2016

Mentoring beginning teachers and goal setting

Peter Hudson
Queensland University of Technology

Sue Hudson
Southern Cross University

Mentoring Beginning Teachers and Goal Setting

Peter Hudson[1]
Queensland University of Technology[1]
Sue Hudson[2]
& Southern Cross University[2]

Abstract: Australia has delineated a new direction for teacher education by embedding mentoring programs for teachers who support early-careers teachers as a system approach. This case study investigated how mentors after involvement in a mentoring professional learning program focused on goal setting with beginning teachers in their schools. Data were analysed from six mentors' interviews using semi-structured questions and archival documents associated with the mentoring program. Findings revealed that negotiated goal setting facilitates potentially successful teaching practices that align to career stage standards. Other findings associated with goal setting are reported around: (1) mentor-mentee relationships, (2) roles, skills and responsibilities, (3) specific goal setting, and (4) the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Further research (qualitative paired mentor-mentee partnerships and large quantitative studies) will provide insights on effective uses of goal setting that align with standardised frameworks and connect with effective teaching practices.

Literature Review

Beginning teachers represent significant numbers entering the profession each year; yet various reports show many leave the profession in the first five years. The Queensland College of Teacher's (2013) report suggests the figure is between 8-50% with the Queensland's beginning teacher attrition rate measured over a four-year period as 11.7% in 2006 increasing to 15.2% 2008 (p. 3). Surveys have asked beginning teachers about the likelihood of staying in the profession. For example, in 2006 the Independent Education Union showed 45% of beginning teachers claimed they would not be teaching within 10 years while in the same year the Australian Primary Principals Association indicated 24% would leave within 5 years (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013). Some reasons for exiting the profession include inadequate teacher preparation (Gavish & Friedman, 2010) and a lack of appreciation from colleagues (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Aitken and Harford (2011) state that beginning teachers can have difficulty "working with colleagues; negotiating a new school culture; and dealing with management" (p. 355).

Buchanan et al's longitudinal study suggests six categories that influence beginning teachers' decision to leave or stay in the profession, namely: collegiality and support, student engagement and behaviour management, working conditions and teaching resources, professional learning, workload, and isolation. They claim that some issues are universal, particularly behaviour management, continuous stress and working long hours without adequate support. Another Australian study (Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce, & Hunter, 2012) provides conditions in which beginning teachers can build resilience

to remain in the profession, which were placed into five categories: relationships, teacher identity, teacher's work, school culture, and policies and practices. Johnson et al's findings are not unlike those uncovered by Gu and Day (2007) in the UK and have links with Buchanan et al's study; thus it may be assumed there are certain universal issues for beginning teachers and potential ways to address such issues.

There are substantial costs associated with beginning teachers leaving the profession, which Darling-Hammond (2010) claims amounts to $2.1 billion per year in the United States. This figure may be somewhat proportional for Australia and elsewhere. However, compared with other professions, there is clearly inadequate support for beginning teachers (Cooper & Stewart, 2009; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Thus, it is advocated vehemently that many difficulties experienced by beginning teachers can be addressed by providing well-structured support by experienced teachers in their roles as mentors (Carter, 2015; Hudson, 2012; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). Some researchers have indicated that well-structured mentoring can be an "intervention for retention" (Sharplin, O'Neill, & Chapman, 2011, p. 136). A report from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (2014) highlights the essential nature of mentoring to support beginning teachers. Mentoring, as a term, "emphasises collegiality and reciprocity" (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008, p. 1805) and "resonates with the emerging conceptualisation of mentoring as a collegial learning relationship instead of an expert, hierarchical one-way view", which is linked to the term supervision (p. 1803). The role of the supervisor (e.g., university liaison personnel and school executive staff) may be different from the role of the mentor (i.e., classroom teacher), and so careful consideration must be given to how terms are used for promoting such roles in schools. It is argued that mentors are required in the profession rather than top-down supervisory models (Hudson, Hudson, Kwan, Chan, Maclang-Vicencio, & Ani, 2015).

There are various mentoring programs for early-career teachers across Australia, yet, few are evaluated for effectiveness. Hudson and McRobbie (2004) describe a mentoring program, which used a quasi-experimental design to determine effectiveness. Sixty final-year preservice teachers formed the control group and 12 final years were in the intervention group. Mentors and mentees (final-year preservice teachers) were randomly assigned by the governing university. Mentors with the intervention group were educated on mentoring strategies aligned with a five-factor model of mentoring (i.e., personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback). A validated survey instrument was used to measure the control and intervention group participants' (mentors and mentees) perceptions of their mentoring. ANOVA results indicated statistical significance on the first four factors for the intervention group. These results suggest that mentors who are involved in a mentoring program provide more mentoring practices than those who are not.

Australian has undergone significant education reform, particularly with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011), which provides indicators around four career stages (i.e., graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead). As a new educational endeavour, research is required around mentoring and how the APST framework is used to guide professional learning at various career stages. According to the APST, preservice teachers are moving towards the graduate career stage while beginning teachers are moving from graduate to the proficient stage. Therefore, Australian mentors of beginning teachers would need to be mindful of the APST and the descriptors that signal the achievement of proficiency.

The aim of this current study was to describe a mentoring program (i.e., Mentoring Beginning Teachers) implemented in one Australian state and investigate mentors' perspectives on mentoring beginning teachers in their schools with goal setting as a focus towards achieving proficiency.

Context and Study Participants

The Mentoring Beginning Teacher (MBT) program was developed as a university-department partnership, after winning a tender with the Queensland Government, which drew significantly from the award-winning Mentoring for Effective Teaching™ (MET, see www.METprogram.com) program as a key component within the Teacher Education Done Differently (TEDD) project (Hudson & Hudson, 2011). A team of ten QUT academics constructed the MBT program in line with the tender proposal yet somewhat distinct from the MET program. Topics were allocated to the MBT sessions. Two or three academics were assigned to each of the MBT sessions and a wiki was designed to house the various documents (e.g., PowerPoints for each session) produced by the academics. Over a four-month period, the wiki was populated by the academics who reviewed materials in small teams and collectively. Subsequently, the program was trialled twice with 20+ participants, who provided feedback for further program refinement.

A mentor booklet was constructed to provide a clear structure for participant involvement in the MBT program. The booklet (and program) was divided into nine sessions (Table 1). Each session provided information pertinent to the topic and allowed participants to respond to the content, as a way for them to engage in professional learning. For example, Session 2 outlines the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) where participants analyse the standards in relation to the career stage. As another example, the first part of Session 4 (Establishing and addressing the needs of beginning teachers) commences with knowledge transfer to participants around beginning teachers' achievements and challenges (see Hudson, 2012). It was planned so that paired participants would focus on one discussion point (e.g., planning the curriculum, differentiated learning, classroom management, building relationships, or working with parents) and discuss how, why and when this discussion point could be an achievement and a challenge for a beginning teacher. It was anticipated that they would brainstorm possible mentoring solutions to address the possible challenges beginning teachers face around this discussion point, drawing upon prior experiences either as a mentor or as a beginning teacher. This part of Session 4 concludes with groups sharing their ideas, including problem solving around presenting mentoring solutions.

Session	Topic
Session 1	Program overview
Session 2	Engaging with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
Session 3	Mentor roles, responsibilities and relationships
Session 4	Establishing and addressing the needs of beginning teachers
Session 5	Mentoring skills
Session 6	Observation, reflection, feedback
Session 7	Goal setting with beginning teachers
Session 8	Planning to commence the mentoring process
Session 9	Reflection on professional learning

Table 1. MBT Sessions and Topics

The MBT program operated through a constructed framework by the academics with Dr Rebecca Spooner-Lane, in particular, contributing significantly to the model (Figure 1, QUT, 2014). The six stages of mentoring were used to guide participants through hierarchical levels indicated within the MBT booklet. For instance, the first stage "Self-awareness check and skill development for mentors" was largely associated with the first three sessions of the MBT program while the sixth stage "Evaluating the mentoring plan" was associated with Session 9.

Figure 1. MBT Model – Six Stages of Mentoring (QUT, 2014)

Participants in this current study were within two MBT programs facilitated by the authors (Hudson & Hudson). Participants who received principal approval to engage in this study were approached at the commencement of the MBT programs. Although 11 principals provided approval, 10 participants provided consent from which their completed MBT booklets were digitally copied at the conclusion of the two days as archival documents. All had consented to interviews, however, three participants stated they had not taken on the role as mentor in their respective schools, mainly because they had no beginning teachers or other mentors were in the roles. Consequently, there were seven participants scheduled for interview, however, one opted to email responses to the interview questions rather than have an audio-recorded interview; although of interest, the emailed response was discarded to comply with the consistency of methods. Hence, the study was based on interviews and MBT booklets from six participants, who were teachers in Queensland schools. These participants were either in a mentoring role or were assigned as mentors by the school executive as a result of completing the MBT program. There was no requirement in this study for participants to implement any part of the MBT program in their schools.

The following presents an outline of the six participants (MBT1-MBT6) involved in this study. All schools were low to mid socio-economic circumstances and were located in medium density areas. MBT1 was a secondary male teacher with about 600 students. MBT2 was a secondary female teacher. MBT3 was a secondary male teacher with leadership potential (e.g., he was Head of Department for two weeks). MBT4 was a secondary female dance teacher who also teaches in Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE) and media. MBT4 said she had two mentees, "One is in media studies and the special education unit and the second one is teaching in the manual arts department, mainly graphics and her other subject area is SOSE junior history and geography". MBT5 was secondary male teacher in a school with nearly 1700 students from years 7 to 12. The school takes on significant numbers of preservice teachers "Semester one last year we had 42. In semester two last year we had about 46, 48 but we just got a new principal so it's quite high this year" (MBT5). MBT 6 was a female primary teacher who, like two others (MBT1 & MBT2), had not been in a mentoring role previously.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis

The semi-structured interviews occurred between two to three months after participant involvement in the two-day MBT program to ensure they had sufficient time to commence mentoring in the school. Participants were emailed the interview questions so they could have additional thinking time before responding (see Creswell, 2014). The questions focused on the MBT booklet and explored participants' thinking around the APST (AITSL, 2011) in relation to mentoring, building a positive mentor-mentee relationship, the mentor's role, mentoring roles, and goal setting during their mentoring experiences. Other questions included: What goal setting were you able to achieve with your beginning teacher? How have you used the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) in your goal setting? The completed MBT booklets were digitally copied as evidence of participant involvement in the program and 30 to 40 minute interviews were conducted, which were audio recorded and transcribed by the researchers. Participant comments were coded into themes, which also aligned with the interview questions (e.g., mentor-mentee relationships, mentor roles, and specific goal setting). Comments were selected to provide insight into these themes for the purposes of understanding how the MBT program may have impacted on their mentoring practices. The MBT booklet provided additional information to complement interview questions. Conclusions were drawn through the interview data and archival documents (i.e., MBT booklets).

Approval was gained from the university ethics committee, the departmental of education and school principals associated with participants involved in the two-day MBT program. The ethics package included consent forms, ethical outlines, university approved ethics information details, and the MBT booklet, making the document more than 50 pages. Over 200 school principals were posted the ethics package from which 11 principals only provided consent to approach participants for their consent at the beginning of an MBT program. It was suggested by a couple of principals that the size of the ethics package (which was a system requirement) may have been a deterrent for gaining principal consent in the first instance.

The research question for this study was: How do mentors focus on goal setting when mentoring beginning teachers? The purpose of this study was to provide further understandings about mentoring beginning teachers in relation to goal setting towards reaching the proficient career stage.

Findings

The findings that link to mentoring with a focus on goal setting can be divided into four broad areas, namely: (1) mentor-mentee relationship, (2) roles, skills and responsibilities, (3) specific goal setting, and (4) the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and goal setting. Each of these areas will be presented in the following.

Mentor-mentee Relationship

The mentor-mentee relationship is at the centre of the mentoring process. Thus, mentors in this study considered it important to build the professional relationship with their respective mentees. Three of the six mentors (Mentoring Beginning Teacher 1 [MBT1], MBT2, MBT6) specifically mentioned building the relationship as an achievement, particularly having productive conversations about goal setting. Each mentor elaborated on

strategies for building the relationship such as establishing a rapport for communication, acknowledgement of skills, being supportive with attentive listening, and building mutual respect. MBT1 articulated the need to have "basic rapport-building conversations" by "sitting down and having that basic conversation about who I am, who you are, what our roles are, basic education that we have or don't have. What needs to be achieved and what are the concerns". The mentors acknowledged skills that both the mentor and mentee can use in the collaboration, "Acknowledging some of the skills they have, sharing stories of my own practice, acknowledging that I'm not an expert myself. I'm just somebody here that can help, who has been through the process" (MBT1).

MBT1 acknowledged that conversations about each other's personal-professional lives would assist to build the mentor-mentee relationship. There was importance placed on understanding the person, the roles, how to achieve goals and articulating the level of support that can be provided by the mentor, with the caveat of not being an expert but rather a support person for understanding processes. Apart from "giving open, honest, friendly feedback", MBT 2 suggested that the mentor not be dominant or "overcrowd" the mentee but instead identify availability so open communication can occur with the mentee. Listening to the mentee and providing feedback while "establishing short-term goals at this early stage" were mentioned as a way to further strengthen the relationship. Similarly, MBT6 suggested establishing "a relationship that's one of mutual respect, but also a relationship where both parties have goals that they wish to achieve". In this case, MBT6 recognised that goals were for both the mentor and mentee.

Interestingly, MBT4 had two mentees and despite saying they had a "fairly good professional relationship", it was acknowledged that "both were quite different professional relationships". One mentee was a little more reserved while the other "more than willing to say, 'Hey, can you take the lead on this? Let me learn something from you?' Which is really good". MBT4 claimed she "was able to develop an understanding of what their needs are, to set up more scheduled but interactions with them and meetings with them to be able to set their goals and move forward". MBT5 on the other hand had "13 or 14 beginning teachers and I worked with every single one of them in a coaching capacity". (Just as mentoring is a key aspect of induction [TEMAG, 2014], coaching is a key component of mentoring). Although the ideal number of mentees to a mentor is not known, MBT5 could not elaborate on the relationships and had difficulty determining if there were "13 or 14 beginning teachers" in her cohort. Additionally, MBT5 was not able to elaborate on the goal setting aspect with these 13 or 14 beginning teachers but later on refers to some general goal setting techniques.

Roles, Skills and Responsibilities

Mentors perceived themselves in the role as supportive with some explaining how they could be supportive for teaching and goal setting. MBT1 viewed his role as a knowledgeable and experienced support person and as "someone to field questions as they cue, someone to guide, someone to say, 'Hey, look I know about this. I can help you here.' Someone to help explain the confusion of the system, someone to help provide strategies and techniques". MBT2 was very goal focused at the commencement of her role. Apart from establishing the relationship, she wanted to organise initial goals "around things that are current in the moment for her [the mentee], like report writing". She also commented that "our long-term goals for her to be able to observe other teachers and undertake some more professional development in different areas". Both MBT3 and MBT4 viewed their roles as a "sounding board" and not someone to "tell them what to do" but rather "role modelling the suggestions" (MBT3). MBT4, with two mentees, considered her role as a resource person for

goal setting: "Helping them with resources to be able to expand their knowledge as well as expand their ideas within a classroom". Beginning teachers may be unsure of the available resources and so a mentor can assist in identifying and locating school resources, which may create greater efficiency.

As key mentoring skills and responsibilities, these mentors highlighted goal setting, facilitating reflective practices, modelling of teaching practices (particularly classroom management) and feedback to guide the mentee. For example, MBT1 stated the skills of explaining "the management of the students, and the management of the room, and highlight just what kind of management techniques are necessary for a class". MBT2 emphasised the relationship development for setting goals while MBT3 spoke about her responsibility for assisting the mentee to "reflect on his lessons" along with "collaborative planning" where they can "feel like colleagues". As a skill and responsibility, MBT6 considered it important "to be quite specific in your feedback and choose one area to focus on". MBT5 outlined his responsibility "as crucial in making the transition easier between uni and all of a sudden living life in the realities of beginning teaching". He said that the mentor's experiences and knowledge can support the beginning teacher's goal setting, particularly around problem solving: "All of the problems that they're facing have been solved before and it's a matter of accessing that information and helping them". Collaborative problem solving between the mentor and mentee was a consistent theme throughout the interviews that also aligned with the staff annual performance plans.

In the mentor role, and as part of goal setting, MBT4 highlighted "preparing [the mentees] for the difficult conversations they might need to have either with heads of department or in regards to classrooms and parents and those sorts of things, building those skills. Especially when we had parent-teacher interviews". As a mentoring role, the MBT booklet had a section on "Preparing for a goal setting conversation", which allowed for a description of the mentor's previous experiences with goals related to the APST. MBT4 wrote in the booklet about preparing the mentee for parent-teacher interviews by referring to the "school policy and procedures". Her role included emphasising the need for her beginning teachers to have "clear, accurate and reliable records" to draw upon when talking respectfully with parents, which aligns with APST 7.3 (Engage with parents/carers). It appeared that MBT4 had aligned professional learning from the MBT program to practice within the school by supporting the mentee with parent-teacher interviews.

As a role, skill and responsibility for guiding the mentee's achievement of goals, mentors acknowledged the usefulness of modelling teaching practices followed by skilful questioning. MBT5 stated the importance of "modelling the essential skills of classroom management and modelling different ways that students can be addressed to get the result that you want". MBT5 did not elaborate on how to model for the 13-14 mentees under his guidance; nevertheless, skilful follow-up questions with the mentee were indicated as an essential part of the mentoring process. Suggesting to mentees to scale themselves was noted as a positive mentoring strategy that MBT5 claimed could be used for enhancing any teaching practices. "So saying to the teacher 'What would a ten for behaviour management look like?' They're actually thinking about it and say, 'Previously I was a six and the last time I had an eight'" (MBT5). Despite subjective responses to "growth questioning" using a self-reported scale, the mentee was provided with a tool to determine success to some degree. MBT5 continued, "So all of a sudden they jump two points. It kind of makes it quantifiable for them". It was inferred that reflecting on moving from a six to an eight assisted in building the mentee's confidence. These mentors articulated roles, skills and responsibilities that they claimed assisted their beginning teachers to achieve specific goals.

Specific Goal Setting

The interview focused further on the mentors' specific goal setting with their beginning teachers. Some mentors had devised programs to keep track of the goals. For instance, MBT1 had "created an in-studio to start recording the evidence of the different strategies. For goal setting we used the AITSL self-assessment tool, so that we can identify which areas need work first and what strengths we can work later on". The AITSL self-assessment tool is undergoing revision as "AITSL has discovered a problem in the reports generated by the SAT [self-assessment tool]. The reliability of the reports is therefore compromised" (5 April 2016, http://www.selfassessment.aitsl.edu.au/node/24). MBT1, who was in a mentoring role for the first time, suggested a need to have a mentor himself, that is, "a mentor who mentors the mentors". He said that there is a need to have "someone at every [career] stage. It would be also good, if up the chain, there was a mentor helping my level to show where to achieve at the highly accomplished or lead teacher level".

Annual performance review was a milestone that mentors mentioned for specific goal setting. For example, MBT3 stated that "we've recently done our annual performance review this term. I sat down with Michael. I said, 'You go away. You have a look at what you think you need to put in your performance review for the annual performance.'" The annual performance review is assigned to all staff in a school whether a beginning teacher, experienced teacher or school executive. MBT3 further stated to the mentee, "Before you actually have your review, we'll have a look at it. You can explain to me why you think those specific areas need to be looked at". He explained that together they analysed the mentee's performance review paperwork. Aligning the mentee's performance to the proficient career stage allowed the mentee "to identify in his own teaching what he perceives as his weaker areas or areas that he hasn't even touched upon yet". The mentor divided goal setting into two categories, namely, short-term and long-term goals. "Let's look at working towards some short-term stuff for this term and then some stuff for maybe the end of next term. Then by the end of the year you should be at this [proficient] stage". His mentee was identified as being "self-monitoring and self-directed" with the ability to "seek clarification... He's not afraid to ask a question". Some beginning teachers feel reluctant to ask questions for fear of exposing vulnerabilities and appearing incompetent, particularly while forming a teacher identity (Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013). Having "a supportive staff" and being proactive in asking questions for achieving their specific goals assists the mentee to "feel like a part of the team" (MBT3).

Linking the annual performance development plan with the APST at the proficient career stage was considered essential for goal setting by all mentors interviewed in this study. MBT4 outlined that "linking to the standards [APST], we've been creating goals for ourselves" for which she also emphasised "I'm also doing it for myself". Specific goal setting could draw on any of the standards. She outlined how one of her two mentees needed to work on creating clear learning goals for her students and providing feedback to her students. She said this was where the mentor can assist the mentee by "working together on different resources to improve her professional practice standards". MBT5 outlined how beginning teachers can list multiple practices they want to improve, however, focusing on one or two specific goals at a time assists to manage their development more effectively. "We set a goal with every one of our beginning teachers what they want to improve in behaviour management. Those are our smart goals that we set, so they're based on observable data and feedback". MBT6 wanted beginning teachers to take ownership of their goals: "I'm hoping that initially beginning teachers will have goals for themselves that they identify, and my job will really just be to perhaps just make those a bit more specific". Mentors would need to articulate such expectations as beginning teachers may not know that they can provide their

own goals. Nevertheless, MBT6 suggested a mentoring role in goal setting by identifying "skills that perhaps the beginning teacher might not identify as necessary to achieve the goal and then make it measurable".

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Goal Setting

These Queensland mentors were motivated by the mandatory annual performance development plan that leads to the annual review. Their motivation was twofold: (1) assist their mentees to gather evidence towards reaching the proficient career stage and (2) gather evidence for themselves through their mentoring and leadership roles. The annual performance development plan relies heavily on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), where teachers gather evidence at their particular career stage. The APST provided a framework for gathering evidence, particularly with an emphasis on a specific focus area, which is also termed as a standard descriptor or a descriptor. Identifying a specific focus area provided the mentors with a clear direction for observing the mentees' practices. MBT1 stated, "So when we're looking at observations, we can say what will this particular standard say, like 3.2 [descriptor]. What does 3.2 say? What are the ways we can demonstrate 3.2? What's it about? We can see it in practice in another classroom". MBT2 used the standards for goal setting but at the same stage said, "The first thing is, it gives me the opportunity to reflect on my own teaching practice, almost like a checklist for me". She indicated that the standards provided an opportunity for growth for both mentor and mentee.

As part of goal setting, all mentors were focused on gathering evidence of practice. To illustrate, "We are sitting down and going through each of those standards and getting evidence to help support her" (MBT2). MBT4 emphasised that her two mentees used the proficient standards "to do their annual performance development plan and establish where they want to be working based on these standards". The APST assisted to gather evidence with a "whole school perspective as well as what they want to be able to achieve as an individual teacher". MBT4 highlighted at least twice that the standard descriptors allowed mentees "to understand where they are fitting in and where they need to get to". Similarly, MBT5 presented using the standard descriptors as a goal setting strategy, "When we're looking at where beginning teachers are and where they want to progress to using the descriptors to articulate what's required of the proficient teacher". The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are divided into four career stages with beginning teachers moving towards the proficient stage. MBT5 explained how mentees need to measure themselves within their own career stage: "Beginning teachers will come in and try to put themselves on a 'barometer' with someone who's been teaching five years, ten years or whatever. So having the descriptors for proficient teachers shows them where they need to be". He made it clear that the APST can be used for differentiating career stages and that, "We don't expect them to come straight out of uni and be at a highly accomplished stage". This view was repeated with other participants, such as "looking at where he's at with the graduate level" (MBT3) and using "Illustrations of Practice that were available, the videos, were most useful in clarifying for me the standard" (MBT6). Illustrations of Practice (AITSL, 2016) show videos at the different career stages so that practitioners can analyse and determine the relevant career stage. This resource can be used by mentors and mentees as "It's good for all of us. These are the standards. Am I reaching them? Do I have the evidence?" (MBT3).

Reflections on practice were indicated as a way to rationalise towards becoming more purposeful with teaching practices, as outlined by MBT6, "I always find that reflecting on my own practice helps to clarify why I do what I do". Involvement in a mentoring program

supported the mentors' development of mentoring practices, including reflection on practice, and developing specific strategies such as questioning techniques to guide mentee achievement, for instance, "The MBT has allowed me to create, to guide and help the beginning teachers develop, especially with the questioning, to be able to guide them to where they need to get to" (MBT4). MBT2 considered reflection on practices (including the APST) with a growth mindset of leading by example: "it goes back to my ability to reflect on my own practice, in terms of, I have the mentality to lead by example. Making sure that what I'm doing in best practice across the standards". Leading by example is a modelling practice, one considered to be a key factor of mentoring (e.g., see Hudson, 2010; Loughran & Berry, 2005). Mentors, who reflected on their own needs when they were beginning teachers, were able to provide purposeful support: "I'm a lot more reflective about when I was a beginning teacher. What I remember were my needs and what were my ideal solutions as another way to support beginning teachers" (MBT5).

During the MBT program, participants were asked to consider specific goal setting and evidence towards mentees achieving proficiency (full registration). Participants engaged with the MBT booklet and selected one APST descriptor (there are 37 descriptors across 7 standards). They wrote ideas around observable evidence to determine if a beginning teacher had achieved that descriptor. MBT1 selected APST descriptor 3.2 (plan, structure and sequence learning programs). He suggested observable evidence for achieving the descriptor as: "teacher has implemented a well-structured lesson", "catering for a variety of learners", "learners are engaged", "students are achieving outcomes", and the "teacher has evidence to collect from students". MBT2 focused on APST descriptor 2.6 (e.g., use effective teaching strategies to integrate ICT). She outlined effective teaching strategies as "having knowledge of ICT resources, and ways in which ICT enriches the curriculum". However, she did not elaborate on such ways. She presented no ideas of critical evidence that would inform her judgement of the beginning teacher achieving this descriptor. MBT5 presented possible evidence for achieving descriptor 4.1 (managing students' learning) with observations of "established routines where students are becoming self-sufficient with their learning".

Coincidentally, MBT3, MBT4 and MBT6 selected APST descriptor 1.4 (strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students). MBT3 wrote that observable evidence can be: (1) "students engaged with ICT activities" (2) "teacher designed task that incorporates linguistic background to draw on prior knowledge" and (3) "students/community members collaborate to make projects". MBT4 had a list of observable evidences, including: community connection, singing, language support, modified task, approachable as a teacher, kinaesthetic, drama, outdoor, safe and inclusive, and theory to practice". However, she did not elaborate on any of these ideas and so determining "singing" or "drama" as a evidence might be vague without more specifics. MBT6 suggested observable evidence as being "responsive to local community and culture" with particular emphasis on: "consistent use of Aboriginal language", "bringing in aides to work with students", "teacher learning the language", "differentiating tasks for different students", and "using traditional music". As expected, these three mentors (3, 4, & 6) had different ideas around evidence, however, MBT3 and MBT6 were more descriptive with more tangible observations than MBT4's suggestions. Mentoring programs may need to extrapolate these ideas and extend participant thinking towards the practicalities of gathering evidence. During the MBT program, participants were provided with the Queensland College of Teachers (2016) observation guide, which provided evidence samples across each APST descriptor. Such evidence samples on the APST are also provided in other Australian states (e.g., BOSTES, 2016).

Discussion

Mentors in this study considered goal setting as a role, skill, practice, and a necessity for guiding the mentee in their annual performance review. It was articulated that goal setting provided visionary directions for mentees to achieve proficiency status. Goal setting also aided mentors to engage in timely mentoring practices, such as preparing the mentee for half-yearly reports or parent-teacher interviews. It was highlighted that goal setting needed to be negotiated between the mentor and mentee. Mentors recognised that using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) as a framework for goal setting allowed both the mentor and mentee to have a clear focus on the standards. Although there are 37 descriptors across 7 standards, mentors mentioned the value of focusing on one or two descriptors at a time to ensure proficient attainment of this practice. Mentors considered the descriptors as a checklist for providing observational notes to advance the mentees' practices. They suggested the descriptors as a way for mentees and mentors to reflect on their own practices.

From a potential pool of 10 participants, only 7 had a mentoring role in their school 3 to 4 months after the MBT program. Six mentors were selected with interview data and completed MBT booklets. Four mentors had one mentee each, one mentor had two mentees and one mentor had 13-14 mentees, and as such it was inferred throughout the study that mentoring must be differentiated between mentees as their needs are different. The induction needs were different for the different career stages (see also Aitken & Harford, 2011), with these beginning teachers requiring fundamental insights at various points during their first year of teaching and, simultaneously, mentors advancing their leadership practices with engagement in a mentoring program. Although differentiation was not indicated sufficiently with the 13-14 mentees assigned to one mentor, it appeared that having too many mentees may not allow for adequate differentiation with adequate knowledge of each mentee's challenges and achievements. Furthermore, the mentor who had two mentees highlighted the challenges in catering for two diverse mentees; thus, catering for 13-14 mentees around APST achievements, class differentiation, and teaching needs would present exceptional complexities for one mentor. Indeed, the mentor's supportiveness, which includes being available and accessible, was signalled by most mentors as essential for an effective mentoring relationship (see also Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Sharplin et al., 2011). Despite having no research around the optimum number of mentees to one mentor, the availability of a mentor to adequately assist multiple mentees would be compromised.

The study provided further insights on how goal setting can contribute to professional growth for both mentor and mentee. In a complementary arrangement, these mentors were collecting evidence for themselves at their own career stages (e.g., highly accomplished or lead) for their annual performance plan, which signifies the potential for developing leadership roles. Mentoring is a leadership role. In many cases, mentoring may be the first leadership role an experienced teacher has undertaken in a school, which was indicative of this study, as half the participants undertook a mentoring role for the first time. Mentoring can become a stepping stone to other leadership roles, where mentors develop confidence and competence to apply for other leadership positions. Mentors suggested the need to have mentors for themselves and at each career stage, that is, "mentors who mentor the mentors", particularly in their formative stages of mentoring. There is acknowledgement through departments of education (e.g., http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/) that new leaders need mentors.

Sharp (2006) had outlined the consequences of inadequate induction for beginning teachers and others (Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Hobson et al., 2009) have reported on how beginning teachers leave the profession as a result of inadequate support, among other factors. This current study highlighted the much called for "timely induction and mentoring" that schools are providing to their beginning teachers (Hudson, 2012, p. 70). The extent of how schools are providing effective

mentoring requires further investigation, especially as accessing participants may be a challenge because of ethical approval parameters. Many beginning teachers need coping strategies (Sharplin et al., 2011), particularly around behaviour management, for which intensive mentoring within extended induction programs can play a crucial role (Stanulis & Floden, 2009; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). The current study showed how these particular mentors used goal setting to focus their attention on developing the mentees' practices and build coping strategies, including effective behaviour management practices. Although participants in this study were located in schools that varied from low to mid socio-economic circumstances, it is important to recognise that beginning teachers who are in high-need areas may require more intensive support (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010).

In summary, goal setting can be initiated through the development of a positive mentor-mentee relationship, which is identified in the MBT model of mentoring. Goal setting should be negotiated and be part of the mentor's skills, roles and responsibilities for mentoring beginning teachers, and as such needs to be included in mentoring programs. The mentors and mentees had targets to reach with the annual performance plan, consequently, this target also motivated them to devise specific goal setting so that evidence could be generated around the APST descriptors. Using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a framework for goal setting was considered valuable, particularly as the APST descriptors were also embedded in the annual performance plan. This has implications for other countries around the world who use standards and competencies for teachers. For example, Scotland (http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/about-the-standards.aspx), British Columbia (https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/documents/AboutUs/Standards/edu_stds.pdf), and Hong Kong (http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/) can use their standards or competencies for goal setting within mentoring partnerships.

Limitations and Further Research

This qualitative study investigated six mentors' mentoring practices using goal setting. However, it did not consider mentees' perspectives of goal setting as a mentoring framework. Further qualitative studies can involve pairing mentors and mentees for understanding their perceptions of using goal setting as a mentoring strategy. It would also be beneficial to have survey studies that involve substantial numbers of mentors and mentees, and possibly across different education departments to explore the ways in which goal setting can be used to guide beginning teachers for achieving proficiency status. The current study did not investigate any schools within high density or low density areas such as regional or rural areas; thus research can be extended with these parameters. The MBT Six Stages of Mentoring model provided a hierarchical framework for engaging in the mentoring process. Research is needed around the Six Stages to gather empirical evidence on its relevance and application for mentoring beginning teachers. Such evidence can assist to further develop the model with insights into the practicalities for mentoring within the schools.

Additionally, more studies are required to determine the optimum number of mentees assigned to one mentor, and the optimum time range for beginning teachers to achieve proficient status, particularly for long-term goal setting. It seems reasonable to suggest that some highly-motivated beginning teachers could achieve proficiency well within a year while others may take three years or more, depending on their extenuating circumstances. Further studies may reveal the importance of a positive mentor-mentee relationship for goal setting and when to commence goal setting with the possibility of sequential goal setting during a

school year, yet also determine how and when to differentiate goal setting. Different Australian states have different expectations about how long it should take a beginning teacher to reach proficiency using the same Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. With consideration that beginning teachers have similar needs across the country and have the same APST, research is required to determine an equitable and reasonable timeframe for achieving proficiency status.

Conclusion

Mentors require mentoring programs, models and frameworks to work effectively. Although the MBT program provided professional learning for understanding the work of the mentor, further research is required to understand how professional learning around mentoring is enacted within schools using different models. The teaching profession in Australia has embraced concepts around developing early-career teachers through supportive mentoring frameworks. This current study showed that the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) is a framework for establishing goal setting as a mentoring strategy. These APST allowed for observation of practice (broadly and specifically), reflection on practice regardless of career stage, and collection of evidence that demonstrates the attainment of a career stage, all of which can be part of goal setting. However, caution should be exercised around assuming that goal setting will arrest beginning teacher attrition. Nevertheless, Australian states have taken affirmative action to support beginning teachers in their formative development within the profession, which ultimately aims to assist teaching and learning.

References

Aitken, R., & Harford, J. (2011). Induction needs of a group of teachers at different career stages in a school in the Republic of Ireland: Challenges and expectations. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(2), 350-356. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.09.003

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL]. (2011). *Australian professional standards for teachers*. Retrieved from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL]. (2016). *Illustrations of practice*. Retrieved from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/illustrations-of-practice/find-by-career-stage

Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES]. (2016). *Timeframes for accreditation.* Retrieved from http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/current-teachers/how-to-get-proficient-teacher-accreditation/timeframes/

Buchanan, J., Prescott, A., Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., Burke, P., & Louviere, J. (2013). Teacher retention and attrition: Views of early career teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(3), 110-129. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n3.9

Carter, A. (2015). *Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT).* Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399957/Carter_Review.pdf

Castro, A. J., Kelly, J., & Shih, M. (2010). Resilience strategies for new teachers in high-needs areas. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 622-629. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.09.010

Cooper, M., & Stewart, J. (2009). Learning together, shaping tomorrow: New teachers try new ways. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 4*(1), 111-123. https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2009.4.1.111

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th Edn.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Recruiting and retaining teachers: Turning around the race to the bottom in high-need schools. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 4*(1), 16-32. https://doi.org/10.3776/joci.2010.v4n1p16-32

Gavish, B., & Friedman, I. A. (2010). Novice teachers' experience of teaching: A dynamic aspect of burnout. *Social Psychology of Education, 13*(2), 141-167. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-009-9108-0

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2007). Teachers resilience: A necessary condition for effectiveness. *Teaching and teacher education*, *23*(8), 1302-1316. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.06.00

Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(1), 207-216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.001

Hudson, P. (2012). How can schools support beginning teachers? A call for timely induction and mentoring for effective teaching. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(7), 70-84. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n7.1

Hudson, P. (2010). Mentors report on their own mentoring practices. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(7), 30-42. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2010v35n7.3

Hudson, P., & Hudson, S. (2011, July). *Partners in education: The Teacher Education Done Differently (TEDD) project*. Paper presented at the Australian Teacher Educators Association (ATEA), Melbourne.

Hudson, P., & McRobbie, C. (2004). *Designing, implementing and evaluating a mentoring intervention for preservice teachers of primary science.* In McLeod, S (Ed.) Proceedings of the 2004 Australian Teacher Education Association Conference. Making spaces: Regenerating the profession, 7-10 July 2004, Bathurst, New South Wales.

Hudson, P., Hudson, S., Kwan, T., Chan, C., Maclang-Vicencio, E., Ani, A-L. (2015, July). *Making connections within the Asia-Pacific region: Case study around the Mentoring for Effective Teaching (MET) program*. Paper presented at the Australian Teacher Education Association conference, Darwin, Australia.

Johnson, B., Down, B., Le Cornu, R., Peters, J., Sullivan, A., Pearce, J., & Hunter, J. (2012). *Early career teachers: Stories of resilience*. University of South Australia-Early Career Teacher Resilience Project.

Le Cornu, R., & Ewing, R. (2008). Reconceptualising professional experiences in preservice teacher education... Reconstructing the past to embrace the future. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 24*(7), 1799-1812. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.02.008

Loughran, J., & Berry, A. (2005). Modelling by teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(2), 193-203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.12.005

Marable, M. A., & Raimondi, S. L. (2007). Teachers' perceptions of what was most (and least) supportive during their first year of teaching. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 15*(1), 25-37. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611260601037355

Pillen, M., Beijaard, D., & den Brok, P. (2013). Professional identity tensions of beginning teachers. *Teachers and Teaching*, *19*(6), 660-678 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.04.003

Queensland College of Teachers. [QCT]. (2016). *Transition to full registration.* Retrieved from http://www.qct.edu.au/registration/transition-to-full-registration

Sharp, H. (2006, November). *Examining the consequences of inadequate induction for beginning teachers.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide, Australia.

Sharplin, E., O'Neill, M., & Chapman, A. (2011). Coping strategies for adaptation to new teacher appointments: Intervention for retention. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(1), 136-146. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.010

Stanulis, R. N., & Floden, R. E. (2009). Intensive mentoring as a way to help beginning teachers develop balanced instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(2), 112-122. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108330553

Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group. (2014). *Action now: Classroom ready teachers.* Retrieved from http://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/teacher-education-ministerial-advisory-group

Wang, J., Odell, S. J., & Schwille, S. A. (2008). Effects of teacher induction on beginning teachers' teaching: A critical review of the literature. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(2), 132-152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487107314002

Acknowledgements