educators, and university-based teacher educators using an embedded case-study research design. This chapter draws from the combination of case studies but focusses on the project specifically through the lens of the PEx Hub in-school professional experience coordinators (PExCs) as they liaised between stakeholder groups (Fig. 25.1).

25.2 Context

A PEx Hub Project Agreement was generated between the Australian and New South Wales (NSW) Departments of Education, a regional university, and regional secondary school. The PExC held a pivotal role in the project, collaborating with the university academics to develop innovative strategies and PEx resources for supervising teachers and pre-service teachers across the school's discipline faculties.

Using a different model to conventional placements, students were required to submit an expression of interest to be part of the project, and successful applicants were embedded in the school culture and events well before placement commenced. Students also kept a reflective portfolio, engaged in classes outside of their specified discipline, were involved in a peer-coaching program, and received identified time for collaborative learning support during their placements. Students were selected from a secondary initial teacher education course and were in their third year undertaking a PEx subject for their first secondary-school PEx placement. Three key research questions arose from the clear aims of the PEx Hub Project:

1. How has the professional partnership been implemented in this project?
2. Is innovative practice evidenced through the implementation?
3. Is there evidence of the development of expertise for stakeholders?

25.3 Literature Review

25.3.1 Professional Experience Context

Pertinent to this nuanced research is, first, an acknowledgement of the wider context in which it is located. Research regarding the importance of the preparation of pre-service teachers for the profession of teaching is extensive and eclectic in focus (Ell et al., 2017; Zeichner et al., 2015). PEx placements are high-stakes, compulsory, core components of accredited initial teacher education courses (Le Cornu, 2015), and many factors have been found to influence their successful completion. Some researchers have illuminated dissatisfaction with the quality of professional experience (Heeralel & Bayaga, 2011); others have suggested that a re-envisioning of the model for placements is needed (Mukeredzi, 2014; Priestley et al., 2015).

Decades of research have highlighted the need for holistic redevelopment of PEx programs, with recognition that the design of such programs is a complex task (Lang et al., 2015; Tickle, 1994, 2000). Le Cornu and colleagues, for example, have advocated for collaborative, collegial models of professional experience based on fostering strong, positive, reciprocal relationships between the main stakeholders in "learning communities" (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008, p. 1803). Building on the need for trusting and professional relationships, researchers have also promoted the development of strong university and school partnerships based on professional standards (Australian Council Deans of Education, 2017; Ure et al., 2017).

A common feature of PEx research is an acknowledgement of the different experiences and challenges for the main stakeholders in PEx programs and the various factors influencing successful placements (Van Schagen Johnson et al., 2017). In our current research (Fenton et al., 2019), the perspectives of three key stakeholder groups are explored: pre-service teachers, university teacher educators, and school-based teacher educators. This chapter delves further into the important influence of the in-school PExCs in their role at the nexus with and between these stakeholder

groups as “boundary crossers” or “boundary spanners” (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016; Greany, 2015).

25.3.2 *Successful Professional Experience and the PExC Role*

There are significant implications for the professional reputations and practices of all stakeholders involved in PEx programs. The PExCs, described by Martinez and Coombs (2001) as “the unsung heroes of professional experience” (p. 275), are pivotal in fostering successful placement outcomes across these groups, yet there is a paucity of research exploring their influence (Jones et al., 2016). For the PExC, knowledge of the factors that influence student success is vital in supporting professional experience. From the students’ perspectives, Crosswell and Beutel (2017) found that “managing diverse learning needs and student behaviours” (p. 424) and the need to balance home, family, and employment responsibilities were factors affecting success. Being able to apply theoretical knowledge in a classroom environment and navigate the “theory–practice gap” were also highlighted as success factors (Douglas, 2017; Yeigh & Lynch, 2017), along with the provision of induction programs and support (Wilkins & Okrasinski, 2015).

In their regular interactions with teacher education students, school-based teacher educators, and university-based teacher educators, PExCs are influencers of PEx success. Butcher and Mutton (2008) found that, as well as undertaking significant administrative and managerial tasks, PExCs also provided pastoral, professional, and pedagogical guidance as well as having quality-control and assessment responsibilities. Le Cornu (2012) reported that the PExC role was most beneficial when the principal and other teachers valued the role, and when PExCs not only mentored pre-service teachers but also support the university mentors. Le Cornu (2012) concludes that this articulation of the PExC’s role is vital in contributing to high-quality professional experiences and “essential in developing ‘new’ school-university partnerships” (p. 18).

25.4 Methodological Approach

A collaborative and strengths-based framework to qualitative research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fenton, 2013) was used to address the research questions. In contrast to an expert-led approach, the focus when using a strengths-based approach to research is a respectful collaboration with all key stakeholders to describe and evaluate the project. In the case of the PExCs, data was collected by a researcher independent of the project after the practicum results had been finalised. Such considerations are considered essential to maintain a sense of “power with” rather than

"power over" (McCashen, 2005, p. 31) research participants. The design aims to describe and reflect on the lived experiences of the project from different stakeholders' perspectives (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005) using "close-up" research (Clegg et al., 2016):

> One of the strengths of close-up research, with its emphasis on depth and understanding, is that it can identify why things are as they are and, by extension, when we identify wrongs seek to challenge them…. This involves a view of making a difference and research that moves beyond thinking of research as a discrete act and invokes the significance of corporate agency and the possibilities of acting collectively (p. 233).

A case-study design was employed to gather rich and "in-depth understanding of a single or small number of 'cases', set in their real-world contexts" (Yin, 2014, p. 4). The multiple case study research design also allowed the researchers to "zoom in", in a focussed close-up on particular perspectives of the project, to delve deeply and produce rich data, as well as to "zoom out", using cross-case analysis, for evidence of wider research implications. Trowler (2012) emphasises that while close-up research can pick up contextually "significant social processes operating on the ground" (p. 281), it is important to recognise larger structural factors at play.

25.5 Participants

The research participants in the overall project consisted of a purposive sample: 16 students who attended the project PEx placements over the course of three years, 15 school-based teacher educators, and five university-based teacher educators. This chapter focusses primarily on data relating to the role of the PExC in the PEx Hub project across all phases (years) of the project. All participants consented and contributed to individual and group feedback sessions. The research project obtained ethics approval from the ethics committees of both the university and NSW Department of Education, (HREA 100/2017/29, SERAP 2017503).

25.6 Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative methods, including strengths-based, informal, face-to-face interviews (Fenton, 2013) and electronic semi-structured interviews (Fenton, 2013), were used to gather data to produce the case studies (Yin, 2014). Additionally, existing project notes, meeting minutes, and participant reflections were drawn upon to describe the context and boundaries of the case studies. The embedded three-case study design allowed cross-case (Yin, 2014) and thematic analysis that illuminated how the PEx Hub project was implemented, and with what results for the different stakeholders (Yin, 2009, p. 17). In a collective, iterative process, common and unique themes were identified across the case studies, which were then analysed and discussed with reference to existing literature in the field to consider future implications.

25.7 Project Context

This project was anchored around supporting pre-service teachers undertaking a 30-day placement subject in the secondary school across Years 7–10 (12 to 16 years old). The pre-service teachers were concurrently studying education pedagogy and disciplinary subjects in English, maths, science, history and business studies. Eligible pre-service teachers were informed of the project by email with a personalised video invitation from the school principal, and then invited to submit a brief expression of interest several months prior to placement commencement. Students were asked to state why they wished to participate and to outline particular strengths and areas of expertise they felt they could bring to the project. The selection of students was completed by a panel of school and university staff. Consideration was given to the available experienced school faculty members for the supervising teacher roles, and to the desire to ensure that a representative sample of students for the school placement reflected a typical range of students in similar placements. The level of academic performance in university studies was not held as a higher priority for selection, while reasons offered by the students for selection, and the strengths and opportunities they brought to the placement, were given strong consideration.

25.8 Results and Findings

Once the project commenced, a number of PEx events and strategies were enacted (Table 25.1). The results in this chapter predominantly focus on the role of the PExC sin the PEx Hub project in the implementation of strategies developed throughout the project. However, data themes are included that are pertinent to the broader context of PEx in Australia. Therefore, results have been selected as they relate both to the experiences of the PExCs *and* to broader evaluations of PEx in teacher education.

25.9 Discussion

25.9.1 Role of the School-Based PExC

The results show that students strongly appreciated having a designated school-based PExC, and highlighted specific benefits prior to and during the PEx placement. The university-based teacher-educators also saw this as very important as an “ongoing liaison between Charles Sturt University (CSU) School of Education (SOE) representative and school professional learning head teacher—emails, meetings, phone calls” (Teacher Education Student). The PExC had a pivotal role as a “boundary crosser” (Akkerman & Bruining, 2016) confirming previous research indicating that this role benefits multiple stakeholders (Jones et al., 2016).

Table 25.1 Professional-experience strategies and feedback from pre-service teachers

Professional experience strategies developed with the school-based PExC	Pre-service teachers' feedback on PEx strategies
1. Specified senior teacher contact/school-based coordinator for pre-service teachers	• Having a school-based coordinator who was accessible allowed clear lines of communication and common information distributed • Extra support from school coordinator when any issues arose • I also wanted to mention that without Xxxx, none of this would've been possible; without having that "go to" person, I don't think it would have worked out as smoothly as it did and I wouldn't have had all of these opportunities to experience/attend throughout my placement • Whilst [we were] on placement, Xxxx organised for us to fill our spare periods with observations, seeing every teacher from the maths faculty teach several different classes, as well as seeing teachers from other faculties teach their classes. Getting so much experience was a huge advantage in preparing us for further studies
2. Advance information about placement, including dates, location, personnel, classes, contacts	• …much more time to prepare and be ready and I think this was the most important aspect, really—it actually made me more independent having the early contact with the school • I already knew where things were and who people were before I started • Having the security of the local placement in advance was hugely important…. I had the security of knowing where it was going to be, so was therefore able to get that work/study balance—ahead of time
3. Pre-placement access to school administrative systems	• Access to Sentral (school admin system) enabled me to see the school context and student context and administrative systems at work • It was also helpful to know my timetable so early on, as I was then able to have conversations and meetings with my mentor to discuss some possible lessons, topics, and activities that I was able to plan early on. This made me feel less stressed and more prepared for my placement

(continued)

Table 25.1 (continued)

Professional experience strategies developed with the school-based PExC	Pre-service teachers' feedback on PEx strategies
4. Opportunities to take part in school tour/events/activities prior to placement dates	• One of the many major benefits of this project was to meet the staff of the school we were going to as well as meeting our supervising teacher months before our placement [had] begun. We had the opportunity to sit in on a staff meeting as well as having a tour of the school. This exposure to the school so early ended up being a huge benefit when I started placement • Able to make connections with supervising teacher and staff and also school routines with early visits and communication • Going into the school beforehand to meet the students helped me to identify their strengths and weaknesses • I was able to attend several homework centres…. Attending this enabled me to begin to show my face amongst the students and begin to get to know them as well as some of the staff • Simple things, [such] as knowing where the toilets are, are really valuable when starting placement • When I turned up to the first day of placement I felt that I was a part of the school

(continued)

Table 25.1 (continued)

Professional experience strategies developed with the school-based PExC	Pre-service teachers' feedback on PEx strategies
5. Opportunities for supervising teacher and student to meet and plan prior to placement	• I was more organised for my own placement and teaching—with more time to plan lessons and resources for teaching • Just getting insights to curriculum too—you see you were not going in "cold" • It was well organised—for example, the timetables were out well in advance—I felt like I was literally "in the right space" that I needed to be • Before the program I got to meet my mentor and form a relationship early on; this was a strength going into my placement, as we knew each other and had already been able to discuss the placement and find a common ground • Able to make connections with supervising teacher and staff and also school routines with early visits and communication. The supervising teachers had greater patience with us—they knew where we were positioned in our course and we had met them earlier to explore classes, topics, and teaching resources • It was a good opportunity to observe the classes I was going to teach- and then commence more confidently
6. Opportunities to observe experienced teachers and other peers teaching	• The opportunity to observe other faculty members' classes as well as the single supervising teacher that was a strength of the project • Working with staff who are specifically trained in special education allowed us to learn new skills and focus on best teaching practices • Observing peer teaching was a terrific inclusion • A strength was seeing a much wider range of teaching styles and classroom approaches—and being involved with other school programs, events, classes outside my teaching area

(continued)

Table 25.1 (continued)

Professional experience strategies developed with the school-based PExC	Pre-service teachers' feedback on PEx strategies
7. Opportunities for professional mentoring and peer support during placement	• This is so current and valuable [practising teacher came and discussed behaviour management]—very valuable because they are teaching now and some of our other lecturers haven't been in the classroom for a while. He gave examples from the day before and how he would go back and follow up with a student—on-the-ground experience is excellent • I found the other students involved in the project helpful and it felt like a team environment • Classroom management—I had some difficulty at first but also received very useful feedback…. There is a need to talk about classroom-management issues after lessons and to set up strategies for following lessons
8. Initiatives to support pre-service teachers during placement	• Having a school-style badge was really useful—gave an identity and legitimacy being closely associated with the school—recognised by staff and school students as a teacher in the school • Being introduced as a teacher by my supervising teacher—this was promoting me as a teacher to students and assisted my acceptance by them as a teacher • Keys to school and name badges (gives more realistic experience not only as a student teacher but to how other [school] students perceive you) • The name badge definitely helped me in feeling welcomed at the school, I felt like I was equal with everyone, which I have not necessarily felt on other placements

(continued)

Table 25.1 (continued)

Professional experience strategies developed with the school-based PExC	Pre-service teachers' feedback on PEx strategies
9. Promoting collegial professionalism between supervising and pre-service teachers	• When you go into a placement and the SBTE says "I want you to treat this as our class for the next three weeks" or says 'Let's try this…", you feel part of it already and welcomed and respected • You had to speak up to take opportunities; if someone takes you "under their wing"—if you have that initially—then you actually end up becoming more independent • You feel that it is okay to fail and that it is okay to take a risk when you are part of a supported placement • Straight away I sat down with my teacher and said, "These are my goals and expectations," and she was super on-board with what I wanted to try out and basically said "take the wheel" and "go for it" • Given access to teaching resources very generously—on a USB they shared online teaching resources of the school • I made several great friends at the school who have provided resources, guidance, and advice on future accreditation processes

The role was not predetermined, and feedback was sought from all stakeholders to maintain a continuous-improvement paradigm over the phases of the project. The results confirm and articulate specific quality-control and pedagogical and professional-guidance elements in the PExC role as identified by Butcher and Mutton (2008). For example, during the second phase of the project, the PExC developed handbooks for supervising teachers and pre-service teachers to provide full details about the school, contact people, key policies and procedures, and advice to support student placements. These resources were valuable tools in developing a common perspective and a common language for all stakeholders.

25.9.2 Advance Notification of Professional Placement

This was a particular advantage for regional students, as it provided the security of knowing where they were going to teach, allowing them to organise other work and family commitments, and enabling early contact with the school and their supervising teacher. In this way, the PExC was able to support students and positively influence one of the main identified factors affecting placement success: the need to balance home, family, and employment responsibilities (Crosswell & Beutel, 2017). This process also benefited the university-based educators in streamlining processes, as it enabled a number of student placements to be finalised at an early stage in the academic year. The PExC role assisted in enhancing the school-university partnership (Le Cornu, 2012).

25.9.3 Pre-placement Access to Administrative Systems

The PExC facilitated the approval process for student access to the online school administrative system, including roll-marking systems, class lists, timetables, and welfare information, by the time the placement commenced. Using a strengths-based approach (McCashen, 2005), the PExC drew on existing strengths and resources to be solutions-focussed. This enhanced the students' development of their professional confidence, professional identity, and professional respect (Fenton et al., 2019), as they were recognised by staff and students as fully integrated with the school's administrative systems.

25.9.4 Opportunities for School Engagement Prior to Placement

The PExC was instrumental in organising a variety of key school events and activities prior to placement (for example, "meet and greet" introductions, a tour of the school, a welcome morning tea with staff, sporting carnivals, a homework centre, and inclusion in staff development). Students found these additional opportunities to connect with the school and become professionally engaged with staff, school students, and school activities particularly beneficial prior to their placement. These actions modelled a trusting and reciprocal relationship and helped to facilitate a positive learning community (Le Cornu, 2016).

25.9.5 Opportunities for Planning with Supervising Teacher Prior to Placement

The pre-service teachers were first introduced to their supervising teacher at an informal afternoon tea organised by the PExC, where they arranged to exchange contact details and commenced building a professional relationship. The pre-service teachers shared information about their course and teaching requirements and reported feeling more organised and confident when the placement commenced. The PExC maintained active communication with the students to ensure that support was available during this pre-placement orientation process. The PExC thus contributed to placement success by providing a well-supported induction program (Prince et al., 2010; Wilkins & Okrasinski, 2015).

25.9.6 Opportunities to Observe Experienced Teachers and Peers During Placement

The PExC developed opportunities to encourage students to reach beyond their own PEx classroom teaching requirements through such activities as providing a dedicated space for the students to plan, prepare, consult, and collaborate, as well as opportunities for peer mentoring and professional-learning seminars with experienced teachers. Other initiatives for the pre-service teachers organised by the PExC included:

- observing each other teaching, and offering reflective peer feedback
- preparing a common lesson and observing each other teaching the lesson (and offering reflective discussion and feedback)
- videoing teaching practice and evaluating in a debriefing process

- observing other teachers teaching across a range of disciplines with reflective feedback.

These initiatives were found to have contributed to the placement success through being able to bridge the "theory–practice gap" (Yeigh & Lynch, 2017).

25.9.7 Opportunities for Professional Mentoring and Peer Support During Placement

Le Cornu (2015) argues that to fully prepare for teaching, pre-service teachers must be provided with opportunities "to engage with the process of mentoring" (p. 363), and that peer mentoring is particularly useful in raising confidence and willingness for professional learning. The PExC facilitated a program to engage supervising teachers in peer-coaching teams with the pre-service teachers prior to and during placement, and to video some of these sessions for analysis. Professional development for supervising teachers was implemented to enhance their understanding and skills in interpreting reporting requirements, lesson-observation coding, and the use of supervision strategies/resources. The PExC identified the need for a document to guide supervising teachers in their observation, evaluation, and assessment of students, and for their pre- and post- observation meetings with students. As a result of this feedback the university educators, in consultation with the PExC, developed an Evidence Guide for supervising teachers and pre-service teachers that was aligned with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2017) for a first PEx secondary-school placement. This provides a discrete example of successful mentoring and reinforces Wilkins and Okrasinski's (2015) claim that such support should begin in pre-service preparation, as it contributes greatly to pre-service teachers' understanding and development as prospective teachers.

25.9.8 Initiatives to Support Pre-service Teachers During Placement

Students particularly noted that a number of small initiatives implemented by the PExC had a positive impact on their PEx placement. The creation of school-identified badges for students complemented the school badges worn by staff members, and being introduced to the classes as a teacher and not a "pre-service teacher" or "student teacher" and the provision of keys and access codes to staff areas were important. As one student reported, "It was the little things that made a huge difference – like having the keys to the staffroom!" When considering sustainable ways to enhance professional experience for students, initiatives such as these cannot be underestimated (Fenton et al., 2019).

25.9.9 Promoting Collegial Professionalism Between Supervising Teachers and Students

The handbooks and Evidence Guide promoted by the PExC enhanced a collegial professional relationship between supervising teachers and pre-service teachers. Such resources can help create a much-needed "non-hierarchical interplay between academic, practitioner and community expertise" (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89). Pre-service teachers engaged in critical reflection before, during, and after the PEx placement in an iterative and formative process aimed at improving ongoing professional practice. They found the time allocated by the PExC for feedback opportunities with supervising teachers, peer discussions with fellow students, and professional-learning seminars with experienced teachers extremely valuable in enhancing professional practice. Feedback opportunities such as these are crucial to avoid what Darling-Hammond (2010) describes as pre-service teachers being "left to sink or swim" (p. 45).

Pre-service teachers indicated that the acknowledgement from supervising teachers of the developing professionalism in their teaching skills was a significant contributing factor in building their confidence and identity as a professional teacher. There was a sense of the beginnings of what Zeichner et al. (2015) refer to as a necessary "fundamental shift in whose knowledge and expertise counts in the education of new teachers" (p. 122). These distinct advantages were facilitated and supported by the PExC, who was always present, always approachable, and a key source of advice and assistance throughout the PEx placement—the PExC was the "unsung hero" (Martinez & Coombs, 2001, p. 275).

25.10 Limitations and Conclusions

This nuanced research consisted of a purposeful and contextualised participant sample of stakeholders in the PEx Hub project over a three-year period in one school. Methods were applied consistently and rigorously, and the findings can be viewed as valid and reliable for the site studied. The small number of participants and contextualised nature of the research precludes universal generalisability or exact replication of results. This is, however, a noted limitation of all case-study research; moreover, the case-study method was not specifically chosen for this study to be statistically relevant (George & Bennett, 2005). The case study was, however, true to the intended method in providing an in-depth study of stakeholders undertaking and evaluating a unique PEx project.

The authors argue that many of the findings noted for this contextualised case study can be easily transferred across contexts and integrated into existing infrastructure and processes, and, notably, do not entail high implementation costs. Some elements of the project may not be as easily transferable for large-scale adoption, such as the expression-of-interest process. Strategies that were implemented, however, such as

an early introduction to the placement school and supervising teacher, as well as the implementation of secondary placement Evidence Guides and handbooks for supervising teachers and pre-service teachers, are evaluated as valuable improvements that are transferable. Other effective strategies included introductions and welcome events, a clear timetable, a tour of the school, name badges, staff access codes/keys, and access to school online administrative systems. A highly significant finding from this case study was the high importance the pre-service teachers placed on low-cost, simple strategies. The research found that when the PExC implemented these small strategies, they combined to provide a significantly enhanced PEx for all stakeholders, including a very positive impact for pre-service teachers in their secondary-school PEx placements.

From the perspective of the students involved, the research identified three key elements that enhance professional experience. PEx is successful when pre-service teachers understand and develop a strong sense of the profession of teaching, particularly in relation to professional identity, professional respect, and professional confidence.

While these elements and the findings pertaining to them importantly confirm and build on previous findings identified in the literature review, this PEx Hub project did reveal certain new and revealing nuances. A new finding is that developing professional identity, respect, and confidence did not work in only one direction or in isolation for the pre-service teachers. Indeed, the school PExC, supervising teachers, university teacher educators, and pre-service teachers need to model a multiway interactive professional-teaching partnership that recognises the significance of identity, respect, and confidence in all stakeholders' professional practice. It is anticipated that these findings will be of benefit in planning future PEx programs and research undertaken in this field.

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Chapter 26
Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of an NSW Regional School-University Partnership: The Perspectives of Academic "Insiders"

Graham Daniel, Matthew Winslade, Greg Auhl, and Deb Clarke

Abstract This chapter reports on the experiences of one rural New South Wales Hub partnership from the perspective of a group of teacher-education academics who worked in partnership with school staff. We report on the benefits of the partnership from the university perspective, and give our observations of the benefits for the participating school. Key learnings relate to the benefits of the inclusion of classroom practitioners' and school leaders' contemporary classroom experiences, from, in preparing preservice teachers for their transition into professional placement. We also report on challenges encountered during the program, and in sustaining the established relationship into the future.

Keywords Teacher education · School-university partnerships · Preservice teachers · Professional experience

26.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the notion of an NSW regional school-university partnership from the perspectives of a sample of teacher-education academics directly involved in leading, designing, and facilitating the partnership. This perspective is an under-represented space, as normally the university academic assumes the role of researcher and explores an issue from the perspectives of "others", as an outsider. In contrast, this chapter provides the opportunity for academics involved in a teacher-education school-university partnership to voice a narrative of their own experiences, highlighting capabilities and chresulting from their partnership engagement. Additionally, the chapter value-adds to the breadth of stakeholder viewpoints in the current school-university partnership literature.

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_26

26.2 School-University Partnerships: Examining the Disconnect

There has been a long history of partnerships between schools and universities who offer initial teacher education degrees, including the use of demonstration schools to model best practice, research partnerships to improve practice, and collaboration in supporting professional experience placements. While these partnerships have been instigated with the view to achieving the common goal of preparing initial teacher education students for the context and responsibilities of the teaching profession, teachers have criticised such programs for a lack of authentic connection to current real-world practice (Clarke & Winslade, 2019). Reciprocally, university academics reproach teachers for a perceived lack of evidence-based practice (Snow, 2019).

These critiques between schools and universities have resulted in a degree of underlying distrust and misunderstanding that is evident at the school-university interface. Authors such as Darling-Hammond (2006) highlight that this disconnect between academics and teachers has in part resulted from each stakeholder group losing sight of, and misunderstanding, each other's roles and their institutional influences. These tensions remain evident in Australian education, despite initial teacher education degrees undergoing rigorous accreditation with peak bodies and extensive consultation processes between providers and educational authorities. This wariness affects initial teacher education students as they act as border workers and cross the threshold between university and school to undertake professional experience (PEx) placements (Brady, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2009; Zeichner, 2010); and in these "divided" contexts they are exposed to the phenomenon that Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1983) labelled the "two-worlds pitfall" (p. 54).

School-university partnerships are not without their challenges. Australian research has noted complex tensions at the interface between schools and universities that all staff and pre-service teachers need to negotiate. These tensions arise due to the number of different relationships present in the practicum space, where each actor negotiates with their own responsibilities and accountabilities (Martin et al., 2011). School staff need to negotiate relationships and responsibilities to employers, colleagues, and parents, with primary responsibility for their students' learning and well-being. University staff are accountable to their employer and teacher registration and other regulatory bodies. Pre-service teachers must negotiate within these tensions to successfully achieve the placement requirement of their institution and registration bodies.

There are also criticisms between schools and universities concerning program preparation and expectations. Teacher-preparation programs are perceived as being too focussed on theory and not preparing pre-service teachers for the practicalities of classroom teaching and the realities of schools (Spendlove et al., 2010). School staff report being excluded from involvement in the development of teacher preparation and placement programs (Martin et al., 2011). Universities are also perceived as having a utilitarian view of schools as sources for PEx placements for their students (Rowley et al., 2013), and being focussed more on research opportunities in schools

than on genuine partnerships (Green et al., 2020; Weerts & Sandmann, 2006). Schools are criticised as not conceptualising teacher education as part of their professional responsibilities. In one Australian study, up to one-third of staff reported seeing placement supervision as an unreasonable impost or distraction from their primary responsibilities (Lynch & Smith, 2012), with similar tensions to those reported in international research.

Despite these challenges, school-university partnerships can also be a source of opportunity to re-conceptualise practice and reestablish meaningful working relationships between stakeholders. Glimpses of establishing these respectful relationships have appeared in historical research, illustrating the benefits of using teachers to support initial teacher education programs (Bhabha, 1990; Goodlad, 1993); however, this practice has not been sustained over time. More contemporary research points to the re-emergence of this practice (Clarke & Winslade, 2019; Smith, 2016). This recent research calls for universities to refocus their perception of schools, from considering them solely as mandatory sources for PEx placements, to revisioning them as genuine partners in the preparation of initial teacher education students (Zeichner, 2021). Genuine partnerships see teachers as valuable providers of input to initial teacher education degree design and delivery, and schools as contexts for pre-service teachers to engage in authentic, assessable immersion experiences. Together these experiences combine to allow pre-service teachers to bridge the theory–practice divide, provide safe rehearsal spaces for their emerging skills, and nurture the development of their professional identity (Ferns & Lilly, 2015). In addition, these opportunities assist in addressing distrust and suspicion between academics and school practitioners, as they deeply engage with each other's practice within each other's contexts.

26.3 Re-focussing the School-University Partnership

In 2015, the New South Wales Department of Education (NSWDoE) Hub initiative was launched. This state-funded initiative aimed to produce innovative and sustained quality PEx practices to be shared with other schools across the state, supported by school-based research, and to build a knowledge bank of effective PEx practices that benefited teachers, initial teacher education students, schools, and universities (NSWDoE). Thus, the aims of the Hub initiative provided permission and incentive for universities and schools to respectfully reconnect, providing stakeholders with the temporal and relational space to gain an enhanced understanding of the others' culture, priorities, and perspectives relating to teacher preparation. Zeichner (2010) describes such a space as the "third or hybrid space": one in which differing expertise is recognised and where a bridge is created between the school and university, as both institutions contribute to initial teacher preparation.

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) requires every initial teacher education student to complete between 60–80 days of placement in schools. The number of placement days depends on the their discipline and degree focus (primary

or secondary). This requirement is often referred to as PEx placement (NSW DoE). PEx is a supervised process, sequenced in all accredited initial teacher education courses; it most often commences with observation and gradually progresses in terms of duty of care and levels of the pre-service teachers' responsibility. It can thus be argued that the Hub initiative was introduced in recognition of the school sector's concerns about the quality of universities' preparation of pre-service teachers. The PEx Hub project identified and supported 24 schools that were acknowledged for their expertise and commitment to supervising pre-service teachers during their teacher-education degree. Each of the 24 schools was partnered with a local university, based on location and appropriate service courses.

In the context of the program reported in this chapter, a team of teacher-education academics from an NSW regional university identified the need to explore both teachers' perceptions and university processes of preparing pre-service teachers. The investigation of teachers' perspectives created a baseline of data from which to develop an evidence-driven project, initially reflective of the needs of one group of stakeholders. The opportunity also allowed the university to undertake an audit of its PEx program with the input of practising teachers, providing a clearer sense of current university practice, and how that practice might present opportunities for implementing authentic partnership approaches.

26.4 The New South Wales Hub Initiative—Regional University and Regional College

The Hub partnership discussed in this chapter commenced in 2015 as a partnership between a regional university and a local multi-campus college of secondary education in regional NSW. The purpose of the collaboration was to provide an opportunity to explore ways to better support pre-service teachers' transition into the teaching profession by enhancing the quality of the initial teacher education degree. The resultant innovations were to be informed by the localised context of the partnership stakeholders.

Initially, a baseline to drive an evidence-driven project was established using surveys (n = 99) and semi-structured interviews of relevant stakeholders (n = 22), to identify strategic pathways for the overall direction of the partnership and subsequent project focus areas (Winslade et al., 2020). This process led to ongoing, co-designed programs and activities that have been in place for five years, including:

1. A range of university and college partnership-designed and delivered PEx subjects for both on-campus and online pre-service teachers;
2. A review of the processes and communication strategy involved in comprehensive university PEx;
3. Development of an Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)-approved teacher-supervision training package, "Valuing the Practicum", to assist teachers to meet accreditation and promotion requirements;

4. The piloting of a remote video supervision and observation tool (known as Swivl) that aligned with the Department of Education's Professional Development Program; and
5. A professional-development mentoring project that partners academics with college (that is, secondary-school) teachers.

In the spirit of sharing knowledge and resources to benefit the broader profession, the project has grown to include other NSWDoE schools, in both the local region and adjoining educational districts. To further share knowledge, this chapter presents the perceptions of three academic *insiders* who reflected on their experiences during the implementation of the PEx initiative of the project.

26.5 Methodology

This study adopted a reflective dialogic approach. Dialogic reflection (Mann & Walsh, 2017) considers the ways in which practitioners interact with and come to understand their professional worlds. In doing so they improve their professional practice in collaboration with a community of practice. Dialogic reflection is most often driven by tools that promote, and allow data-driven, systematic engagement in, reflective practice (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017). In this study, the tool was a guided reflective schedule that included a series of reflective prompts to focus the academics' written responses of their recollections of their Hub experiences. The tool was designed by an independent researcher, and was informed by both the initial dialogue with the three participating academics and the contemporary school-university partnerships literature.

The study was approved by the university's Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: 100/2016/11, updated revision document). The reflective guide was distributed by email to the three academics, who prepared detailed reflective responses focussed by the guide prompts. This one-step-removed approach to gathering the voices of the insiders assisted in minimising bias, as the academic insiders were urged to reflect on a breadth of experiences, stakeholders with whom they had engaged, challenges, and benefits of their involvement in the project.

26.6 Participants: The Academic Insiders

Three teacher-education academic staff acted as participants in the research. Pseudonyms* have been applied to each of the academics' descriptions and reflections to preserve anonymity. Participants varied in age, teaching experience in school and university contexts, and adopted roles in the project, including leadership, administration, and teaching.

26.6.1 Michael

Michael* was employed as the Associate Head of School (staffing) in the School of Teacher Education and was responsible for managing the staffing for the Hub project. This task required him to identify PEx subjects in each of the teacher-education courses (early childhood/primary and K-12) and to assign both academics and teachers as timetabled on the university calendar. In addition, Michael co-designed and team-taught in the introductory PEx subject in the early childhood/primary course. Michael's teacher partner was a highly experienced ex-school principal from the local region. Both Michael and his school partner hold degrees in primary teacher education.

26.6.2 Chris

Chris* was employed as the Faculty Sub-Dean Workplace Learning, with oversight of the Professional Experience Unit (PEU), and held responsibility for the operational aspects associated with the initial teacher education student placement elements of the project. Key responsibilities in this role included the coordination of PEU staff to facilitate pre-service teachers to placement sites, allocation of liaison officers, and assuring risk-mitigating controls and resourcing to support pre-service teachers and teaching partners. Chris's role further included management of the project's research activity, and he assumed membership of the partnership steering committee, allocating funds and resources to support partnership activity. Chris was the initial Associate Head of School for the first phase of the project, undertaking the same responsibilities as Michael, including actively contributing to the co-design of subjects and coordination of academic and teacher partnerships.

26.6.3 Sandy

Sandy* recently returned to the School of Teacher Education from a secondment in the university's central learning and teaching unit, where she assumed the role of workplace-learning professional leader. It was in this role that Sandy's commitment to the importance of authentic contextual workplace experiences was confirmed and her perspectives expanded beyond teacher education. Sandy co-designed and team-taught in three PEx subjects in the Bachelor of Education K-12 degree, working with four teachers during the five-year project. Sandy was the initial academic to team-teach in the project with a secondary teacher, who has sustained her commitment since the project's inception. Sandy and the teachers with whom she team-teaches all have secondary-school teaching degrees and extensive secondary-school teaching

experience. Sandy assumes membership of the partnership steering committee and is currently driving further partnership initiatives relating to teacher mentoring.

26.7 Data Analysis

The academics' reflective narratives were analysed using intra and inter-textual analysis to determine themes and categories (Burns, 2005). The themes were coded according to the academics' reflections of their experiences of engagement with the varying elements of the project, and the people involved in its development and implementation. This analysis involved an iterative process of checking between the emerging categories from individual responses and the collective to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the themes. This process involved initial reading of each of the narratives and highlighting significant points of reflection, based on the reviewed literature, and acknowledging other key messages. Preliminary codes were initially assigned to the raw data followed by assigning a final code that was thematically driven from the initial codes. Coding was a way of indexing or categorising the text in the reflective responses to create a framework of themes (Gibbs, 2007).

26.8 Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed benefits for the teacher-education degree, pre-service teachers and academics, as well as perceived benefits for the teachers and their schools. The data also revealed contextual and theoretical challenges in the delivery of the project, and in establishing the project's sustainability. Each of the themes identified in the data will be explored in further detail. Throughout this chapter, select, representative quotes are included to illustrate the individual academic's voice as well as more common findings, in instances when issues were raised by all three academics.

26.8.1 Benefits

26.8.1.1 Exposure to Contemporary Teaching Practice

One of the challenges for teacher educators is that as academics, teacher educators can lose currency in their understandings of schools as they move through their tertiary-education career (MacPhail et al., 2019). Michael and Sandy reported being "brought up to date" with the current classroom, school, and industry environments, through their engagement in the Hub project.

From the university perspective, the academic participants pointed to the benefits of being exposed to contemporary teaching practices modelled by exemplary teachers. When Michael and Sandy team-taught university subjects with current classroom teachers, they were exposed to a more authentic view of schools that illustrated application of contemporary practices, procedures and policies; this assisted in the delivery of the initial teacher education program with current classroom examples. These links with current practice address what Clarke and Winslade (2019) describe as the missing connections to real-world practice. Sandy lauded how the teachers brought their perspective of school students' learning to the delivery of university subjects, offering immediate and practical examples of the application of the subject materials to school practice. These examples were often illustrated with the teachers' own samples of lesson development and students' learning activities.

Michael highlighted how the teachers provided pre-service teachers with examples of differentiation from their own classrooms, demonstrating planning and selection of outcomes for specific learners' needs. He further recalled that the teachers reported that the experience raised *their* awareness of the connections between the educational theory of differentiation theory and their classroom practice.

These examples point to a successful model of subject facilitation that positions academics and classroom teachers in a shared, collaborative space, in which each offers pre-service teachers their respective expertise (Zeichner, 2010). These benefits model the affordances of schools and universities working in "genuine parentships" (Zeichner, 2021) to enhance preparation programs for pre-service teachers.

26.8.1.2 Links Between Theory and Practice

Examples of applying the subject content to schools' practice appeared to enable the bridging of the theory–practice divide (Darling-Hammond, 2006). For example, Sandy highlighted how one of the teachers illustrated the application of regulatory teaching standards (AITSL, 2011; NESA, 2018) to the preparation of their documentation for proficiency accreditation. She suggested that presenting how these standards were mobilised in schools, both in the delivery of teaching and in the management of careers, provided clarity to the application of these standards in the pre-service teachers' placement expectations, and in their demonstration of their progress and success on placement. Rather than appearing as a set of university or subject requirements, the teaching standards provided a clear line of sight from teacher preparation to professional practice and through to future career trajectories.

One of the aims of the Hub project was to build connections between schools and universities. An intent of the two educational systems working together was to create further collaborative processes and enhance the relevance and applicability of university and school experiences for pre-service teachers. This intent has realistically played out. Chris reported an example in which the teacher-education degree was adjusted to reflect the current school context. This revision assisted to further align theory with current practice, and better prepare pre-service teachers to comply with school expectations. Chris further reported examples of teachers'

recognition and appreciation of university and regulatory requirements that guide and constrain teacher-education PEx placements. Such increased awareness and understanding helps to build the missing connection between stakeholders referred to by Darling-Hammond (2009) and Zeichner (2010).

26.8.1.3 Heightened Connection Between the Institutions

Chris reported increased connections between the two institutions, heightened by the development of professional-learning opportunities, and through engagement with the AITSL's professional teaching standards. Chris recalled a range of shared professional-learning benefits resulting from the partnership. For example, one significant outcome was the collaboration between the university and teachers in developing accredited professional-learning modules to assist supervising teachers to supervise pre-service teachers. The Hub project also increased teachers' awareness of and interest in local opportunities for further education, including enrolments in postgraduate coursework and research degrees.

Michael identified that the links with schools also provided the university with access to exemplary teachers who were employed beyond school hours to teach the university's curriculum subjects: a strategy useful for teacher career trajectory and enhanced professional learning. Furthermore, Sandy noted how these heightened connections gave rise to opportunities for research partnerships as academics and teachers enhanced their professional relationships. Chris stated how these enhanced connections with local schools had the additional benefit of the schools' increased preparedness to host pre-service teachers on PEx placements.

26.8.1.4 Seamless Transition of Pre-service Teachers

An important outcome of the partnership identified by all the academic team was the identification of the need for PEx subjects to support the seamless transition of the pre-service teachers from the university into their first school placement. Students benefited from the practical, current, and authentic links between university theory and application that the project provided. The authenticity and currency of school-based materials and examples enabled the project members to prepare the pre-service teachers for the expectations and requirements of their forthcoming school placement.

As well as providing authentic tips from the field, Michael highlighted how his connection with a teacher from a local school enabled the provision of a non-assessed pre-placement school visit, in which the pre-service teachers observed a class of the same year level as their upcoming (first) school placement. This brief step into the relative unknown enabled them to orient their thinking to schools and visualise the context of the classroom—a space in which some had not been for several years.

However, as suggested in the chapter introduction, while school-university partnerships hold the potential to offer a wealth of benefits for each of the stakeholders, they are not without their challenges.

26.8.2 Challenges

The academics pointed to a range of challenges that constrained the structure and operation of the Hub initiative. These challenges included differences in institutional cultures, structures, and organisation.

26.8.2.1 Differences Between Institutional Cultures, Structures, and Organisation

Differences in the policy and practice environments between schools and universities presented contextual and theoretical challenges to the operation of the project. Both Chris and Michael pointed to the contextual challenges, including practical day-to-day differences in the operations of schools and universities, and regulatory and policy requirements within each institution. Examples of practical challenges included differences between institution's timetables, employment requirements and conditions, and staff availability during university and school breaks. As well as these more immediate challenges, there were longer-term practicalities such as teacher turnover between university semesters and school years. Practical challenges were relatively easy to work through but relied on the flexibility of the individual school and university staff.

The variations in the level of freedom or professional autonomy was at times challenging for both the teachers and academics in the project. It was evident that teachers were highly accountable to their school leaders, while the academics managed their commitments to suit their professional needs. At times, this created difficulties when scheduling meetings and timetabling university classes.

Sandy acknowledged that identifying appropriate staff who demonstrated the capacity to bridge the school-university divide was also a significant challenge for both institutions. Although there were only rare occasions where participants found this fit challenging, the provision of information sessions led by current and previous staff from the project would raise teachers' and academics' awareness of the expectations and requirements of the project.

26.8.2.2 Cascading and Upscaling

A further challenge for the immediate future is to scale the learnings of the various partnership projects into broader practice across initial teacher education degrees, and across schools within and beyond the region.

The project required the release of teachers to deliver initial teacher education programs at the university, affecting their availability to undertake their school duties. The project required a paradigm shift from the traditional dichotomy of theory and practice responsibilities assumed by each of the respective educational institutions. A shift to a continuum of shared responsibility across a teacher's career is proposed: a continuum seen to span from novice to practitioner and on to educational leader, as reflected in the Australian Professional Teaching Standards (Weerts & Sandmann, 2006; Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, this shift needs to encompass the notion of pre-service and practicing teachers and academics as a professional community of practice (Lynch & Smith, 2012). The participating academics cited examples of how partnering with teachers meant that these connections between university and school in the development of future teachers gave rise to opportunities to work as a team, with a broader view of how each was able to enhance the transition of pre-service teachers between their studies and their school placements.

In the absence of NSW DoE funding, the sustainability of the project will, to an extent, depend on this paradigm shift of shared responsibility, and the commitment of school and university leaders to embed these partnerships into "business as usual". With this commitment, creative solutions to the practical constraints and challenges can be sought. Regular and long-term planning to guide the cycling of school and university staff and succession planning will be required to sustain and promote the benefits of the project. This continued relationship was one of the aims of the Hub project.

26.9 Conclusion

From an academic and university perspective, the partnership initiative afforded currency, authenticity, and relevance in the preparation of the participating pre-service teachers for their school placements. By bringing together theory and practice and illustrating these concepts with current examples from schools and classrooms, students were provided with clear demonstrations of professional teaching practice. The partnerships with practising teachers also offered opportunities for increased communication and understanding between the institutions and staff, and enhanced delivery of program content. The next step is to establish ways of ensuring the sustainability of these partnerships to maintain the identified benefits.

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Part VI
Concluding Chapter

Chapter 27
Professional Experience in Times of COVID-19

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Abstract This study examined the preparedness and capabilities of pre-service teachers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when many schools were teaching online. The university curriculum was adapted to enable pre-service teachers to explore suitable pedagogies to not only teach remotely but to engage their students using contemporary technology-based learning materials. The school in this study was in a low socio-economic area with diverse students, many with a language background other than English. This study was thus positioned at the intersection of what is known as trauma-informed education, professional learning and the resilience of both practising and pre-service teachers. The study used a case-study methodology with data collected from online surveys and group interviews on Zoom. The participants were pre-service teachers from the university and staff, including supervising teachers, from the school. The data from both the surveys and the group interviews were analysed thematically, guided by a theoretical framework addressing the intersection of resilience, trauma-informed education, and professional learning. Resilience in coping with the unusual classroom context was enhanced by the smaller number of students in class; the greater range of life experiences of the more mature pre-service teachers; and the skills and experience of the school's teachers to support and mentor the pre-service teachers. The guidance provided by the university in conjunction with the experience of the school's teachers enhanced the pre-service teachers' ability to manage trauma-affected students. The greatest source of trauma was when students who were learning remotely returned to school as they struggled to catch up on work missed and the mental-health issues that resulted. Pre-service teachers stated that as a result of the combination of the adapted university course work and the practical learning during professional experience their preparedness was significantly enhanced.

Keywords Initial teacher education · Professional learning · Resilience · Trauma-informed education

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_27

27.1 Introduction

There is a dearth of research on the interconnectedness of trauma-informed education and professional learning in a modern context. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a challenging yet rich situation in which to observe pre-service teachers in a nuanced and diverse environment. Significantly, teacher professional learning became a substantial need in a short period of time, and teacher preparedness an understandable concern for schools, students, and parents (Fitzgerald et al., 2018). Additionally, awareness of the effects of trauma on education was paramount to, at least, an understanding of the nature of the teaching and learning experience (Beltman, 2021). The study characterises the impact and effect of mentoring professional learning for pre-service teachers and the school teaching staff supervising them, along with the school's HoPP and PExC.

This study provides learnings for ongoing and future curriculum development and pedagogies in initial teacher education so that pre-service teachers can be effectively mentored to engage in school spaces where challenging and unpredictable situations may occur. Skills, strategies, and dispositions are documented and further explored in terms of variables such as the use of technologies in teaching and learning, remedial strategies and curriculum re-planning, assessment, and pastoral care.

27.2 Situation of the Study: The School

The school is located in Sydney's South West with a population of 620 students, with 98% of the students from a language background other than English, including 6% of students who are refugees. The school has 21 mainstream classes and four classes in the Special Education Unit, which cater for students with intellectual disabilities and/or autism. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, classes were primarily face-to-face. Where students were able to be at home, learning was conducted both by hardcopy and online to address the needs of diverse student populations and their home-life contexts. The school community is identified as low socio-economic and receives additional funding to address equity issues through the Resource Allocation Model (NSW Government, 2020).

27.3 Literature Review

Literature on trauma in the context of pre-service teachers in Australia is limited, as much of it is related to war, the plight of refugees, and natural disasters. This abbreviated review explores the relevance of resilience in the face of trauma given the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact on pre-service teachers'

experience, and teacher learning in the context of preparedness for a complex and nuanced PEx placement.

27.3.1 Resiliency

Teachers seek to develop their resilience as a coping mechanism (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Taylor, 2013) that is potentially critical for long-term retention and can be supported by mentors and other colleagues (Naidoo & Wagner, 2020). It is argued that resiliency is pertinent for pre-service teachers and existing teachers alike (Bobek, 2002). Lohbeck (2018) found that those with greater resiliency actually had greater motivation to teach, and as a result experienced greater levels of success within the profession. Furthermore, people who chose to become teachers demonstrated a more intrinsic than extrinsic motivation for teaching, and, as a result, were more likely to be resilient and demonstrate behaviours that were associated with resiliency (Lohbeck, 2018). However, pre-service teachers experience a greater level of emotional stress and exhaustion, and hence require more support in the initial stages of their career. Professional-learning programs (Beltman et al., 2011) and strong, collegial relationships were identified as important strategies in support of pre-service teachers (Taylor, 2013).

27.3.2 Trauma-Informed Education

The general effects of trauma are well documented, as are the effects of trauma specifically on education and the preparedness of teachers to support students affected by trauma (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2019; Wolpow et al., 2016). There is a link between trauma and resiliency, as the former are the stressors and the latter, the strategies that enable teachers to cope. For young people, the educational effects of trauma can include impediments to learning, cognition, behaviour, and socialisation (Doughty, 2020; Morgan et al., 2015). More recently, the impact of COVID-19 has brought about a new perspective on the topic.

27.3.3 Trauma and COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 has reshaped the world, particularly in a modern context, ravaging entire economies and affecting work, health, and education (O'Connor et al., 2020). Education provides an element of stability for children, which shifted greatly as a result of the pandemic (Teo & Grif, 2020). The effects were initially felt in the context of uncertainty and fear of the unknown, especially as people adapted

to concepts such as social distancing (Fitzgerald et al., 2020) and the closure of frequented venues, ultimately including schools and universities (Phelps & Sperry, 2020; Teo & Grif, 2020). The effects were felt by families, particularly those thrust into home-based schooling and work simultaneously, with mental health a key issue (Phelps & Sperry, 2020) along with the psychosocial effects (Fitzgerald et al., 2020).

27.3.4 Technology in Relation to Trauma

Digital technologies had a substantial impact, and imprint, on the pandemic, creating a trauma of their own (Garfin, 2020). Educationally, technology provided a seemingly stable solution for school closures through online learning. However, the reality of socio-economic factors, device availability, and individual competency caused a substantial divide, particularly in the context of accessibility. For those with limited access, the reliance on technology may have been more detrimental than beneficial (Teo & Grif, 2020). This is particularly the case where children have limited access to suitable devices or where internet is limited, for example (Day et al., 2021). It was reported as a substantial consideration for inequities in access to learning and long-term implications for learning gaps (Duffy, 2020).

27.3.5 Teacher Learning

Teacher learning is an important facet of initial teacher education, and preparation is key to ensuring both mentors and mentees are appropriately equipped for their roles (Beutel et al., 2017). Universities play a major part in this, as the initial providers of education and the source of core knowledge, while mentors provide the basis on which to unpack this knowledge into practice.

In the context of resiliency, trauma, and education, there is a complex interconnectedness between the preparedness of teachers to engage in the profession and the necessary mentorship that will help them develop their skills as teachers to ensure competency and confidence. Importantly, this extends "beyond training and includes collaborative, dialogic spaces for potential mentors to engage with other teacher-mentors and university-based teacher educators" (Beutel et al., 2017, p. 165). Additionally, school leadership and capacity in executive leadership are critical to the success of mentoring and supporting mentors (Houston & Hood, 2017; Romijn et al., 2021).

This study's conceptual framework consists of the three strands of resiliency, trauma-informed education, and teacher learning. It illustrates the nexus between professional learning and the domain of trauma-informed education, as well as the underlying framework of resilience in a specific context. This provides a rationale for the inclusion of such strategies in initial teacher education and professional-learning

programs. Further, it provides a lens through which to situate recommendations made by the study participants.

27.4 Methodology

27.4.1 Research Design

This qualitative study employs a case-study methodology (Yin, 2014). This enables the study to explore the narrative of participants whilst focussing on the lived experience of pre-service teachers and staff at the school. It also allows multiple realities to arise from natural differences in the development of human perception provided most effectively through the words of the participants (Lapan et al., 2012).

The study was approved by the University's Ethics Committee (# 017088S), and informed consent was granted by each participant in the study. Participation was voluntary and participants were able to withdraw at any stage of the study.

27.4.2 Research Questions

The following four questions were devised as focus points for investigation within the case study:

1. How effective are the initiatives the Hub School partnership is trialling to support supervising and pre-service teachers to ensure positive outcomes from the PEx placement for both partners?
2. What strategies can be employed to prepare supervising teachers to better be able to fulfil their role when mentoring pre-service teachers, ensuring that they will be profession-ready on graduation?
3. How can the University better prepare pre-service teachers prior to them undertaking PEx?
4. How can initiatives best be documented, evaluated, and disseminated to other Hub School partners and the wider community?

27.4.3 Units of Analysis—Case Boundaries

The case is a Hub School, working in partnership with the University. Eighteen participants volunteered for the study; these included six of the University pre-service teachers and their six respective supervisors, along with the school's HoPP, PEx coordinator, and principal, three members of the University staff.

27.4.4 Data Logic

Data collection was through survey and group interviews, and analysis was thematic, in which the conceptual framework comprised the overarching themes of resiliency, trauma-informed education, and teacher learning. The literature that informed each theme was used to interrogate the data. Under each theme, sub-themes were identified and extracted as they arose from the data (Yin, 2014).

27.4.5 Data Collection

Data collection consisted of survey and group interviews between the Hub School and University staff who participated in the project. The surveys were anonymous and online, while the group interviews were held on Zoom. The momentum of the interviews was researcher-driven based on themes that surfaced in the survey data. The PSTs were interviewed as a single group. The school staff were interviewed together as a separate group consisting of the supervising teachers, the HoPP and the PExC.

27.4.6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed in alignment with the proposed framework, specifically under the guidance of the three themes of resiliency, trauma-informed education, and teacher learning. The sub-themes are detailed below. Within each strand of the framework, and due to the qualitative nature of the data, the researchers allowed themes to rise from the data and tell a story of each participant group in context.

Themes	Sub-themes
Resiliency	• Teacher • Student • Impacts on… • Strategies in developing… • External influences, including teacher and student
Trauma-informed education	• Behaviour impacts • Social, including family • Professional development/knowledge/conversations • Perceived preparedness and strategies • References to COVID-19 • Functional, organisational, learning, technological impacts of COVID-19

(continued)

(continued)

Themes	Sub-themes
Teacher learning	• On-site provided • University • Impacts of… • Practitioner needs • Reflective/reflexive practices

27.4.7 Criteria for Interpreting Findings

The purpose of the study was to tell the story of the case-study participants in relation to their experience as pre-service teachers and supervisors. Hence, the criteria for interpretation were to simply explore how participant experiences either align with or differ from relevant research and findings in the literature. In this way, recommendations might be made for a greater focus on trauma and developing resilience in the classroom within the teacher learning experience.

27.5 The Study: Analysis and Findings

The following examines the raw findings and discusses them in relation to the literature review. These are integrated, as this more aptly tells the story of the participants. The examination is bound by the themes of the analysis: resiliency, trauma (which includes implications of the COVID-19 pandemic), and teacher learning.

Note: Quotes are used in the next section, but participant names are not used, and quotes are not referenced for the sake of readability and brevity.

27.5.1 Resiliency

Themes generated from the data give insights into the experience of resiliency for pre-service teachers in their role in the school as a practicum teacher. Notably, the pre-service teachers found that they were warmly supported by the school and the University, which was amplified by their past experience and their personal understandings of cultural awareness.

27.5.1.1 Flexibility and Adaptability

An emergent theme within resiliency arose from a discussion on how teachers were settling into their role as classroom teacher. Their responses were characterised by the pre-service teachers' capacity to be prepared and flexible. In their survey responses, the pre-service teachers identified similar key ideas. For instance, one supervisor found that "the teacher education student was motivated and organised for the lessons", whilst another noted that:

> …because these were Master students and they were mature-aged students, they had already experienced workforce environments before, and were…more used to change and being flexible.

Further, when supervisors were pressed on how stressed students were, especially given the complexity of the pandemic, there was a resoundingly positive vibe. One supervisor simply said that the experience enabled the PSTs to learn "the ability to be flexible".

In another instance, a student expressed uncertainty about the placement and, due to the timeframe of allocation, felt underprepared. They did identify that this could be related to the uncertainty of COVID-19. However, most felt more prepared and ready to tackle the unfolding situation:

> I felt well prepared. Having an additional two weeks to prepare at the beginning of the term was extremely beneficial!

A further examination of this showed that the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic potentially played a part in successful transition. Class sizes at the school were considerably smaller than they would usually be, which had an impact on the capacity for pre-service teachers to settle in. They had more time to get to know students in the room, and as students trickled back into classes, they were able to slowly absorb this into their routines. For example:

> It was an easy transition for the [pre-service teachers] with the number of the students in the classroom so they can get to know the routines, get to know some of the kids.

This could indicate that growing into the role slowly and getting to know the diversity of students at a pace that is manageable enables a greater level of adaptation to the role of teacher. This is obviously unique to the implications of COVID-19, but provides an opportunity for deeper investigation.

27.5.1.2 The School as a Practicum Provider

The strength of the school was in their development of pre-service teachers' ability to deal with continual change and diverse student needs, which was compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic:

Teaching timetables during this time have changed daily and this has offered the provided most effectively through the words of the participants (Lapan et al., 2012).

The study was approved by the University's Ethics Committee and informed consent was granted by each participant in the study. Participation was voluntary and participants were able to withdraw at any stage of the study.

> [Pre-service teachers] had the opportunity to develop flexible teaching strategies. It has also allowed [them] to work collaboratively with various teaching staff and enabled them to develop professional connections/associations that may assist them in their career…and become profession ready….

The diversity of experiences and the strength of the school in understanding the needs of pre-service teachers were key themes of supervisor feedback in the survey.

> The [pre-service teacher] has been exposed to visiting different classrooms to view the diversity of learning at [the school]. She was also able to attend professional learning based on the progressions, …to develop strategies to further develop her behaviour-management strategies due to the challenging behaviours [at the School].

Further, supervisors indicated that there was a focus on ensuring that the pre-service teachers understood the context of the school, specifically through a "detailed induction manual with a comprehensive orientation, which is conducted by the PEx Team at the University, and the School Principal". Furthermore, the school hosted pre- and post-PEx meetings with the supervising teachers to set the standard protocols and evaluation of the pre-service teacher program.

This demonstrates the school's preparedness, structure, and organisation for pre-service teachers to gain the most out of PEx placements, which is further enhanced by the diversity of students and impacts of COVID-19.

27.5.1.3 Summary

In brief, smaller class sizes and slower integration of larger numbers, the more mature age of pre-service teachers and past experience potentially played a part in a more successful initial experience. The capacity for the pre-service teachers to be more adaptable and flexible enabled a greater sense of resiliency toward the impending COVID-19 situation. Moreover, supervising teachers felt that the pre-service teachers had greater efficacy. The skills of the school teachers provided a stronger foundation for the pre-service teachers to develop these skills and practice them in a collegial environment. Ongoing involvement and relationship development between the University PEx team and the school improved adaptability through support and mentoring.

27.5.2 Trauma-Informed Education

This theme provided more substantial data, as there is a greater reliance on the knowledge of cultural diversity and implications of trauma for pre-service teachers and supervising teachers. From the data, it is noted that the school and its teachers

provided some context for supervising teachers. Second, the University provided some instruction, though this was mixed (and discussed in the next section). Many of the strategies that the pre-service teachers used in the classroom were based on those that were either modelled or behaviourally focussed.

27.5.2.1 University Teaching and Preparedness

The pre-service teachers indicated that they were prepared by the University for the potential need, due to COVID-19, for remote learning. Differentiated learning opportunities were provided for implementation of Learning Management Systems (LMSes):

> I think they prepared us really well in terms of all the online teaching tools we might need. We did a lot…to prepare ourselves for online teaching.

However, it became apparent that the PSTs would not be able to use many of these due to accessibility for students at home. They explained that in some cases, they were able to use the LMSs, but in other classrooms and situations the use was limited. In remote situations, students lacked access at home, so instead they were able to use school resources to complete the work. The supervising teachers explored their use and mentored pre-service teachers in the use of the LMS.

27.5.2.2 Cultural Diversity

In the context of preparedness to deal with the diversity of students, supervising teachers found that some pre-service teachers were less prepared but optimistic about the experience at the school, as they had not been exposed to similar diverse contexts previously:

> The majority say they haven't worked in such an environment as ours. …[T]hey had to lower some of their expectations and their use of some of the language that they were using….

Additionally, for some students, there was existing trauma and cultural differences for pre-service teachers to be aware of and manage:

> Some have come from traumatic situations…they've seen death and…lost family members. [There's] a lot of grief...and a lack of self-worth.

The pre-service teachers made the most of the situation and spent time learning from students:

> A number of students were fasting at school during Ramadan and they were very open to sharing information with me…which helped to increase my understanding of their culture and beliefs.

27.5.2.3 Teaching Experience in Traumatic Contexts

For some, COVID-19 affected their experience, whilst others indicated they had a deep awareness before coming to the school:

> I [am a] student from a non-English speaking background, so I could definitely relate to the students and families in the school.

The in-person experience, despite COVID-19, was of major benefit:

> We were fortunate in the sense we could offer [the pre-service teachers] an internship coming into the school, but I know their colleagues didn't have those opportunities…and found it a disadvantage.

In traumatic situations, there is an opportunity to build on the resources available to students, which could enhance their success in education. For the school, this was particularly apparent. Whilst other schools were adapting rich online-learning strategies, the school adapted a substantial remote learning strategy where the pre-service teachers were preparing "learning packs" for students to take home. However, they felt the greatest impact was on return to school:

> Knowing how to handle the kids when they return back to school and what the appropriate levels of information [are that] they may question…they often come back to school feeling very anxious.

And:

> There was all this fear of the unknown… No-one can give them answers and kids want answers….

For others, it was more explicit:

> You've got behaviour issues then, more than just anxiety and timidness, the crying. Kids coming in not wanting to be there and wanting to go home, to be with mum.

The greatest area of need was in recovering from incomplete work when students returned to school, due to the diversity of completion while remote:

> [Students] find it hard to go home and figure out a concept if it can't be described in their language the way the teacher did…. They can often understand it [in their language] and can complete it and solve it, but if its written in English…they have trouble comprehending it.

And:

> We had very little evidence home-learning was happening. We asked for evidence to be brought in. But they enjoyed returning to routine and consistency.

Hence, the pre-service teachers needed to provide a substantial amount of support to students on their return to school, and help overcome a variety of issues presented, including learning and trauma as a result of COVID-19.

27.5.2.4 Summary

In summary, the pre-service teachers were prepared to manage most situations and had some perspective of the diversity at the school. The University provided some general guidance and supervising teachers provided mentorship to the pre-service teachers to bridge the gaps. The pre-service teachers were able to make use of the experience of the supervising teacher in their classroom to maximise outcomes for students while remote, whether online or not. Their greatest area of need was dealing with the resulting trauma on return to school, which focussed on catch-up work and mental health.

27.5.3 Teacher Learning

In the context of teacher learning, the University placed PEx at the centre of the pre-service teachers' initial teacher education.

> *The 10-week professional experience placement is a significant advantage for teacher learning.*

Additionally, there was a high level of support for pre-service teachers from the perspective of the school, especially in the context of diverse experiences and collegiality. For the school, some aspects of initial teacher education could have been enhanced, although they found that the pre-service teachers were generally well prepared; in their responses, the pre-service teachers themselves reflected this perspective. Supervising teachers placed a distinct emphasis on behaviour-management strategies. Unlike many schools, the school in this study provides a program to support pre-service teachers:

> One of the advantages is to visit other classrooms…and the support unit.

There was mention of more support from the University, specifically:

> I would like to see more about behaviour management.

Similarly, learning progressions were a focus of conversation. The University has already indicated this as a pertinent action item for development in the initial teacher education program, and the school provides leadership and mentoring to pre-service teachers in this area. Weekly meetings, additional experience with the Support Unit, and modelling of strategies by supervisors are all provided as strategies are applied.

From the perspective of the school, the principal indicated support for the University through professional discussions with colleagues to encourage their schools to improve their PEx programs and consider working with the University.

The pre-service teachers entering the school noted that strategies in teaching English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) would be greatly beneficial. The school provided support, although they felt underprepared from the perspective of initial teacher education:

> We are aware of it, I feel, but I didn't feel totally equipped with all the strategies…we had two…lectures that…touched on it.

Others felt that the required strategies were heavily context-dependent:

> I don't think anything at university can really prepare you. The question was always asked…what strategies should be used…but it's all theory-based.

And:

> School leaders have been heavily supportive and heavily involved in our placements.

The school also provided formal professional-learning opportunities to support pre-service teachers:

> We undertook professional learning on literacy and numeracy learning progressions, as well as conducting running records. It was helpful to have this understanding…to provide real goals….

Pre-service teachers indicated that supervising teachers shared knowledge, resources, and experience with them. Observation was a critical tool in the exploration of teaching strategy and the application of those strategies to assist in refinement. Supervisors found this equally beneficial. Explicit instruction was the dominant teaching strategy, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.

Furthermore, the school indicated that "Weekly meetings [were]…held with the PEx coordinator and [pre-service teachers]." Additionally, it was shared that the pre-service teachers were "paired with previous interns working as temporary teachers through a buddy system", which relies heavily on the capacity of proficient teachers providing support to the pre-service teachers. These contact points build strength in the mentorship process.

The strength of the school professional community is again made evident in the following quote from the group interview:

> A large number of graduates are now working in a full-time and long-term temporary capacity due to their positive professional experience, which is beneficial for the school and the graduates.

27.5.3.1 Summary

Ultimately, it was agreed that most of the practical aspects are better learnt over a full term through modelling and strong mentorship, especially when managed consistently. The pre-service teachers found that the University had prepared them appropriately in most cases for their work, and that the theoretical knowledge was valuable. The school felt the University provided a positive experience for the pre-service teachers.

27.6 Implications

In response to the research questions, there are a range of relevant outcomes and implications.

As to the effectiveness of initiatives of the Hub School partnership in supporting supervising and pre-service teachers, it was found that mentorship and supervisory leadership were areas of strength. Overall, the pre-service teachers indicated a feeling of preparedness as a result of encouragement from their supervisors, and observed the strength of support by school leadership teams.

The supervising teachers provided a diverse range of strategies for pre-service teachers to develop skills in behaviour management, teaching EAL/D students and remote, online learning where possible. They provided modelled observation, strategies and resources, and professional, collegial conversation that enabled the pre-service teachers to feel more prepared moving into their future career. These strategies were effective, and from the supervising teachers felt that the pre-service teachers would be successful graduands. An explanation for why the school was such a successful environment for these pre-service teachers may have to due with its position as a low socio-economic school that has thus needed to develop a systematic, all-school cultural approach to working in this context. When the pre-service teachers undertook PEx at the school, they were initiated into and immersed in this culture. They attended weekly meetings and were mentored beyond the usual experience of interns. The fact that they were in a PEx placement there for a whole term gave the school time to invest in their mentoring and general professional learning, leading to their full-time and long-term temporary employment.

It was found that the University primarily focussed on developing pre-service teachers' understanding of cultural awareness, technological preparation (as a result of the implications of COVID-19), and some basics on behaviour management. The results also indicated that pre-service teachers would need greater preparation for behaviour management and further explicit preparation for understanding cultural diversity and characteristics in order to feel more prepared, and more instruction in the use of LMSes and in learning design. A useful framework for this would be Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), which provides a substantial platform for designing learning with diversity in focus.

In documenting the Hub School project, the school contributed substantially to the professional teaching community in the context of initial teacher education by inviting staff from surrounding schools to participate in a professional-learning program for the pre-service teachers. This culminated in successful presentations with positive feedback at the NSW PEx Hub state conferences. The school also shares outcomes and learning from the PST program with other Hub schools through online conferences. This study also constitutes further documentation of the school and PEx initiatives and the purpose and outcomes of pre-service and supervising teachers' experiences. For the purpose of this study, the data were satisfactory and provided some valuable insights into the initiatives. This could be improved with further investigation into aspects of the case that spark interest, such as the specific

process of mentoring pre-service teachers and how this can benefit other schools, and the capacity of the school to induct and orient initial teacher education students to professional experience. Additionally, there is the possibility of conducting collaborative action research to include supervisors and pre-service teachers. This might be more appropriate in analysing the growth of individual supervisors and as a minor project for pre-service teachers as part of their university studies.

The PEx context is nested at the intersection of trauma-informed education and professional learning for both practising and pre-service teachers in the school, which is socio-economically disadvantaged. The school has developed a series of strategies and a range of initiatives, including internal professional-learning and mentoring programs, that have enabled them to develop a highly professional culture of coping with difference and diversity and generating positive outcomes. When the University pre-service teachers undertake PEx at the school, their tenure there is such that the school sees value in integrating them into these initiates and programs (meetings and mentoring) so that their overall PEx experience is enhanced. As a consequence, the knowledge and skills the pre-service teachers experienced at the University were not only supported when they interned at the School, they were enhanced. An aspect of this enhancement was that the University pre-service teachers were able to feed some of their knowledge and experience into the overall process of mentoring, thus contributing to an evolving response to trauma-induced or stimulated learning.

The outcomes of the study also suggest the following recommendations for other initial teacher education providers and/or partner schools:

(a) Initial teacher education providers can evaluate their programs to ensure that trauma-informed education is addressed across their programs as part of diversity and inclusion.
(b) Providers and partner schools can identify guiding principles to support a trauma-informed approach, as trauma-informed teaching starts with an understanding of how trauma can affect learning and behaviour.
(c) Providers can be paired with schools (as in the Hub arrangement or independently) to hear from teachers about the impact of trauma on students and the way it presents in a classroom, enabling a collaboration to share and apply useful strategies.
(d) Partner schools can inform intial teacher education programs about their digital-technology expectations and their application.
(e) Pre-service teachers can gain additional support during their PEx experience through a critical friend/buddy program or system.
(f) Further research can be enhanced through a multidisciplinary focus to include specialists from child psychology and social work.

27.7 Conclusion

This study set out to demonstrate the nexus between resiliency and teacher learning, taking into account the impact of COVID-19 and the associated implications of a

pandemic. Through the strength of leadership and mentoring of both pre-service and supervising teachers, the people at the centre of the case study felt that they were prepared, equipped, and encouraged in their role. Their role as a teacher was well defined, and the reciprocity of knowledge and experience has spread throughout the parties involved in the project and beyond. The pre-service teachers' capacity was supported and nurtured by the school, and in partnership with the University. The partnership enabled pre-service and supervising teachers to continually and reciprocally build their skills in education and teaching. The partnership demonstrates how strong communication and tight ties between initial teacher education providers and PEx supervisors can enhance the experience of both pre-service teachers and students in the school.

The outcomes for understanding trauma were positive, which highlights the necessity for empathy and exposure to continually build a greater level of efficacy as a teacher. Pre-service teachers examined their own preparedness in the context of dealing with trauma, whether existing or evolving, and found it to be useful and appropriate for the work they were to engage in. This was evidenced in their adaptability and readiness to assist students returning to school and engage with colleagues professionally.

Finally, it is apparent that strong learning outcomes for teachers are paramount to their efficacy and professional readiness. The University provides this learning in a way that readies teachers for the diversity of experiences they may face, whilst the school has a responsibility to provide the practical, real-world learning that assists in the transition to teacher practitioner.

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Chapter 28
It's a Horror Movie Right There on My Computer Screen: The Beautiful Risk of Work-Integrated Learning

Tony Loughland and Jen Clifton

Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic has focussed the attention of teacher educators on the real and immediate risks of their work-integrated learning (WIL) programs. Many WIL experiences were postponed due to the pandemic, and the ongoing operation of this fundamental branch of initial teacher education has been subject to a stomach-churning uncertainty for all stakeholders involved. Biesta (2015a, 2015b) portrays the beautiful risk of education as the inherent and necessary uncertainty about its outcomes. Biesta's affirmative advocacy of uncertainty is succour to experienced professional experience coordinators who have learned to embrace the inherent risk of WIL as an opportunity rather than a challenge. In this chapter, two of these hardened coordinators represent their COVID-19 WIL experience in the style of an *At the Movies* review in this chapter before they argue in the discussion that they survived only when they learned to view the inherent risk of professional experience as a thriller instead of a horror movie.

Keywords Risk · COVID-19 · Professional experience · Teacher education

28.1 Introduction

Professional experience (PEx), also referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL), practicum, placement (prac), or field experience, is seen as an essential part of becoming a teacher, as it provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to develop and practice their teaching skills in a schooling context and connect theory with practice (Le Cornu, 2015; White & Forgasz, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). Professional experience is highly valued by policy-makers, principals, teachers, and researchers alike, and many pre-service teachers argue that the practicum has the greatest impact on their learning to teach (Adoniou, 2013; Hastings, 2010; Le Cornu, 2015). Given

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_28

its importance, PEx is highly regulated; national accreditation mandates conditions in relation to the assessment of professional experience, the number of days, and supervision arrangements of pre-service teachers (AITSL, 2019).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial teacher education sector required considerable adjustments to teaching, learning, assessment, and delivery. These adjustments were intensified in PEx due to the shifting conditions, cancelled or postponed placements, the pivot to online by schools and universities, and concerns about transmission and management of an outbreak in the sector. The role of the academic in professional experience had never been more important.

The Academic Director of Professional Experience (ADPE) is a role that provides academic and research leadership in PEx. The role involves providing advice and advocacy for the field and contributes to the policy and processes associated with PEx in the institution. As associate professors and ADPEs, we are privileged in this space, as our universities have a dedicated academic in PEx, and we are both senior academics. This is not typical, and indeed it has been noted that leadership in PEx is often administratively focussed, with little attention to engagement in pedagogy and scholarship (Le Cornu, 2009).

In the unfolding response to COVID-19, the ADPE was required to lead and support the modifications to professional experience. These modifications included: changes to the scope of placement (e.g. move to fully online and/or project-based); adjustment of placement (e.g. moving pre-negotiated dates with schools and pre-service teachers, developing buddied or group placements, and reducing placement days); and changing key aspects of PEx (e.g. new content to prepare students for new school contexts and/or modifications of assessment). The pressure to prepare pre-service teachers, maintain relationships with industry, communicate the unfolding changes to stakeholders (pre-service teachers, other university staff, and schools), and meet regulatory requirements intensified the "cognitive, metacognitive, affective, interpersonal and intrapersonal work" that is already required in the ADPE role (Le Cornu, 2012, p. 214).

Given the topical nature of PEx during this time, the Australian Teacher Education Association invited us to share our experience of working in an environment full of novelty, uncertainty, and change. Titled "*It's a horror movie, right there on my computer screen: The challenges of professional experience in 2020",* this one-hour session was delivered to the association's membership in June 2020. While we welcomed the invitation to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on professional experience, we had several reservations. First, those connected to PEx often bond over narratives or "war stories". At the time (mid-2020), we were faced with managing the implications of postponed or cancelled placements and shifting rules and regulations. We were emotionally and mentally drained, and while we didn't want this to be the focus of our presentation, we felt this story needed to be told.

Second, we were also concerned about being positioned as the spokesperson or "voice" for everyone involved in PEx. We were aware that while there were similarities to what we were experiencing as ADPEs, certain things were unique to each higher-education institution and each state and territory of Australia. To avoid speaking for all and telling tales from the edge, we decided to draw on the drama

technique of "distancing" and present in character as Margaret and David from the television series *At the Movies*. Hosted by Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton, *At the Movies* was a long-running weekly television series that reviewed films. It is best known for the entertaining tension, bickering, and disagreement between Margaret and David about the quality of the films.

Using the dramatic technique of distancing provided a way for us to address some of our hesitations. Distancing is a theatrical concept where the actor and the spectator are "removed from the everyday world, but paradoxically recreate that world through an identification with and participation in the fictional reality of the characters and scenes presented" (Landy, 1983, p. 176). In employing this dramatic technique, being in character provided a fictional frame to distance ourselves from the immediate personal or emotional issues we were facing. In character, we could become a composite character of issues and stories and speak from multiple perspectives, redistribute ideas, and give voice to the imagined experience of others in a similar role to us. In this dramatic technique, while the characters, set, and props are fictional, "within the fiction, there is truth" (p. 175). In the script, we see evidence of where the fiction and reality blurred, and there were times we spoke from our own experience.

The presentation was recorded and then transcribed. The transcript was then modified to correct when we spoke out of role and readability. Over a series of meetings, the transcript was then thematically analysed and grouped in relation to the themes associated with beautiful risk, including the themes of uncertainty and inherent risk in PEx and the opportunities that this risk presents. Through this process, there was, in a sense, "double distancing": the initial distancing technique used in the presentation and then the distance of time and hindsight when revisiting the script.

28.2 The Narrative

Margaret: David, let's look at the film we are reviewing, which covers the last six months.

(shows news footage of various events related to COVID-19 outbreak across Australia and, in particular, a cluster of cases at a high school in Sydney, NSW in the first half of 2020).

David: Stop, enough, cut it. I've seen enough already. As you can see from the number of cases, this excerpt was from quite early in the COVID-19 pandemic. It was early March, and there were UNSW pre-service teachers' students at Epping Boys High School at the time, completing a program we call Instep (In School Teacher Education Program). The ADPE wakes up on what they thought was a nice Friday, thinking they would get to work and ready themselves to do some research and finish the paper they were working on. Then they received that email from the faculty manager with the words "Don't we have students out of Epping Boys?" and all sudden, they went "Oh, I have to take this thing seriously, this thing is real". And then the horror show became real, as you realise that for the first time the ADPE didn't know what to do. There was no policy written for this horror show. The horror

show reminded me of *The Day of the Triffids*, where the triffids take over the world; this is like that but in viral form. The ADPE didn't know that COVID-19 was about to run amok across their professional-experience program. Margaret, I thought the montage of sleepless nights and nightmares worked well to capture the early thinking of how this pandemic might play out. From the well-meaning pre-service teacher who visits their immune-suppressed relatives to the barrage of emails from the interns who were out in schools, who had five more days to go to finish their internship and graduate, saying, "What's happening?" to schools not knowing what was happening the next week. Policy at school and university was made up on the run every day.

So the film did a good job of capturing the fear the ADPE felt, as this was a character who thought they had seen everything, but no, this was unprecedented – that word that has been used a million times – but this was a horror show. It was a horror show in that it captured the awful, paralysing feeling that you see in horror shows where you can't do anything. It was like that awful dream where you are being pursued, and you can't get away. There was no script; both the university and the school didn't know what to do because it wasn't part of their playbook.

Margaret: I have to disagree with you, David. For me, the film was more like a thriller than a horror show. I'd probably go even further and say it was a psychological thriller, in the way that the best thrillers have this build-up of tension before some form of release. Would schools close, or wouldn't they? Do we send our students on placement? What if they become at risk? What if they are the ones who transmit it? It was this tension that made this film more like a thriller.

I don't think it was horror as there just wasn't enough blood and gore. For me, it was that tension and difficulty that was brilliantly captured when the ADPE reached out to a colleague,asking them, "How do we do professional experience when all the spaces – university and schools, our lives and the pre-service teachers' lives, were so disrupted?" You could tell they were looking at the pandemic through multiple lenses, as a community member, academic, and parent. The ADPE delivered that perfect line that captured the inescapable tension: "Schools should be looking after their students, not my university students."

David (interrupting): Margaret, Margaret, Margaret. No, there was blood on the floor after every regulator meeting in the film.

Margaret (laughing): I did feel like escape was impossible, though, so that's why I think this was a thriller.

So, David, I think it was really difficult to tell who was the true villain in this film. One minute it was COVID-19, and then in the next scene, it was the indecision around schools. Every Sunday, when the national cabinet met, that villain mandated another set of rules the ADPE had to work around. And in other scenes, the villain was the attack on the university by the government. So who do you think was the real villain here, David?

David: Good question, Margaret – who was the villain in this film? For me – and I've already used the day of the Triffids – but I want to return to the zombie from this cult classic. The zombie as the unchanging praK [sic]. And spell prac with a capital K at the end. In universities, they may call it professional experience or practicum, but schools still used prac in the film and asked, "When are the praccies coming

out?" – decades later, this term is still being used by schools. In this horror film, the praK Zombie came out and would say *(in zombie's voice)*, "Okay, what is placement? What is the main criteria?" And it was all about the number of professional-experience days.

The constant returning question of how many days of professional experience do we need? Is it 80 days? Is it 60 days? What was interesting in the film was there was never any discussion about quality. The scene where schools were in the terrifying situation of being the only institution that was left open – there was so much uncertainty around cleaning products, how to socially distance in a school setting, and the transmission rates among young people. The ADPE had pre-service teachers out in this dangerous situation. There was that poignant moment in the film where the ADPE is pleading, "Can I finish these prac students five days early because it was the last week of term one and schools didn't know what was happening the next day?". Everywhere they turned looking for an answer about finishing the placement early, the big zombie would come out: *(in a zombie's voice)* "Have they done their 80 days? Have they done their 60 days?" It was the praK Zombie of the horror film, Margaret, that was the villain. The praK Zombie that would come out and say: *(in a zombie's voice)* "I will reassert the historical hegemony of days – quantity, not quality." The true villain of the praK Zombie returned several times in the film; it just wouldn't go away. Like later in the film, when ADPEs were doing what they do best and problem-solving, and they were asking, "Could pre-service teachers do placement and teach online? Could they work with their school-based colleagues in term two on online preparation when schools went online?". The praK Zombie returned and said: *(in a zombie's voice),* "No, that doesn't look like classroom teaching."

That was the villain in this horror show, the praK Zombie. The film did a great job of capturing how the ADPE was at the mercy of the zombie, as were other characters, like pre-service teachers, schools, and universities. But throughout the film, the mantra of the praK Zombie was: *(in a zombie's voice)* "Meet the days, meet the days." What was evident from the film was that there was no flexibility around the definition of professional experience. In the end, in an accreditation environment, the horror was the compliance measures that meant it came down to days. And this horror film of COVID-19 and professional experience highlighted the actual philosophical and educational bankruptcy of equating days in schools with quality preparation.

Margaret: Yeah, I have to agree. There was the point in the film when the ADPE thought they had all the pre-service teachers over the line, and then ACECQA at the very end said no, they are five days short. But this did lead to that interesting montage at the university where there were several healthy discussions around: How does the university find a replacement professional experience for this cohort for five days when prior-to-school settings were locking out pre-service teachers? Do universities send them out for five random days? And if so, what sort of quality experience will they have? And the scene where the ADPE is asking, "How else can we do professional experience that not going to impact on early-childhood centres or schools and still meet those requirements or the aim of professional experience, which is about developing pre-service teachers' learning?" I felt that was a turning point of the film.

David: So there's a real plot twist here, Margaret. Can you just make it explicit for the audience?

Margaret: There were a lot of plot twists in this film. I thought the most powerful imagery came from the scene where the ADPE was in that meeting, and they said the situation was like a Rubik's Cube that every time they got one side of that Rubik's Cube solved, they looked around for the other sides of their cube, and they were all messed up.

David: Powerful, Margaret – powerful, powerful.

Margaret: It is a big call, but I think that was one of my favourite parts of the movie. It summed up that part of the film where the ADPE moved, modified, or postponed professional-experience dates. However, they then had to suddenly withdraw pre-service teachers out of units or courses, but that meant they couldn't get their Centrelink payments, which then meant a whole flow-on series of events of trying to enrol them into something different to meet the credit-point requirements. The ADPE was madly trying to sort out census dates, assessment dates that had all been published.

David: Oh. *(hanging his head in dismay).*

Margaret: So, I think that Rubik's Cube was a great metaphor for how these plot twists just led to more and more change.

David: Was the teaching performance assessment part of that Rubik's Cube?

Margaret: The TPA was certainly part of that Rubik's Cube, and at times this felt a little more seamless from a regulation point of view this time. I think I was expecting more plot twists in relation to the TPA in the film, but I feel like it was a bit more like LANTITE, and it was just put to one side for a year, with the attituded of "we'll deal with it a little bit later:.

But every time the plot twisted, the ADPE came back to the quality-versus-quantity discussion, the horror of dealing with the rules and regulatory conditions we were under. I felt one of the more interesting plot twists was the different state regulators' responses – and the gossip and rumours about state regulators, how different states were doing things differently, how some states were allowed fewer days, more changes….

David: No, oh no.

Margaret: I know. But David, I think there was some outstanding acting in this film. We had a lot of heroic acts, like when the gin distilleries went to making hand sanitisers. We saw teachers and university lecturers pivoting to online learning. There was a coming together to support each other that we had not seen in a long time in this field, but David, who do you think gave the most endearing performance in this film?

David: I'm still thinking about your plot twist and your claim that this is a psychological thriller. You have given me a lot to think about here, as I'm thinking about the plot twist which I'm calling "the backlog issue". Thinking about what will be the consequences for the ADPE when professional experience is differed or postponed? The film cut to NSW, where they were only able to place final-year students, and every other placement was postponed until 2021, and there were pockets of that in other states and territories. Coupled with the increasing enrolments due to the boost

for lower fees for teacher education and the usual influx of students we get during a recession and depression, there will be issues. I'm not saying this lightly, but it's going to be an awesome plot twist that plays out in 2021. But let's let's leave that to later.

So back to your question, who was the most outstanding actor? I felt it was the pre-service teachers. Of course, in the modern day, university students come first, and students were always the priority. But they were actually very understanding, patient, and tolerant, like that scene in the film where we saw them receive email update number 496 *(laughing)*. There was so much different communication going around to pre-service teachers as the policy changed. I was quite surprised by the way the PSTs acted here. They had a deep understanding of the dangers of infection for both their own families and communities and also the students they were teaching.

This goes back to our earlier mention of the war-story metaphor. Often in professional experience, 3% of PSTs say and do absolutely outrageous things, but the other 97% were actually very, very cognisant of the actual huge danger. I guess having it on the nightly news, even though young people don't watch the news these days, or whatever news they were getting, they were actually quite sobered by the seriousness of the situation. So, looking back on this horror show, the PSTs handled the situation well. What're your thoughts, Margaret?

Margaret: Yeah, well, I would have to agree, to some extent. I thought the PSTs came on the journey with the ADPE. In the film, there was a shift over time. In the beginning, the PSTs were a little more difficult, as it was not all over the news, and we saw the ADPE agonising over an early decision to withdraw all PSTs completing a rural and remote placement. But there was a shift once the PSTs understood the possible severity of sending them from a capital city to a rural or remote community. Earlier, they didn't understand the dangers –like if they had to quarantine in a rural or remote community, the insurance implications that institutions had, or the worst-case scenario for the ADPE if they took COVID-19 into these communities. As the seriousness became a lot clearer, PSTs supported the ADPE, who had to act quickly and be conservative in some of their choices. The ADPE made decisions a lot earlier than they probably would have liked, but they had to because of just the machines that go into placing large numbers of students.

But I think I'd have to say that the ADPE was the true hero in this film.

David: You've got many friends who support that call. But the ADPE role has always been characterised by uncertainty and change, and novelty – and adaptability is part of the ADPE job description. I mean, the PSTs were patient. They were tolerant. But the PSTs were inevitably in a very powerless position, so their understanding was welcomed, but they didn't have much power.

The ADPE is the pivot point between schools, academics, PSTs, policy, university legal branches – so they had to make a lot of very, very, very quick decisions on the go. It was evidence of their adaptive expertise and their ability to depart from routine expertise. I can see your point. The ADPE is actually schooled in making the decision on the go, and the film showed how they are able to draw upon their principles and precedents and try to make the best decision. The start of the film showed the ADPE a placement in a non-COVID19 time and the complexity of their role. They showed

a PST at risk, it was complex, messy, and there are lots of different human stories involved in it. They're never very, very clear cut. Sometimes when it goes back to the university, it's seen in black and white. But on-site with different stakeholders with different views of what professional experience or practice is about is hard. So the ADPE has this adaptive expertise, this was just this skillset at a new level, so the ADPE had to be the star. That is the thing with unprecedented times: leaders who have got adaptive expertise, who can think in novel situations, have shown themselves up as being, possibly, you know, the right people to lead in the future.

It's hard with our professional staff, especially in universities where they're not guaranteed the future and there are job cuts, and the ADPE is still trying to encourage the troops, to motivate their teams and people in very, very dangerous and challenging circumstances for everyone, so I can't disagree with you there. I can't disagree with you there, Margaret.

Margaret: Yeah, David, I think the ADPE was certainly invited to a lot more tables than ever before. During this this film we saw them having to make big decisions and then influence high-level organisation staff. ADPEs suddenly had to be the go-betweens with the regulators and the unit – they had to be the person to let people know they had lost their sessional work because they couldn't do the university partner or university liaison work because we weren't sending out students or because we couldn't have non-essential visitors in schools.

The ADPE role is an interesting role, because every day is different, and I think we have come from that long lineage of never knowing what the day will bring. But this uncertainly was on a new level for everyone. So, I like to think that the ADPE was the real hero of the film.

So David, do you think there's a sequel in this?

David: Oh my God, I hope not. Will it be just one continuous issue, sequel, or just the new normal? The sequel might be that the horror show is real. The horror show is every day. Perhaps this is the new normal. One way to look at it is that this might shake it up. You talked about the ADPEs being at the centre. Maybe they are the new centre of teacher education. And I will say that the ADPEs will have to be if we want to preserve some sort of teacher education in universities. The ADPEs will have to play a pivotal role. Maybe the ADPE becomes more prominent because of this crisis. The ADPE needs to have more of a voice in day-to-day operations. I've always liked flattened structures where you've actually got a person who worked at the chalkface or coalface or school face – always a much better structure, I think. Unfortunately, because of the huge job losses coming up, especially in some universities, it's going to be a very flattened structure, and we're going to have to think very closely about: which positions are the rainmakers? Which bring in business?

Which positions preserve the business, which is, you know, keeping the garden going? and which positions are just superfluous? I dare say it, from my perspective, there will be a very hard constraint budget environment. In the sequel school-based teacher education and stronger partnerships will be prominent.

The ADPE will need to take a clear role in terms of the policy.

Margaret: Yeah, yeah. I'd have to kind of agree there, but I don't think the sequel will be like the big Hollywood blockbuster that we saw with this film. I think the

sequel will be more like a cheap, indie low-budget film where we see the demise of professional staff support, sessionals, and contracts – and as we saw in the film, that was a significant staffing profile of professional experience.

My prediction is that the sequel may not even feature COVID-19 as a villain, but it will still be a thriller or horror. Actually, I think the sequel might be a little bit more like a horror; and with the blood and gore will be the shedding of some of our teaching staff who are the bread and butter of professional experience.

We saw glimpses of this in the film where the ADPE was voicing their concern that in 2021 the regulars would be "COVID, what COVID?" and not provide any concessions for the placing the backlog of pre-service teachers that was created in an effort to get through the year and the additional numbers in the commencing cohort of new pre-service teachers. So the sequel will still feature stories, but they are going to be a lot quieter or smaller stories, like the cutting of partnership models and the ways in which we work with schools.

So David, I do think there'll be a sequel, but not like this big Hollywood blockbuster; I think it'll be a much more minor story to be told, but still an important one.

David: Small is beautiful, Margaret. Small is beautiful.

Professional experience often features little individual acts of human kindness everywhere. In the film you saw this with the sessional and part-time staff: each of these people are deeply humanist and they're touching people's lives in very, very challenging circumstances. I mean the little stories are beautiful.

This highly policy driven-environment can be a tough space to work in. But it may result in more robust partnerships with schools, and elevating the role of the professional-experience coordinator in the school. As we saw in the film, that person is a key hinge point and conduit. The NSW Department is in a very strong position and universities are not necessary. NESA is also in a difficult position as well. It'd be really nice to actually have positions that are that are then based in schools that work in partnership.

I've seen the sequel, it will be like the film that released a while ago, based around the UK teacher academies, Teach First, and Teach for America teacher. I don't have to dream up the sequel. I've seen it. I've seen it in other countries, it's not a dream, it's just around the corner. In this sequel it will be interesting to see if there is questioning or fighting over what we believe about university-based teacher education. Why do we need to do it? Why couldn't they do it in teacher academies? Why couldn't they do it in Teach First? Why couldn't they do it in Teach for Australia and so on?

It's a very clear argument because teaching does subsidise research. No matter how many papers are produced in critical policy research, and it's not demeaning, that work, it is the pre-service teachers who subsidise research. Teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, and all those casual staff employed and sometimes exploited, who actually pay so we can do some research.

I give this horror film three and a half stars. I'm still thinking it's a horror film. It's only three and a half stars because there's no resolution. I still see zombies. Zombies are coming out of the woodwork every night of the week and every day of the week. So sorry, Margaret, it's three and half.

Margaret: Yes, as a thriller, I'll give it four stars. It certainly had me on the edge of my seat. I thought I'd seen almost everything in professional-experience films. But it it definitely had me on the edge of my seat, tension-filled, and feeling that there was nowhere safe to escape to. Thanks, David.

David: Thanks, Margaret, and thanks for the chat.

Margaret: And that concludes our show *(theme music plays).*

28.3 Possible Key Insights or Findings, and Implications for Professional Experience

The COVID-19 pandemic has merely highlighted and accentuated the risks inherent in WIL that have always been present. Experienced campaigners in this critical area of teacher education possess the adaptive expertise that permits them to view this risk as a thriller rather than a horror movie, thus embracing the beautiful risk of professional experience in teacher education. The context of the COVID-19 crisis has also focussed on who does the work of WIL experiences in teacher education.

All university faculty, whether academic or professional, require adaptive expertise to survive in WIL. This is the case with or without a pandemic. Adaptive expertise is the practical wisdom of knowing what to do when confronted by a novel situation (Bohle Carbonell et al., 2014). This is contrasted to routine expertise, when knowing what to do is sufficient, as the decision-making environment is relatively stable, which has generally been true for the on-campus university context. We argue that this adaptive expertise makes WIL operatives a unique, and possible undervalued, part of the workforce in universities where routine expertise exercised through careful, thorough, and deliberate decision-making is the norm.

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the importance of WIL to the operation of teacher education in universities. Heads of Schools of Education were alerted to this reality by anxious students who saw their graduation date slip further into the future because of delays in securing placements. This has remained the case in 2021 as further lockdowns in Greater Sydney have exacerbated the placement logjam caused by similar lockdowns in 2020. We in WIL in teacher education have welcomed this spotlight on the work our teams do. It draws attention to the nature of this work in teacher education and the mainly part-time employees who do it. An analogy exists between our newfound spotlight and Biesta's arguments about educational research:

> When we look at education through the lens of what in the English-speaking world are known as the disciplines of education, we can say that the philosophy of education asks philosophical questions about education, the history of education asks historical questions, the psychology of education asks psychological question and the sociology of education asks sociological questions, which then raises the question "Who asks the educational questions?" (Biesta, 2015a, 2015b, p. 15)

We use Biesta's provocation here to to interrogate the culture of teacher education in universities that marginalises this work.

The Sahlberg Report into initial teacher education in Ireland in 2012 made sensible recommendations for the rationalisation of teacher education in that country. It is hard to disagree with the authors' arguments that teacher education be research-based, that teacher educators be researchers, and that our graduates be teacher-researchers (Sahlberg et al., 2012). The report also suggested that having a large part-time workforce of supervisors and methods tutors was counter-productive to the achievement of their aims.

While visiting Ireland on a fellowship in 2019, Tony observed that the part-time army of teacher educators remained fundamental to the effective operation of teacher education in that country, as it is in Australia. The parlous public funding of universities in Australia means that education schools have had to employ more part-timers to do the hard work of school visits to balance the budget.

To speak of the economic imperative of employing part-timers is not to denigrate the real work of WIL that they do. The phronesis of our colleagues who do the work of WIL should be fundamental to the theory and practice of WIL in teacher education. They are at the vanguard of our efforts to enculturate our students into the art of critical reflexivity. It is unfortunate that the artificial separation of researchers and teachers in university schools of education has meant that often we overlook the richest source of philosophical, practical, and ethical wisdom that resides in our part-time workforce of university liaisons.

The part-time army of professional-experience supervisors we employ in teacher education may be the expert others who are asking the educational questions to our students. This is going on whilst full-time tenured faculty pursue their own equally important psychological, sociological, and philosophical questions about education. These questions are more likely to receive funding and their answers to be published in the elite journals that faculty need to get into if they want to get ahead.

This is not a bitter rant from two academic directors of professional experience who have been marginalised by the political economy of university-based teacher education. We have both worked, survived, and continue to thrive in our work as associate professors in research-intensive universities. We are just very curious about exploring the implications for WIL of Biesta's provocation that education should be regarded as a discipline rather than as a context for other disciplines to work in. At the centre of this curiosity is a desire that the expert pedagogues we employ on our margins be given the space to pose the difficult questions, the answers to which we don't know. These questions may give us tenured teacher educators a view of a different WIL that we may overlook in our Sisyphean task of chasing the next stretch target in bibliometrics or grant monies.

28.4 Conclusion

We wrote and performed this narrative in July 2020. We were prescient in the claim that 2021 might be worse. It was and it is for the conduct of professional experience, as lockdowns have closed schools or restricted placements in the eastern states of

Victoria, New South Wales, and, to a lesser extent, Queensland throughout the second half of the year. The directors of professional experience that we valorised in our performance have in 2021 been even more adaptive, resilient, and just plain brave-stupid to keep the professional-experience arm of teacher education working to some degree. The restriction on school placements is also occurring at a time of severe shortage of teacher supply in Australia. This perfect storm of pandemic and supply issues is truly a horror story that will haunt Australian schools for many years to come.

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interpret the world but to try to change it. Tony subscribes to Marx as he believes this orientation towards research is vital in a world threatened by anthropocentric climate change. Tony is currently leading projects on using AI for citizens' informed participation in urban development, on providing staffing for rural and remote areas in NSW, and on Graduate Ready Schools.

Chapter 29
Virtual Professional Experience Observation: Lessons Learned from Five years of Implementation, Development, Cross-Institution Collaboration, and Research

Annie Agnew, Seán Ó Grádaigh, and Tony Hall

Abstract This chapter tracks the experiences and development of virtual observation as a method to support and assess initial teacher education students on their field-experience practicum, or professional experience (PEx), with three pioneering initial teacher education providers in the United States, Ireland, and Australia. Through observation and the sharing of practice by two institutions (NUI Galway and UTS), we have developed a model of virtual observation that can offer the same support to pre-service teachers regardless of location. The chapter demonstrates the efficacy of virtual PEx observation as a high-impact innovation before the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic; during the pandemic, when traditional school placement assessment was infeasible; and beyond, as an innovative new approach to enhancing teacher education internationally, post-pandemic.

Keywords Virtual observation · Sharing of practice · Pandemic · Support · Innovation

29.1 Introduction

Research suggests that reflective practice is a vital component in progressing from novice to expert (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Dewey, 1933; Jones & Jones, 2013;

The original version of this chapter was revised. The Author name has been corrected from "Annie Anew" to "Annie Agnew". The correction to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_31

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_29

Pedro, 2005; Schön, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1987, 1996), and the importance of reflective practice within the teaching profession, and particularly within initial teacher education, is well established (Dymoke & Harrison, 2008, p. 2). It is imperative that pre-service teachers can reflect critically to improve their practice and question "hegemonic assumptions and power relations" (McGarr & McCormack, 2014, p. 267)'.

Critical reflection enables analysis of what has been learned and how it has been learned, and to thus support self-control of practice development. It is in light of these two functions that a great deal of importance is placed on critical reflection in the professional development of teachers in their classroom practice and pre-service teachers during professional placement.

The notion of reflective practice derives from the work of Dewey and Schön. Dewey (1910) wrote that reflective practice refers to "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it" (p. 6). This supports the use of a questioning approach, considering why things are as they are, and how they might be, considering actions and planning with forward thinking.

Schön (1983) developed Dewey's ideas further, presenting the notion that reflection depended on two aspects: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, with more reliance on evidence, focussing on "practitioner generated intuitive practice" (Farrell, 2012, p. 12). Through this process, the practitioner can develop a deeper understanding from what has occurred, identifying adjustments that might be developed and implemented, and providing further opportunities for students to engage with learning. For teachers, this promotes careful planning informed by theory and experience that translates into purposeful autopoietic practices in response to changing pedagogical contexts (Agnew, 2018).

Developments in the application of remote live technology are currently affecting and reshaping conventional methods of classroom observation for preservice teachers (Liang, 2015). For initial teacher education providers, the use of remote live observation has obvious appeal. Lessons with student teachers can now be observed through digital networks by higher-education institution placement tutors without the need to physically visit school sites. The resulting cost benefits can be substantial, with reductions in travel, time, and expenses (Cooper, 2015), along with simultaneous increases in the frequency and flexibility of observations within the often-onerous teaching and research responsibilities of higher-education institution staff (Goodson & Allen, 2014; Krause et al., 2018). There are challenges, however, which include matters related to obtaining permission from the school and technological issues such as restricted internet access (Van Boxtel, 2017). In addition, the limited perspective of the camera, particularly when a single fixed camera is used (Marsh & Mitchell, 2014), may reduce control and narrow the viewpoint of the observer. Although the more traditional approach to pre-service teacher observation involves physical attendance from a tertiary supervisor or mentor, and is noted as "the most comprehensive observation experience" (Krause et al., 2018, p. 31), remote observation has been shown to reduce reactivity and the associated potential negative impact on teacher confidence and classroom dynamics (Bolton, 2010; Mac Mahon et al., 2019; Wash

et al., 2014). Pre-service teachers appear to have comparative experiences from both online and face-to-face lesson observations, with both modes effective in supporting the provision of supervision during placement (Weber et al., 2018). However, some professional-experience (PEx) supervisors suggested that they felt less “hands on” with the process when viewing pre-service teachers online (Chilton & McCracken, 2017; ÓGráidagh et al., 2021). Nevertheless, synchronous transmission of lessons from the school classroom can facilitate reflection and reflexive discussion among observers as they react to unfolding events (Mitchell et al., 2010; Marsh & Mitchell, 2014); this applies to pre-service teachers and teacher educators alike. Technology-enabled supervision and feedback offers teacher educators and pre-service teachers multi-dimensional opportunities to collaborate and learn (Gibbons & Farley, 2021).

When pre-service teachers’ pedagogical development is viewed as “a process of identifying weaknesses and taking actions for improvement” (Liang, 2015, p. 236), live remote classroom observation can be effective in moderating the level of subjective judgement by increasing the number of observers and variety of feedback sources. Feedback that is “immediate, specific, positive, and corrective holds the most promise for bringing about lasting change in teacher behavior” (Scheeler et al., 2008, p. 205), and is central to pre-service teachers transferring learning from initial teacher education programs to the classroom (Weber et al., 2018).

Effective feedback leads to the formulation of learning goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and research suggests that e-coaching increases the professional capacity of student teachers to implement evidence-based practices by facilitating the provision of immediate feedback and ongoing support (Naffziger & Fawson, 2013; Rock et al., 2009; Van Boxtel, 2017). For pre-service teachers on placement, having the opportunity to receive frequent, high-quality and focussed support and feedback from a range of professionals is recognised as being significant in how they develop reflective practice as they transition into the classroom as teachers (Dieker et al., 2014).

29.2 Virtual Observations in Initial Teacher Education, US, Ireland, and Australia

The uses of video have long been explored in teacher education to develop pre-service teachers’ practice and reflection on practice (Hammel & Viau-Guay, 2019; Sydnor, 2016). The development of their ability to engage in critical reflection is core to all teacher programs, and digital video analysis applications such as Dartfish and VEO (Video-Enhanced Observations) have been used widely in initial teacher education programs to develop this facet of professional practice (Faddie & Sullivan, 2013; McCoy & Lynam, 2021). While many of these tools have been borrowed from the sports analysis field, VEO, produced by Newcastle University (UK), was designed specifically for the micro-teaching setting and allows student teachers to tag their videos of practice with comments and notes to evaluate their practice (Haines & Miller, 2016).

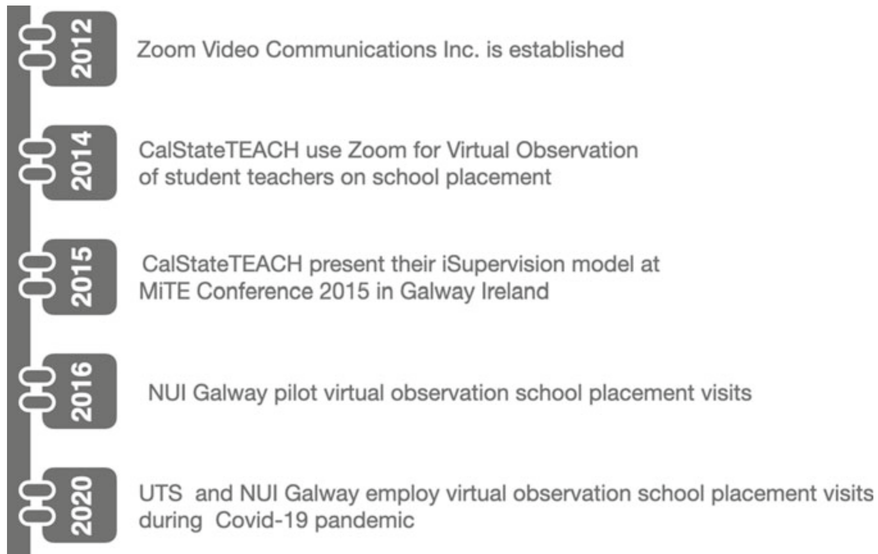

Fig. 29.1 Virtual observations: timeline of developments. *Note* The timeline was developed by the authors to represent key timeframes in the collaborative experiences and development of virtual observations in initial teacher education by CalState, NUI Galway, and UTS (Source: authors)

In recent years, with the development of Web 2.0 and teleconferencing applications in particular, the possibilities of observing a live stream of initial teacher education students while on school placement has emerged. This paper tracks the timeline of experiences and development of virtual observation as a method to support and assess initial teacher education students on their PEx placement in three pioneering initial teacher education providers in the United States, Ireland, and Australia (Fig. 29.1).

29.3 Virtual Observation at CalStateTEACH

The CalStateTEACH program (California State University) was one of the earliest adopters of live teleconferencing and streaming technologies for school-placement observation of initial teacher education students. Their pioneering work using Zoom Video Communications Inc. began in 2014, when Zoom technology was in its infancy.

CalStateTEACH is an online, site-supported public-university teacher-preparation program that was developed to provide access and equity to candidates placed in diverse underserved rural and urban schools. Virtual observation of teacher candidates was uniquely suited to this program due to the vast geographical area covered by cooperating schools that offered placement opportunities to their pre-service teachers.

CalStateTEACH had previously focussed on self-reflection that used video of their candidates' own teaching. In alignment with many teacher credential and licensing agencies, they had adopted the use of digital video processes for performance-based assessments and as an observation tool throughout the program for pre-service teachers' growth and development. The CalStateTEACH online and site-supported teacher preparation program, candidates are placed in clinical experiences while their assigned faculty member conducts in-person and virtual observations to monitor their progress. Through the development of their "iSupervision" model, candidates are given the opportunity to showcase specific moments of their teaching and embed reflective annotations, while the faculty members provide feedback directly within specific timestamps. Analysis of recorded and live-streamed lessons promoted sophisticated levels of reflection while building pre-service teachers' confidence (Jones & Jones, 2013; Pedro, 2005; Zeichner & Liston, 1987, 1996).

In 2015, faculty members (John Ittelston, Michael Slade and Alice Flores) from CalStateTEACH presented a paper on their *iSupervision Model* at the MiTE Conference (International Conference on Mobile Technology in Teacher Education) in Galway, Ireland. The presentation demonstrated how they coordinate and facilitate virtual observation through Zoom. Following this presentation, faculty members from the School of Education at the National University of Ireland Galway began to work with CalStateTEACH to develop virtual observation as part of the National University of Ireland Galway's MGO (Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas) teacher-education program.

29.4 Remote Observation in the School of Education, NUI Galway

Following the2015 MiTE Conference and with expert advice and support from colleagues at CalStateTEACH, the MGO program ran a pilot in 2016 utilizing Zoom to conduct remote observation with students on school placement. Following the successful pilot, remote observation was embedded as part of its professional-practice module in 2017.

The Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas (MGO) is the national flagship program in Ireland for teacher education through the medium of the Irish language; it has been recognised internationally for its innovative use of technology in teacher education and has been recognised as an Apple Distinguished Schools Program since 2015. It is also the host and founder institution of the MiTE Conference (International Conference of Mobile Technology in Teacher Education). It is a two-year, postgraduate initial teacher education program for second-level teachers. An iPad is issued to each pre-service teacher in the program and mobile technology is embedded in all aspects of practice (Mac Mahon et al., 2016, 2018).

Pre-service teachers on the MGO program complete school placement in Irish-medium schools nationwide, encompassing urban and remote rural areas throughout the country, as well as offshore islands.

Research carried out with the program's 2017/2018 cohort highlighted the ways that remote observation with initial teacher education students offered valuable professional learning for both these pre-service teachers and novice placement tutors (Mac Mahon et al. (2019). Findings from this study will be examined later in relation to video observation at CalStateTEACH and UTS.

29.5 Virtual Observation in School of International Studies and Education, University of Technology Sydney

The COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges in the field of initial teacher education, particularly in relation to managing and assessing the PEx element of initial teacher education programs. For student teachers, school placement affords an opportunity to bring theory and practice together, and can be "a deeply meaningful professional experience" (Hall et al., 2018, p. 13), supported by appropriate mentoring, professional conversations, and feedback from teacher educators; this experience is recognised as a significant component to all initial teacher education programs. These programs were consequently "forced to adapt student teachers' placement programs to fit the ongoing adjustments being made both in schools and the tertiary education sector" (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020, p. 587).

It was against this backdrop that faculty from the Professional Experience Office at UTS (Annie Agnew and Warren Poole) contacted the MGO program (Seán Ó Grádaigh) to support them in establishing virtual observation with their initial teacher education students. It was decided from the outset that a collaborative research project would be employed, which developed into a fascinating cross-institutional, international study on emergency virtual observation (Ó Grádaigh et al., 2021). Initially, the concept was to consider using virtual observation to continue the support for pre-service teachers during the re-instigation of on-site placements in schools following a period of online learning where schools in the state of New South Wales (NSW) were closed to students. Schools at that time were allowing pre-service teachers into the classroom if they were in their final year, but other non-teaching visitors were not permitted onto the grounds or in classrooms due to ongoing pandemic restrictions. This posed a problem for university supervisors (mentors) from the university in completing the required observations of the pre-service teachers during placement. Conversations between Ireland and Australia led to the development of the idea of using virtual observations to address this issue. The team from Australia used the experiences of colleagues in Ireland to develop communication strategies and professional learning for university supervisors, and to achieve support from the university.

During the pilot phase of the emergent research study, the true capabilities of virtual observation were unearthed when four faculty members from NUI Galway viewed live lessons streamed from schools in rural NSW, while colleagues from UTS observed pre-service teachers on school placement across the island of Ireland. In addition to teaching practices and classroom activities, cultural and language nuances were also observed. The term "remote observation" (Mac Mahon et al., 2019) was changed to "virtual observation", as "remote" had connotations in Australia that implied "rural" or "isolated" settings.

As the pilot study continued, adjustments were made to how the virtual observations were undertaken.

Key learnings included the effective placement of devices, the need to ensure that contact was made in a trial run with the pre-service teacher, and alternative methods of contact should something go wrong during the observation. This was in response to an observation being done for a student in Ireland where the sound had been inadvertently turned off and there was no alternative method of contacting the student, and another where, due to location and internet issues, communication was fraught, resulting in a missed lesson observation. Other learnings included not trying to move the device for streaming around the classroom to follow the action, as this made the observation rather difficult to maintain, and successfully trialing the use of movement-tracking cameras such as Swivl (McCoy et al., 2018). Another advantage was that for students who required additional observation and support, or for whom a subject specialist was required, virtual observation enabled several university supervisors to observe the same lesson without the disruption to the class that a panel of observers sitting in the classroom would introduce. This provided several perspectives on the same lesson, which was met with favour from the pre-service teachers: "By [having several people observe], everyone picks up on something different so that you get more out of the feedback: instead of just one thing, you get might get something [different] from each different person that was looking at you…" (pre-service teacher, Ireland).

The majority of schools in NSW were open to the idea of using virtual observations, provided strict protocols were implemented. These included the virtual connection being controlled from the school's context with no recording enabled. University supervisors and where required, additional university directed academics were provided with the link and would log in then turn off their video after greeting the PST and supervising teacher to avoid classroom disruption.

In addition to the virtual observations, further development of the feedback process was implemented. Building on existing reflective practices at NUI Galway, a process of reflection for the pre-service teachers was developed. Following virtual observations, pre-service teachers and university supervisors would have a short debrief, with general commentary and feedback. The university supervisor would also have a brief conversation with the supervising teacher in a similar manner to more traditional, face-to-face observations. The pre-service teacher would then have a designated time period (usually one to two days) to use a scaffold to be both reflective and reflexive about the lesson they had demonstrated. They could take time to review their lesson and consider what they had done well and where they identified gaps or issues, how

they could use this information, and the implications for future teaching situations. Previous feedback from university supervisors identified that pre-service teachers were often still a little anxious or excited when feedback sessions occurred immediately after the lesson observation, resulting in most of the discussion being led by the observer, with little time available for deep reflection. Through the use of virtual communication, significant changes to the process of observation feedback were enabled in the follow-up sessions between pre-service teachers and university supervisors, with greater time flexibility and higher levels of pre-service teacher-led discussion than in more traditional situations. Feedback from university supervisors included: “I developed a better rapport [with the PST] in lots of ways because we were in touch more often and with less time restriction” (tertiary supervisor, Australia).

29.6 What We Have Learned

Three distinct themes or trends emerged with the stakeholders during five years of virtual observation with one encompassing finding. In general, all stakeholders—pre-service teachers, supervising teachers, and university supervisors—were in agreement that virtual observations were invaluable, and were the best available option when physical visits were not feasible due to COVID restrictions or remote location, or as a supplement to in situ school placement visits. “[O]ne of the advantages is that we can use a group of supervisors to see more students, particularly in the remote or restricted situations where [the PSTs] are doing a placement” (tertiary supervisor, Australia).

(1) Pre-service teachers appreciated tutor **[?]** visits and valued feedback on their practice: “I much preferred them actually seeing me teach – even if it terrified me” (pre-service teacher, Australia). Many believed it was a “more authentic experience” (pre-service teacher, Australia) and “a more fair reflection, a more realistic evaluation of how we are doing” (pre-service teacher, Ireland).

(2) While initial apprehension among supervisors was common, most felt that virtual observation was the “better option than no observation” (tertiary supervisor, Australia), and that “seeing something was far better than seeing nothing” (tertiary supervisor, Ireland) when compared to other methods of assessing school placements. Others found the experience to be satisfying from a professional perspective: “It was valuable. I got exactly the same thing with Zoom as going into the classroom” (tertiary supervisor, Australia).

(3) Supervising **[?]** teachers’ overriding concerns mainly focussed on how the technology would work in their classroom, with particular reservations about data security and child protection: “How is this going to work in my school?” (supervising teacher, Australia); “How will I get permission to broadcast images of my students?” (supervising teacher, Australia) (Table 29.1).

Table 29.1 Lessons learned from five years of virtual observation in initial teacher observation

Focus	Lessons learned
Benefits	Cost-effective Time and money Travel Reactivity No additional personnel in the room changing class dynamic Recorded post-observation feedback Visit frequency Flexibility if lesson observation had to be rescheduled
Opportunities	Two tutors **[?]** viewing the same lesson Second concurrent subject-specialist opinions Extra visits possible with limited disruption Rural schools less isolated Subject-specialist visits Hybrid visits (on site tutor **[?]** and virtual tutor **[?]**) Novice tutor **[?]** continuing professional development Extra support for failing or struggling pre-service teachers More time for pre-service teachers' reflection on their lesson
Limitations	Sound quality Limited camera view Fixed camera Cost of ICT infrastructure Loss of connection with schools "Feeling out the room"
Barriers	Poor wifi connection Non-cooperative schools Fears over data security Data-protection concerns Child-protection concerns

29.7 Discussion and Conclusion, Including Future-Facing Recommendations

Placement observation, in situ in schools, constitutes an essential component of teacher-education programs internationally. It represents a key process for providing pre-service teachers with indispensable and invaluable, real-world experience of school life and of working as a professional teacher in the classroom.

However, face-to-face school placement observation—particularly over significant physical distance—can create considerable challenges for higher-education institutions globally, not least in terms of financial expense and pressure on faculty. Furthermore, in a period of global climate shift, and the imperative to meet sustainable development goals around travel and pollution, education needs to play its considerable part in supporting a greener future.

Virtual PEx observation can provide technologies that help to mitigate these issues by offering a way of enhancing school placement without the associated issues and

risks of onerous physical travel. Furthermore, due to the advancements of increasingly unobtrusive technology, virtual observation can offer an effective complement to face-to-face school placement, pointing to a future approach to teacher education that naturally incorporates virtual observation as an essential component alongside face-to-face assessment.

The research reported here does not suggest that virtual PEx either supplant or replace established face-to-face school placement assessment, which will always have much to commend it, but rather that innovative technologies can be deployed as an enhancement of teacher education, specifically the critically important assessment of pre-service teachers' PEx placements.

The chapter also demonstrates how virtual observation can provide a high-impact solution beyond a mere contingency technology in an event such as a global pandemic, and become a standard, acceptable, and robust approach for PEx assessment, post-pandemic. Consequently, the authors suggest that virtual observation become a normative aspect of the "new normal" that will emerge in teacher education and PEx assessment after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Chapter 30
Revisiting Our Understanding of Partnerships in the Pre-service Teaching Space: Key Findings and Conclusions

Michelle J. Eady, Tony Loughland, and Matthew Winslade

Abstract The ongoing work of teacher education is much like the professionals who are involved in the craft: fluid, adaptable, resilient, integrated, and engaging. While there is a well-established stream of highly influential research in the area of the scholarship of teaching and learning, there has been little opportunity for the pivotal playmakers to share the details of their craft through written academic word. This text has provided a rare opportunity for those stakeholders involved in teacher education, in particular partnerships between higher-education institutions and Department of Education school staff, to shine a spotlight and share their knowledge of professional work-integrated learning (WIL) through multifaceted, rich, and longstanding practices in professional experience (PEx). Schools and universities that were working together were invited to share their research, practice, and partnerships in teacher education as an offering to learn from one another in the third space. This chapter summarises the findings of these contributions and provides a platform to welcome others involved in the under-recognised, tireless, evolving partnerships necessary for the creation of excellent graduate teachers.

Keywords Professional experience · Teacher education · Work-integrated learning · Hub schools · Partnerships

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The original version of this chapter was revised. The Author name has been corrected in section 30.3 (Page 401) from "Annie Anew" to "Annie Agnew". The correction to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_31

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_30

30.1 Background

30.1.1 An Alternative Way of Sharing Our Practice

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) argued that the "single most important" (2014, p. 5) factor in the ongoing improvement of teacher education in Australia is the horizontal integration of the delivery of initial teacher education degrees. Traditionally, universities and schools have worked together in a space where pre-service teachers spend time in the classroom preparing to be a qualified teacher (Manton et al., 2021). In 2021, the state of New South Wales (NSW) in Australia is currently facing what has been described as a "teacher shortage", with at least a 25% increase of new full-time equivalent teachers needed by 2031 (NSW Teachers Federation, 2021). It is timely to explore the ways in which schools and classroom teachers can be supported and how universities are working in partnership with schools to enhance collaboration within, practice of, and research about teacher education. Equally important at this time, universities globally are becoming more aware of the skills that new graduates need in order to be "work-ready" (Larsen, et al., 2019; Sarpong-Nyantakyi et al., 2021). These work-integrated learning (WIL) skills are known for enabling a wider set of strategies and abilities to solve problems, and a more in-depth knowledge of the field, aligned with discipline awareness (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

30.1.2 New Ways of Working Together in the Third Space

Students entering an initial teacher education program have been said to experience dissonance due to the theory–practice divide (Mayer, 2014) leading them to feel unprepared when entering the workforce; this increases the risk of early-career teacher attrition (McConney et al., 2012; Green et al., 2020). The concept of the third space, which has been defined as "various situations in which established boundaries are crossed" (Green et al., 2020, p. 404), has been a prevalent notion to explain the theory–practice divide (Zeichner, 2010; Zeichner et al., 2015). The main function of the third space in the context of teacher education is to create real learning opportunities for pre-service teachers.

WIL has a major role to play in the integration of theory and practice in the classroom. WIL, also known as service learning or cooperative learning, is an important learning strategy in the tertiary setting (Smith et al., 2009). Within different institutions, the definition and practices of WIL vary (Billett, 2015). Common touchpoints exist amidst these variations, including embedded learning activities and assessment that involves industry engagement encompassing student placements and internships (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021). More recently, WIL has included experiences that do

not have a physical placement, instead occurring virtually (Dean et al., 2020). Importantly, tertiary institutions have promoted their WIL components as a key factor in graduate employability (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021).

30.1.3 Importance of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

There is a longstanding debate in the academy about the similarities and differences between higher-education research and research that is focussed on teaching and learning. These two different, yet similar, veins of research often run parallel to one another in the higher-education landscape. The scholarship of teaching and learning, a term coined by Boyer (1990), promotes the view that that such scholarship occurs when educators are "well informed and steeped in the knowledge of their field" (p. 23). Academic and formal writing about the work that is being done in teacher education serves as a platform for policy, changes in education systems, and government initiatives. However, the front line workers in teacher education seldom publish academic writing about their work.

This book is nestled in a third space where universities and schools as partners in teacher education have been able to come together and discover, in some cases for the first time, what academic writing is all about, how one goes about it, and why it is important for these front-line workers to share their craft. In this way, this text has created a community of practice (CoP). CoPs can bring together people with various experiences, skill sets, and knowledge that can be shared to enhance practice and serve as a way for supporting and encouraging others (Tierney, 2020). While practitioners are seeing success stories in their classrooms and schools on a daily basis, they have not had the means to share this important work in the literature due to juggling constraints such as time, confidence, and an already crowded curriculum (Bridgstock & Jackson, 2019).

30.1.4 What Can We Learn from This Book?

No matter which way you decided to read this text, whether it was in Tony's random fashion described in Chapter 3, or in your own way, the content showed how different universities and schools are working together. The text has showcased the important research, partnerships, and practice occurring in the third space of teacher education across the state of NSW. Some examples of this include the professional development that is being created, how technology has been used in the third space, and the importance of role definition, collaboration, community, and practice. This book has provided a channel between the two key players in teacher education reform—a channel that should remain open, free-flowing, collegial, strengths-based, fluid, and

safe as we move forward into continuing to create the nurturing and fertile grounds where these future professional educators can grow. This book has shared a multiplicity of success stories, challenges, research, and recommendations when working in third-space collaboration between higher-education institutions and schools. The following sections provide a synopsis of key messages from the book.

30.2 Preamble

We were thrilled to welcome Professor Mary Ryan, the Dean of Education at Macquarie University, and Dr Bonnie Dean, Head of Academic Development and Recognition at the University of Wollongong, to start our journey through this text in the preamble section. Professor Ryan sets the stage for this text beautifully in her chapter. She stresses the importance of epistemic reflexivity in teacher education and continues her quest for teachers to actively engage in public-facing discussions about their craft. As she beautifully states in her chapter, we need to share and make visible all of the wonderful things that are happening in school-university partnerships so that these meaningful collaborations "can inform public discourse about the complexities and opportunities of teacher preparation and development". In Chapter 2, Dr Dean, an ACEN Board member and internationally known author in the area of WIL, shared with us the value of work-integrated learning for preparing the future teaching workforce and explored the value of WIL for enhancing graduate readiness, in order to argue for the uptake of WIL across the initial teacher education curriculum.

30.2.1 Section 1

The authors of the four chapters that were assembled to create the background and theoretical perspectives of the text included the editorial team, who urged us to consider the importance of this text and the unsung heroes of teacher education. Suggestions on how to read the text are made and the stage is set for the rest of the book. In Chapter 4, Associate Professor Sonia Ferns, at Learn Work Consulting, and Professor Vaille Dawson and Associate Professor Christine Howitt, both from the University of Western Australia, share findings of a three-phase mixed-method case study that investigated quality in the teacher-education context and discussed how stakeholders can work together to prepare students to transition into the world of work. Their findings provide 11 domains for quality outcomes that emerged from the data collected across three phases; the authors highlight that students had higher levels of engagement, motivation, and in-depth learning through WIL activities. They also indicate that partnerships established a culture of shared responsibility among stakeholders to prepare graduates for the teaching profession.

Chapter 5 follows this sentiment, with Associate Professor Narelle Patton at Charles Sturt University stressing the importance of harnessing the value of WIL

in teacher education. This chapter discusses the complex and relational nature of the learning that pre-service teachers undertake during their WIL professional placements, and provides a variety of recommendations for supervising teachers, academics, and pre-service teachers to maximise learning opportunities during WIL experiences. The author highlights the central position of students actively driving WIL experiences, and not passively receiving learning from them.

In Chapter 6, Dr Corinne Green, now at the University of South Australia, and Stacey Jones, at Charles Sturt University, use the academic and grey literature published between the years 2015 and 2020 to focus on the qualities and models of school-university partnerships in Australia from multiple stakeholders' perspectives. This systematic literature review identifies five key themes that relate to Australian school-university partnerships connected to initial teacher education: partnership structure, partnership activities, partnership aims, respect and reciprocity within the partnership, and sustainability of the partnership. The authors also suggest that subjectification is a valuable goal for professional experience, as it allows a space for teachers who know their own practice repertoire and have the confidence and skills to deploy their work.

Chapter 7 comes to us from our colleagues in Victoria, who have been working on a similar project to this book from a Victorian perspective. Dr Ondine Bradbury, from Deakin University, and Dr Daniela Acquaro, from the University of Melbourne, continue the conversation from Chapter 6 by providing global examples of school-university partnerships. In their analysis, which covers six continents, they identify connecting threads in third-space partnerships between universities and schools. These include the importance of autonomy, boundary-crossing roles, and open and fluid communication. The authors suggest that as we move forward in our work in these partnerships, each stakeholder group must be seen as equal in its ability to offer insight into third-space partnerships; this is the perfect segue into Section 2 of this text.

30.2.2 Section 2

In teacher education, we often remind our students that teachers are researchers in all that they do.

In Chapter 8, Associate Professor Tony Loughland and Keiko Bostwick, at the University of NSW, and Helen Antoniadis, Candice Byrnes, and Bettina Wilson, at NSW Education, examined pre-service teachers' learning through the lens of Biesta's (2007) three purposes of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. A phenomenographic approach was used to analyse the data collected from 95 lesson feedback reflection forms, and based on this analysis, the authors argue that subjectification can be achieved in professional experience through the use of the GROW model. The study found that only one-eighth of the student sample were using clinical reasoning in their reflection; this demonstrates to us that pre-service teachers can

form inferences on the success of their teaching through reference to their student data and own practice moving forward.

In Chapter 9, Associate Professor Matthew Winslade and Dr Graham Daniel, at Charles Sturt University, and Ms Jacquie Hood, at Denison College of Secondary Education, share a particular project that engaged school staff and a local university in a genuine partnership. The partners came together in an authentic project that catered for the needs of both the school staff and the university, resulting in a mutually value-added experience. The chapter demonstrates a collective approach to develop resources that benefit all stakeholders. By implementing four strategic objectives to integrate in the development of six learning modules for teacher supervisors, this chapter is a demonstration of meaningful practice that can lead to improving overall supervision in schools.

Finally in this section, Dr Sarah James, Amanda Isaac, Dr Suzanne Hudson, and Cathy Lembke, all at Southern Cross University, Rodney Bullivant, practising teacher,and Donna Ryan, at UTS, present a central but under-explored component of the process of supporting pre-service teachers: the in-school coordinator, who is the conduit between the school and partnering university. In this chapter, 21 participants were involved in a 30-min one-to-one phone interview. Results showed the breadth of the role of the in-school coordinator from the perspectives of the supervising teachers and the coordinators themselves. The chapter concludes with a recommendation for the need for clarity of the role of the in-school coordinator and opportunities for staff to apply for such positions with dedicated job descriptions.

30.2.3 Section 3

Section 3 is, unsurprisingly, the largest section in the text due to the fact that the very nature of teacher education is practice-based. Chapter 11, by Dr Kim Wilson and Dr Nerida Wayland, at Macquarie University, and Amy Murphy, from the Department of Education, share their *Thirdspace* Collaborative Practice project as a response to the need to upskill pre-service and new teachers to work in shared flexible learning spaces. In their example, academics and teachers are collaborating in practice to prepare pre-service teachers to flourish in modern, transdisciplinary, and flexible third spaces.

Dr Kay Carroll, Jacqueline Humphries, and Jaison Varkey, all from Western Sydney University, remind us in Chapter 12 about the importance and impact of data. The authors recommend that pre-service teachers should be immersed and guided through the collection, analysis, and results of data collected in schools that drive teaching practices. Through their case study, the pre-service teachers involved in this practice were shown to have increased understanding about data and how it can be used, improved confidence in analysing and understanding the data, greater ability to make connections between approaches to teaching and successful applications of learning, and a better understanding of differentiation through student data.

Chapter 13 is timely in addressing some needs that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Associate Professor Michelle J. Eady and Dr Bonnie Dean, at the University of Wollongong, and Sophie Buchanan, practising teacher, recommend a series of strategies to bolster relationship-building mediated through online video technology to support pre-service teachers in remote and rural placements. This chapter has shown that supporting them while they are in remote and rural areas will affect the perceived experiences and effectiveness of skill acquisition and confidence while participating in remote and isolated placements. Using the technology available to us to support pre-service teachers in this way is a positive step towards preparing our students for their future careers.

Dr Joanna Anderson, Timothy Bartlett-Taylor, Dr Genevieve Thraves, and Dr Rob Whannell, all from the University of New England, discuss an experiment with an online demonstration school, which showed beneficial outcomes in response to the criticism of initial teacher education programs through removing barriers dealing with the practicalities of face-to-face PEx placements. The chapter broaches the issue of bridging the theory/practice divide by providing opportunities for students to notice classroom interactions and reflect upon teaching practice and its relationship to theory through the use of video technology. Other education sectors have joined the online demonstration school initiative, and the authors urge universities and education systems to embrace online technologies in the preparation of classroom-ready graduate teachers.

Chapter 15, from our colleagues Associate Professor Fay Hadley, Dr Rebecca Andrews, and Associate Professor Iain Hay, all from Macquarie University, and Vanessa Vale, from the NSW Department of Education, remind us of the important role of mentoring in the PExC role and through the "pedagogy of discomfort" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003) pose the question: What does the place of context have to do with mentoring? The authors suggest that professionals engaged in professional placements must challenge the dominant paradigm by embracing diversity and applying it to the mentoring of pre-service teachers. Through two case studies, the authors illustrate the instrumental role that PExCs play for both pre-service and supervising teachers and the importance of negotiating, considering, and reflecting on the place of context as an opportunity to question traditional mentoring programs.

Sandra Moore, at the NSW Department of Education, and Dr Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn and Dr Annie Agnew, at UTS, shared how they established and expanded on a model of effective vertical mentoring in Chapter 16. This was designed by staff at the high school in partnership with colleagues from the university and other local network secondary schools in response to the need for a whole-school focus on supporting pre-service teachers. This chapter reminds us of the importance of a whole-school team approach, rather than the allocated supervising teachers working in silos.

Nicole Hart and Associate Professor Wayne Cotton, from the University of Sydney, Berlinda Cook, school principal, Valerie Knezevic and Lawrence Lau, from Campsie Public School, and Sangeeta Hegde, from Macquarie Fields High School, present five narratives from people in a CoP who shared a common passion to explore

ideas and grow together in the production of quality professional placement experiences in initial teacher education. The chapter suggests that initial teacher educators must learn to use a common language to sustain professional conversations, and that these capacity-builders and change-makers who implement reform must be acknowledged.

Dr Debra Donnelly and Dr Gideon Boadu at the University of Newcastle, along with Marcus Neale, Peta O'Keefe and Haylee Cummins (practising teachers) analysed the reflections of 102 beginning primary- and secondary-school teachers to better understand the factors that affected their success in and satisfaction with their PEx experiences. The authors share that teachers who foster the development of the pre-service teachers are invaluable as role models, mentors, and critics as pre-service teachers move into their careers. The attitude of this CoP to pre-service teacher preparation is reported by the authors as the factor that most determines the success or otherwise of the placement.

Finally in this section, Dr Amy Tsvoris and Associate Professor Michelle J. Eady, at the University of Wollongong, suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to revisit the importance of our communities and ways in which we can give back to and support one another through service. An excellent example is a compulsory subject at the University of Wollongong (UOW) that fostered authentic community service learning as a core element of the teacher-education degree. Using the CARC learning cycle (Duncan & Kopperud, 2008), students researched inequity and disadvantage and took action against these challenges by completing 30 h of service learning in the community. As the authors suggest, "The importance of designing and offering subjects that provide opportunities for university students to engage actively in society and give back to community not only benefits students but creates empowering partnerships between the community and the university" (p. 11).

30.2.4 Section 4

Section 4 provides an insight on the partnerships presented in these chapters.

Chapter 20, by Dr Monica Wong, Chrissy Monteleone, Associate Professor Miriam Tanti from Australian Catholic University and Kelly-Mariee Lorusso from the NSW Department of Education, outline the reflections of a pre-service teacher during their placement experience in a School for Specific Purposes (SSP). The research findings suggest that when placing pre-service teachers in SSPs, they should attend in pairs so that they can discuss and debrief their approaches together. The research also finds that a short, specific, content-based behaviour-management and communications course, including a range of scenarios that pre-service teachers may encounter, would be helpful for pre-service teachers before the commencement of their PEx at SSPs.

Chrissy Monteleone, Dr Therese Barrington, Associate Professor Miriam Tanti, Dr Monica Wong, from the Australian Catholic University, and Carmela Giamboi, and Meredith Weaver, from Strathfield South Public School, take the reader on a

journey to explore the partnership between a university, a Hub School, and several spoke schools. It uses a systems-thinking approach to critically reflect on the Hub network and its growth through the lens of the three key leaders: the principal, the PExC and the university coordinator. The authors stress that while this model provides an initial understanding of the Hub network, the leaders need to have a shared, holistic vision and passion to ensure that quality teachers provide great teaching for all students. The leaders of any Hub network need to engage in respectful, collaborative relationships where multiple views are heard, negotiate the tasks and challenges directly, and ensure that evaluation allows for adaptation and innovation as the new Hub networks develop.

In Chapter 22, our colleagues Dr Debra J. Donnelly, Professor John Fischetti, Professor Susan Ledger, and Dr Gideon Boadu, all from the University of Newcastle, suggest that there are various ways of building competencies within initial teacher education programs, but direct our attention to the use of the cognitive apprenticeship approach to maximise mixed-reality micro-teaching sessions. Their work suggests that even though the training of teachers in a virtual environment cannot replace school-based practice, virtual space provides a flexible, safe, and predictably aware environment that allows pre-service teachers to focus on the development of specific teaching skills. Using this approach to isolate and target aspects from the classroom builds pre-service teachers' competence in preparation for real classroom practice. The results suggest that teaching skills can be improved by carefully crafted lessons that model skills and strategies. This chapter opens several avenues for further investigations, with a need for consistent attention to and integration of virtual teaching environments in all initial teacher education programs.

In Chapter 23, Dr Noelene Weatherby-Fell and Associate Professor Michelle J. Eady, both from the University of Wollongong, provide a snapshot of actions and activities developed alongside classroom teachers to establish a wider CoP and gather evidence to encourage universities to focus on school-university partnerships in meaningful and collaborative ways. Workshops were developed to harness knowledge, share in a CoP, have meaningful discussions of professional learning, and provide PEx mentoring resources. These workshops instilled the realisation that even though the participants had graduated their degree and were working in a school, the university was still there in a partnership to support them in their roles.

The partnership highlighted in the work our colleagues and partners share in Chapter 24 suggest that the greatest impact on the pre-service and practising teachers and the school was the development of positive and supportive communities of practice. Joanne Yoo and Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn, from UTS, and Kylea Dowling, Leanne van Vliet, and Daryl McKay, from the NSW Department of Education, share this generous project, which saw the Hub School providing funding of $5,000 to each school, which allowed staff to be released from their teaching commitments to attend professional-learning and networking sessions and to "plan, create resources, and respond to University correspondence in a timely manner". This practice invigorated learning communities.

Chapter 25, by Dr Angela Fenton and Mr Paul Grover from Charles Sturt University, shares a number of small, implemented strategies that combined to provide

a significantly enhanced professional experience for all stakeholders. The authors argue that many of the findings noted for this contextualised case study are deemed as being easily transferable across contexts, able to be integrated into existing infrastructure and processes, and notably free of high implementation costs. A new finding is that developing professional identity, respect, and confidence did not work in only one direction nor in isolation for the students. This important work will be of benefit for planning future PEx programs and research undertaken in this field.

Dr Graham Daniel, Dr Greg Auhl, Associate Professor Matthew Winslade, and Associate Professor Deb Clarke, all from Charles Sturt University, highlight both the benefits and challenges of bringing together theory and practice, and illustrate these concepts with current examples from schools and classrooms in Chapter 26. The benefits included pre-service teachers being provided with clear demonstrations of professional teaching practice. The partnerships with practising teachers also offered opportunities for increased communication and understanding between the institutions and staff, and enhanced delivery of program content. Some challenges included differences in partners' culture and structure and moving forward to upscale such partnership in the absence of funding. The chapter suggests that we must establish ways of ensuring that the sustainability of these partnerships are maintained so that identified benefits continue.

30.3 Postscript

The postscript chapters shared some immediate food for thought with regard to the impact of COVID-19 on teacher education.

In Chapter 27, Professor Lauren Stephenson, Professor Boris Handal, Professor Kevin Watson, Rachelle Glynn, and Dr Jonathon Mascorella, all from Notre Dame University, along with Rene Demos, school principal, and Catherine Sze, from the NSW Department of Education, focussed on taking a look at the intersection of trauma-informed education and professional learning for both practising and pre-service teachers. The intention is to illustrate the nature of the School Hub Program in collaboration with the University. The authors used a case study to showcase the preparedness and capabilities of practising and pre-service teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected was viewed through three core strands: resiliency, trauma-informed education, and teacher learning; the study concluded that in supporting both supervising and pre-service teachers, Hub School partnerships were effective in preparing the pre-service teachers for their PEx. This chapter shares that a reciprocity of knowledge between all stakeholders equipped and encouraged teachers in their role, a necessity for empathy and for continuing to build self-efficacy as a teacher, along with strong learning outcomes were paramount for profession-readiness post-pandemic.

Chapter 28 presents a script that was used to deliver a one-hour session at the Australian Teacher Education Association conference in 2020. The title, "It's a horror movie, right there on my computer screen: The challenges of professional experience

in 2020", reflected a story that needed to be told through the technique of "distancing". The authors present the story from the perspective of the television series "At the Movies". The findings show how directors of WIL professional experiences have had to become even more adaptive, resilient, and brave during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter is a perfect distraction from the everyday challenges of the PEx coordinator role, and while the characters and situations are primarily fictional, as Landy (1983) suggests, "within fiction, there is truth" (p. 176). So, pop some popcorn and be entertained by the relatable "beautiful risks" as told by Associate Professor Tony Loughland from UNSW and Associate Professor Jennifer Clifton from Queensland University of Technology.

Chapter 29, with Annie Agnew from the University of Technology Sydney and Seán Ó Grádaigh and Tony Hall from the National University of Ireland Galway, urges us to consider the ongoing use of video technology as a means for observations of pre-service teachers' practice beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research has shown the benefits of using video technology in this regard, and they suggest that its implementation should become a normative aspect of teacher education and school placement assessment, one of the few positive takeaways from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 29 chapters that make up this text, the first of its kind bridging the theory–practice divide and recognising all voices in the teacher-education collaborative, has highlighted and celebrated the work of all stakeholders in the teacher-education context. For many, the writing of these chapters was a first attempt at authorship and, as in so many other areas of education, we applaud the risk and bravery in these educators sharing their stories. A common thread that runs through this text is the importance that collaboration, WIL experiences, and reflection play in teacher education. There is no doubt that authentic WIL experiences provide the most fertile ground for our pre-service teachers to learn their craft. Let us all embrace these essential partnerships and, as academics, provide opportunities for the other stakeholders on our team to share their important stories and their work.

Acknowledgements The authors would like to acknowledge everyone who took part in the creation of this text. Thank you to the universities involved in this textbook for trusting us with your success stories and challenges. We would like to celebrate with all of the practising teachers who gave their time and energy to willingly share their deep knowledge and understanding of the importance of fostering pre-service teachers. We would like to acknowledge Di Wasson, who initiated the Hub School Project, and thank Cynthia Wearne for supporting us, and for providing opportunities for the Hub Schools to flourish. Finally, and most importantly, we offer our gratitude to all of the supervising teachers, in-school coordinators, classroom supervising teachers, university PEx coordinators, and pre-service teachers for all of your dedication and work in this very important field of education.

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Correction to: Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education

Matthew Winslade, Tony Loughland, and Michelle J. Eady

Correction to:
M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6

In the original version of the book, the following belated correction have been incorporated: The author name "Annie Anew" has been changed to "Annie Agnew" in the Chapters 29 and 30. The chapters and book have been updated with the changes.

The updated original version of these chapters can be found at
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_29
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_30

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M. Winslade et al. (eds.), *Work-Integrated Learning Case Studies in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6532-6_31