Exploring relationships during the practicum in pre-service teacher education: Power and positioning within a quadraciprocal model

By

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ABSTRACT

Learning to be a teacher involves a multiplicity of factors including cognitive, physical, emotional, and social interactions with a range of people. Much of this learning occurs in the practicum. Over the years the shape of the practicum may have changed but the complexities and tensions remain.

This is a transcendental phenomenological study of the unique nature of the supervisory construct of the postgraduate teacher education program at The University of Melbourne and its quadraciprocal model involving relationships between four main stakeholder groups: Teacher Candidates, Mentor Teachers, Clinical Specialists and Teaching Fellows. The purpose was to examine the reciprocity of the relationships between the four members in this supervisory construct. In particular this study explored the impact of positioning and power on the development of relationships in the quadraciprocal model.

Through detailed analysis of a range of qualitative data methods a rich “thick” description and detailed account of phenomenological categories were used to identify emergent themes, patterns and broad areas in the discourse. This research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge base about the learning needs of pre-service teachers, in terms of positioning and power and the combined impact of these elements on the development of relationships in the practicum.

Findings indicate that when a fourth member enters the construct positioning and power is shifted in new directions and structural and relationship power is minimised. Perceptions presented by participants suggest power-dependency in relationships is diminished by the availability of alternatives in mentoring.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

i) The thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Education.

ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

iii) The thesis is fewer than 60,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

Signed: 

Date: 

Rannah Hetherington

Doctoral Candidate
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Sebastian Scamporlino, for his remarkable patience and unwavering love and support. Thank you for the last twenty years and our amazing relationship. I am truly grateful for having you in my life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I acknowledge and thank my supervisors Professor John Hattie and Dr Marnee Watkins. I deeply appreciate the expertise and support I received from them. Their persistence, amazing insights and perspectives helped me learn so much. Their constant support helped me manage the most challenging moments along this demanding journey. I owe a huge debt to these two incredibly amazing, supportive and caring people. There are just no suitable words that can express how much I appreciate their efforts.

I would also like to acknowledge Associate Professor David Gurr and Dr Lawrie Drysdale for without their teachings, faith, support and encouragement I would not have enrolled in the D.Ed or remained connected to the university. David and Lawrie served as critical friends in the area of research methodology. I very much appreciate their sage advice and guidance.

I acknowledge and appreciate my many colleagues at The University of Melbourne who day by day encouraged me to take the small steps that kept me focused on the end goal. I especially thank Dr Melody Anderson, a personal friend, colleague and critical research friend whose constant encouragement was and will always be very much appreciated.

The time and openness given of the teacher candidates and mentors with very hectic schedules is acknowledged and appreciated. Without their generosity of spirit and dedication to the field this study would not have been possible. I hope this study helps others following in their footsteps.

On a personal note I thank my mother who taught me the value of reading for enjoyment and my father who taught me the value of reading to gain knowledge. Both were important attributes along this journey.

Finally, I thank my husband, Sebastian, who has always supported me in every endeavour. For his patience and encouragement, taking on more than his fair share with the renovation, running of the house and caring for the children, I am forever grateful. To our children Kara and Matthew thank you for the time and space, and understanding when I needed to focus on my studies.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Teacher Candidate – For the purpose of the study this term is given to student teachers who are engaged in the Master of Teaching program at The University of Melbourne. Any student engaged in teacher education with the intention of taking up a teaching role at the end of their training could be considered a teacher candidate.

Mentor Teacher – A school-based classroom teacher who is responsible for providing feedback, mentoring, and evaluating teacher candidates during the practicum. Previously these teachers have been termed ‘supervising’, ‘cooperating’ or ‘associate’ teacher.

Clinical Specialist – For the purposes of this study this term is specifically used when referring to academics teaching and supervising teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching program. These academics may also teach in other university programs.

Teaching Fellow – A school teacher employed by one of the partner schools, called a Base School, which provides practicum placements for teacher candidates in the Master of Teaching. In this study Teaching Fellows are employed 0.5 (full time equivalent), by the base school, to support placements for groups of 20-30 teacher candidates in a group of 6-12 schools.

Partnership School – In this study this term is used for a school providing supervised practicum placements for initial teacher training candidates in the Master of Teaching. A partnership school typically provides placements for up to six candidates.

Base School – In this study this term is used for the Teaching Fellow’s employing school in the Master of Teaching. A Teaching Fellow employed by a base school works with candidates across the Partnership School Group.

Partnership School Group – A small group of 6-12 partnership schools engaged in the Master of Teaching program. These schools are typically localised to a given area, either metropolitan or rural region.
**Professional Reciprocal Relationship** – The term Professional Reciprocal Relationship is ‘two or more partners working together in an agreed professional context to achieve common goals through collaboration within a model of complementary exchange based on mutually beneficial and dynamic relationships.’

**Quadraciprocal Relationship** – The term “quadraciprocal” when applied to relationships in this study refers to reciprocal, supportive relationships specifically developed between the four main players in a teacher candidate’s development being; Teacher Candidates, Mentor Teachers, Clinical Specialists and Teaching Fellows.

**Quadraciprocal Model** – As there was no known, or suitable, word for this particular structural model the term *Quadraciprocal Model* was coined in this study. The term “quadraciprocal” is applied to the structural aspects of the four-member practicum supervisory model in this study. It refers specifically to an emerging theoretical, cyclical and reciprocal learning model of professional development developed between the four main players in a practicum supervisory construct, in this case being; Teacher Candidates, Mentor Teachers, Clinical Specialists and Teaching Fellows.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AITSL</td>
<td>Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership</td>
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<td>BS</td>
<td>Base School</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Clinical Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFT</td>
<td>Equivalent Full-Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITSD</td>
<td>Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGSE</td>
<td>Melbourne Graduate School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Mentor Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>Professional Development School</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPAC</td>
<td>Professional Practice Academic Coordinator</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
<td>Professional Practice and Seminar</td>
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<td>PSG</td>
<td>Partnership School Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Pre-service Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Supervising Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>TF</td>
<td>Teaching Fellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNE</td>
<td>Teachers for a New Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSS</td>
<td>Textural-Structural Synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UoM</td>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>University Supervisor</td>
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<td>VIT</td>
<td>Victorian Institute of Teaching</td>
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I made the mistake of complaining about my practicum teacher to one of my professors and it just became worse. The only advice I have for you is to "play" whatever game this teacher wants you to play - do exactly as she does in order to get a great evaluation and then do what you want in your own class.

(Canadian Guest, Teacher Stuff, 2004)

Practicum is the cornerstone of teacher education; a constructed occasion designed to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to apply and develop theory to practice relationships. It is presumed that under the guidance of experienced practitioners, teacher candidates will develop their theoretical and practical understandings about effective teaching (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh & Ward, 2003; Peters, 2008; Trevethan, 2013). Not all practicum experiences are positive; instead some can be fraught with conflict and tension around imbalances of challenges, support, communication, and power (Dobbins, 1995; Peters, 2008; Tang, 2003; Wilson, 2006). Much research and work has gone into trying to improve this critical component of teacher education.

Over time and across global borders researchers and reviewers of teacher education have raised concerns about the quality of the professional learning experiences provided in the practicum (Australian Parliament, 1998; Dobbins, 1995; Edwards & Protheroe, 2003; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Parliament of Victoria, 2005; Peters, 2008; Pinder, 2008; Sachs, 1997; Tang, 2003; Ure & Learning, 2009; Wilson, 2006; Zeichner, 1990).

In Australia there has been, on average, one major state or national enquiry into teacher education every year for the past 30 years. Inevitably and unfortunately, each inquiry reaches much the same conclusions and makes much the same recommendations, yet little changes.

(Dinham, 2012, p. 36)
Acknowledging the practicum experience

Participation in the practicum is experienced by all pre-service teachers and research suggests that it is one of the most valuable and influential experiences in the professional preparation of teachers (Ewing, Lowrie & Higgs, 2010; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Ure & Learning, 2009). It is widely acknowledged that classroom-based supervising teachers who work with pre-service teachers during their practicum perform one of the most important roles in teacher education (Ewing, Lowrie & Higgs, 2010; Hastings, 2010; Mitchell, Clarke & Nuttall, 2007; Sanders, Dowson & Sinclair, 2005; Taggart, 1988; Wilson, 2006). Bullough, Draper, Smith and Birrell (2004) term this eloquently as the “sine qua non of teacher education” (p. 510). Pre-service teachers themselves view the development of a productive relationship with their supervising teacher as crucial during the practicum (Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006).

The practicum experience is designed to provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to link theory to practice in an ongoing manner. This component of pre-service teachers’ preparation is essential in helping them develop pedagogical skills, is a form of socialisation into the profession (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), and it is also where ‘tacit’ knowledge, behaviours and expectations begin to develop (Ewing, Lowrie & Higgs, 2010). Despite its importance, it has been perceived as a challenging and negative experience for many pre-service teachers and concerns have been raised by many (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2006; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; Korthagen, et al., 2001; Ure & Learning, 2009; Wilson, 2006).

The drive to improve the practicum experience has resulted in numerous research studies (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; Korthagen, et al., 2001; Iceman-Sands & Goodwin, 2005; Timperley, 2001; Ure & Learning, 2009; Wang, 2001; Wilson, 2006). During the past two decades many of these studies have maintained a focus on the mentoring skills of the supervising teacher and the triadic relationships developed between the supervising teacher, pre-service teacher and the university supervisor.
A traditional perspective

Traditional practicum experience involves a three-member group in a triadic structure. The triad is made up of a classroom based supervising teacher, university supervisor and the pre-service teacher. Most often the pre-service teacher is ‘parachuted’ into a classroom and appointed a university supervisor who will make visits to the classroom to observe the pre-service teacher practise teaching. The structure of the practicum itself has largely been selected blocks of time over a period of a number of weeks where pre-service teachers have been expected to practise their campus learning several weeks and months after initial instruction (Ure & Learning, 2009).

Typically power plays and hierarchical structures have been the outcome of the triadic relationships historically formed in school partnerships through teacher education programs. According to early researchers (Caplow, 1968; Mills, 1953; Veal & Rikard, 1998) triadic structures may cause relational disturbance and jealousy among members. Veal and Rikard supported Caplow’s (1968) view that a triad is hierarchical by necessity, creating a change in power distribution as members seek to form coalitions and alliances. They concluded that triads where all three members hold equal power are not likely. Re-envisioning the nature of professional relationships and partnerships in the practicum is seen by many as particularly important (Goodfellow & Sumsion, 2000). As Hastings and Squires (2002) pointed out, what is needed is a restructuring and reculturing of the practicum.

This study was designed to explore the notion of a four-member, or quadraciprocal, relationship between the supervisory construct members in a recently formed practicum model. This new practicum structure forms part of the clinical approach currently being implemented within the Master of Teaching (Primary) program at The University of Melbourne.

Nomenclature of terms

Within the field of education a number of providers demonstrate an inconsistent use of the term for the practicum, frequently interchanging the terms teaching practice, field-based practice, school-based practice, school experience, placement and practicum (cf., Kruger et al., 2009; Ure & Learning, 2009). Similarly the terms used for the classroom-
based teacher supporting the pre-service teacher is also known by various terms such as, *supervising teacher, cooperating teacher, associate teacher* and *mentor teacher* (Ure & Learning, 2009). Developing a consistent nomenclature within the field will ease confusion of roles and support crystallising links between practice and the philosophical intentions of teacher education programs.

This doctoral study refers to the practicum experience interchangeably as the practicum or placement. It refers to the traditional roles of pre-service teacher, supervising teacher and university supervisor as *teacher candidate, mentor teacher* and *clinical specialist* respectively. Detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of these supervisory construct members can be found in appendix R.

Traditional nomenclature is used when describing the triadic model and the current quadraciprocal model’s terms are used elsewhere. As this study explored a quadraciprocal model moving beyond the triadic model it includes an additional role in the mentoring process; the *teaching fellow*.

**Background to the research problem**

Born out of decades of identified needs, the year 2007 launched significant new approaches to pre-service teacher education in Australia. A major proposal out of the Australian Parliament’s House of Representatives ‘*Top of the Class: Report on the inquiry into teacher education*’ was the establishment of a National Teacher Education Partnership Fund. This, among other initiatives, was designed to stimulate innovative and authentic developments in teacher education. One such innovation was the increased support for partnerships. It was expected that new, or strengthened, partnerships would be constructed so that teachers, pre-service teachers, and teacher educators would work together in a “spirit of trust, mutuality and reciprocity” to transform teacher education (Kruger et al., 2009, p. 13).

Currently in education in Australia there is much change occurring in both the expectations of teachers and of teacher education. There seems to be an air of shifting political priorities and higher education institutions’ responses are varied. Recently there have been changes in many educational institutions shifting teaching from an undergraduate degree to a postgraduate degree with a focus on clinical teaching and a
desire to build closer university-school partnerships and present teaching as a profession (McLean Davies, 2013). A major impact of these recent changes is an array of emerging approaches to the practicum experience. Nevertheless, whatever the changes to the practicum there still appears to remain a hierarchical structure that can impact and impedes pre-service teacher professional learning.

All too often teacher candidates enter the practicum to meet a hierarchical relationship with their mentor teacher, who seemingly has more power and influence than university supervisors (Veal & Rikard, 1998). Hierarchical relationships are problematic in the education of pre-service teachers as they are laden with power-dependency potentially fostering power plays frequently causing impassable impediments (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goodnough et al., 2009; Veal & Rikard, 1998). Researchers who have examined the interplay of the traditional, and in many cases still prevailing, triadic structure (pre-service teacher, supervising teacher and university supervisor) regularly find the dynamics to be complicated and challenging, resulting in substandard experiences and poor professional development for pre-service teachers (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Valencia et al., 2009)

Constraints in power relationships within a triadic structure frequently cause teacher candidates to conform to the status quo and as such they often fail to realise their own expectations or that of their tertiary educators (Cameron & Wilson, 1993; Corrie, 2000; Pinder, 2008). The practicum experience then potentially becomes a site of ambiguity and tension that impedes learning (Pinder, 2008).

The importance of the mutually beneficial relationship

A mentoring relationship is a complex social interaction that mentors and mentees construct and negotiate for a variety of professional purposes and in response to current contextual factors (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000). The relationship that develops between the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher can be an emotionally demanding endeavour for all.

The practicum is recognised as a genuine professional development opportunity for pre-service teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators (Dobbins, 1995; Ewing, Lowrie & Higgs, 2010; Hastings, 2004, 2010; Pinder, 2008; Sanders, Dowson & Sinclair, 2005;
Ure & Learning, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Successful consequences of the practicum support pre-service teachers’ pedagogical and professional development as well as being an effectual induction into the field of education. Equally, mentor teachers make emotional connections with their pre-service teachers and their role in working with them presents as an opportunity for reaffirmation and understanding of their professional work (Hastings, 2004). Therefore, success of the practicum is a reciprocal enterprise.

Whilst there are limited definitions of the term ‘professional relationship’, Ralph (2003) suggested that a professional relationship comprises a kind of reciprocal commitment to each other’s development and professional learning. Therefore establishing and sustaining a professional reciprocal relationship should be considered a crucial aspect of the practicum (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009).

Overview of the study

The practicum - contextualising the study’s model

Improving the quality of teachers and the nature and effectiveness of pre-service teacher education is of great importance in the current educational climate. In 2008, The University of Melbourne, under its strategy of ‘Growing Esteem’\(^1\) transformed its curriculum, introducing landmark education reforms collectively known as the Melbourne Model, since renamed to the Melbourne Curriculum\(^2\). In response to the Growing Esteem strategy the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) launched the Master of Teaching. The Master of Teaching is a two year postgraduate professional degree involving secondary, primary and early childhood streams. The introduction of the new curriculum enabled the Graduate School of Education to

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\(^1\) The Growing Esteem strategy with its new metaphor, the Triple Helix, of three tightly bound strands: research, learning and teaching, and engagement, reportedly described the character of the University. Retrieved from http://growingesteem.unimelb.edu.au/growing_esteem/about

\(^2\) The Melbourne Curriculum was introduced in 2008 and offers degrees in three broad cycles. At Bachelor degree level, students select from one of six degrees offering a total of 87 major fields of study. These programs lay the intellectual foundations for employment or further study.
address local and international criticisms of pre-service teacher education. Aligned with the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) agenda (Carnegie Corporation, 2001), the Master of Teaching offers a rigorous curriculum where an extended practicum experience is interlaced with coursework (Anderson & Scamporlino, 2013).

In accordance with calls from national and international education researchers The University of Melbourne is developing partnership schools (cf., Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010; Goodlad, 1994). These partnerships are developing in clusters where teacher candidates are placed in mentor teacher classrooms and supported by a clinical specialist and teaching fellow. The four-member structure – the teacher candidate, mentor teacher, clinical specialist, and teaching fellow – departs from the triadic model of supervision. It potentially disrupts the traditional hierarchical complexities, conflicts and tensions of a triadic model and brings forward a new construct; the ‘quadraciprocal’ model. What was unknown was how this four-member team interact to support relationship development in the practicum and how that translates into supporting the professional learning for teacher candidates. Hence the need for this research to investigate how this new four-member construct impacts relationships within the practicum.

A contemporary view – Melbourne’s model

The practicum model under study comprises two components. The two day per week component allows for introduction and induction into the school where academic tasks and teaching practice occurs. Ongoing observation and support as well as formative assessment assist teacher candidates to monitor their professional learning and identify strategies for improvement. Pending satisfactory assessment of the two day component, teacher candidates proceed to a period of sustained professional practice during a two or three week block placement. During each practicum experience there is a structured graduated progression of teaching requirements and responsibilities across four semesters. At the completion of each block placement a summative assessment of professional development is presented by the mentor teacher in close consultation with the clinical specialist, the teaching fellow does not hold an assessor role (Anderson & Scamporlino, 2013; McLean Davies et al., 2013). Features of this model claim to create
immediacy between theory and practice in teaching and provide tangible evidence of a professional learning exchange between the two sites (Anderson & Scamporlino, 2013).

Placement sites in the study model are geographically grouped around a base school. A series of partnership schools are arranged within clusters called partnership school groups. These partnership schools play a key role in supporting the professional development of teacher candidates. The partnership school group, or network of schools, provides sites for clinical practice (McLean Davies et al., 2013).

Each base school provides one staff member, funded by the university and released from their school-based teaching duties 50 per cent of the time to work across a partnership school group (Dinham, 2012).

It is the newest member of the supervisory construct, the teaching fellow, which distinguishes the quadraciprocal model from other models. The teaching fellow supports teacher candidate professional development and mentor teachers. They work to ensure a coherent and consistent delivery of the program, as placement requirements are met. The teaching fellow and mentor teacher are united by a university-based clinical specialist, who also supports teacher candidates and mentor teachers to make theory-practice links between on campus academic concepts and classroom practices (Anderson & Scamporlino, 2013; Dinham, 2012; McLean Davies et al., 2013).

Design of the study

Research questions

This study was designed and developed through the following questions. One main research question is supported by sub-questions designed to help answer the main research question.

1. How does the construct of the ‘quadraciprocal’ model impact relationships in the practicum?

   a. What is a professional reciprocal relationship and what does that look like in action?
b. How are construct members’ roles viewed by participants in relation to positioning and power?

c. In what ways do the notions of positioning and power impact members when developing and maintaining relationships within the supervisory construct?

d. What is the impact of the newest member, the teaching fellow, in the supervisory construct?

e. How can the study of these relationships, within this construct, contribute to our knowledge of the practicum more generally?

These questions were explored through a structured focus group involving a cognitive mapping activity, reflective journals, and semi-structured individual interviews. An interpretive paradigm was used in analysing the data to enable complexities to be explored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Gomm, 2009).

The researcher involved in this study has been an experienced primary school teacher and principal, a university academic, and teacher candidate supervisor. She has been involved in the supervision of undergraduate student teachers in the Bachelor of Education program, and has been a clinical specialist across four partnership school groups in the Master of Teaching program at The University of Melbourne. Over the duration of the study the researcher moved into the role of a school-based teaching fellow in order to gain new experiences and a new perspective of the quadraciprocal model and group members. More recently she took on a leadership role in the Master of Teaching (Primary) coordinating the practicum component of the course. Prior to this work the researcher had also experienced the role of the school-based mentor teacher having supervised numerous pre-service teachers over ten years for a range of universities and teacher education programs.

**Aims of the study**

It is important to note at this point that this study is not an evaluation of The University of Melbourne’s practicum design, but rather uses the practicum model as a vehicle to explore the different relationships that exist within its four-member construct. In particular, the research explored the impact of positioning and power on relationships between the four-members given the distinctiveness of the structure. This study aims to
provide insight not only into the relationship dimension within this model, but also provide valuable information for practicum designs more broadly.

This study examined a select mentoring construct in pre-service teacher education; the practicum experience. In particular it explored the presence and style of the relationships formed within a new four-member construct. It investigated how relationships between the supervisory construct members were formed and maintained, and how emerging novice teachers were supported whilst navigating positioning and power influences during their placement experiences. This study aims to contribute to an existing body of knowledge about how relationships are formed and maintained in the practicum and how hierarchical structures can be managed to reduce power-dependency and to support increased learning experiences for pre-service teachers.

This doctoral research project is a phenomenological study of pre-service teacher and mentor relationships. It examines issues of professional learning, induction and socialisation into the profession of teaching through the exploration of the lived experience of those most directly impacted by positioning and power in practicum based relationships (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2006; Le Cornu, & Ewing, 2008; Levine, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; Maynard, 2000).

**Rationale for the study**

Many pre-service teachers state that their supervising teachers are the most important influence on their development as a teacher (Dodds, 1989; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Templin, 1979; Ure & Learning, 2009). It is not surprising then that increasing interest and attention is being given to the supervisory aspects of teacher education.

Despite consensus in the field that the influences of the mentor teacher and practicum experience are one of the most critical aspects of teacher education, there are vast differences in how these positions are perceived and undertaken (Sanders, Dowson & Sinclair, 2005). For example, in many cases, the mentor teacher is largely responsible for defining precise tasks and specific objectives for teacher candidates, based on the guidelines of the university and the university supervisor (Sanders, Dowson & Sinclair, 2005). Often these guidelines do not meet the regulatory standards and as such tasks and
requirements can vary with considerable professional development consequences (Ure & Learning, 2009, Ure & Lysk 2008a, 2008b). Teacher education providers largely place the responsibility of ensuring expectations are clearly defined and stated for the practicum on the university supervisor (McBride, 1984; Ocansey, 1987). Mentor teachers often experience limited understanding of the pre-service teachers’ needs, professionally, academically and emotionally (Hastings, 2004, 2010; Ure & Learning, 2009).

In Australia mentor teachers are not specifically trained in the areas of mentoring or supervision. In addition, teacher education courses differ greatly in their administration and practice requirements, often causing confusion about specific course and pre-service teachers’ needs (Ure & Learning, 2009). As evidence of the rapidly shifting sands in this area, at the time of writing this chapter, three new online modules to support mentor teachers’ understandings of the supervision of pre-service teachers were released by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

Given the changing trend in teacher education and the challenges of building and sustaining collaborative university-school partnerships, understandings about relationship building are pivotal for supporting quality teacher education programs. The need to secure and improve practicum sites is fundamental to quality teacher education practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010; Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Birrell, 2004; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). As new approaches to practicum supervision evolve research needs to continue to maintain an influential cycle of continual improvement.

This chapter has provided an introduction and background to the study and has given some justification of why the study was needed. The aim and rationale for the study has been highlighted and key questions have been presented. This chapter situates and contextualises this research as a study of the relationships between pre-service teachers and their mentors within the bounds of a particular program and practicum model. In the following chapter the literature regarding practicum experiences and the need for a mutually beneficial relationship is critically discussed.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Relationships between all members in the supervisory construct are a substantial component of the pre-service teacher practicum experience (Montgomery, 2000). Relationships between pre-service teachers and their mentors are of particular significance. Power in these relationships influences the learning and reciprocity between members in the practicum (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006). If perspectives between members in the supervisory construct conflict then tensions may arise and relationships are strained causing disharmony and poor transition into the field of education. When relationships within the practicum are negative, professional development is hindered; however, when they are positive and a sense of community is developed learning is enhanced (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006, Goodlad, 1994, Koeppen, et al., 2000, Tang, 2002). According to Montgomery (2000) some relationships developed between members of a supervisory construct are either hierarchical or collegial. Understanding relationships and how they are developed and maintained is important for all but particularly for facilitating the pre-service teachers’ development and building long term partnerships.

Many pre-service teachers find themselves in the practicum in a situation of novice-expert with a hierarchical and often unidirectional relationship that may superficially appear to be a productive partnership. However, closer analysis shows an unequal power relationship at play. Such a relationship is indicative of a traditional master-apprentice model of supervision, where pedagogical activity is being interpreted exclusively on the basis of the supervising teacher’s conceptions, right or wrong (Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006). The danger here is that old ways of supervising persist and improvements in teacher education simply become ideology.

The purpose of this study was to develop understandings about how relationships are developed and maintained within the new supervisory construct of The University of Melbourne’s practicum model. This four-member (quadraciprocal) model signifies a
paradigm shift in supporting the development of teacher candidates in Australia. The inclusion of a supportive, non-assessing other (the teaching fellow), changes the relationship structure from the historical model. With this change come new ways of conceptualising and working with pre-service teachers and their mentors.

**Purpose of the literature review**

This literature review aims to provide a broad overview of the current body of research on relationship development in the practicum whilst contextualising the position of this study. Drawing on seminal works and recent literature it explores and presents views on the changing field of teacher education, global and local political perspectives, the importance of the mutually beneficial relationship and how relationships in the practicum are impacted by positioning and power.

Relevant literature was located using electronic databases, libraries, journals, reports, books and other formats such as papers, and research articles from personal archives of faculty staff. Combinations of key words, such as: *power relationships, relationships + education, positioning + power in relationships, power and relationships + education/pre-service teacher*, and *relationships + practicum* were used across online databases and other search engines and government departments active in education research. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance. The theoretical literature includes conceptual and research-based papers drawn largely from within the fields of teacher education and social psychology.

**The changing field of teacher education**

In the broad field of teacher education there is a plethora of literature espousing the need for improvements in the quality of teacher education programs. In response to this range of opinion, commentary and evidence based research universities across the world are transforming their teaching and learning practices to meet the challenges of Higher Education requirements in the 21st century. Literature in this area acknowledges that quality teachers and teaching are required in order to maintain intelligent and informed citizens (Goodfellow & Sumsion, 2000; Hampton, 2009; Sachs, 1997; Williams, 2007; Wilson, 2006). For decades much debate has been had over what constitutes ‘quality
teachers and teaching’, and the debate continues. Broader conversations and research into ‘teacher effectiveness’ is needed (Goldrick, 2009).

Numerous national and international researchers and reviewers of teacher education have documented the problematic nature of professional learning experiences provided in the practicum (Australian Parliament, 1998; Edwards & Protheroe, 2003; Haigh & Ward, 2003; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Parliament of Victoria, 2005; Peters, 2008; Pinder, 2008; Sachs, 1997; Ure & Learning, 2009; Zeichner, 1990). Whilst the documented concerns vary they include discussion around the need for balance of challenge and support (Tang, 2003), issues around communication, roles and relationship development (Haigh & Ward, 2004, Martin et al., 2011), power imbalances in relationships (Cast, 2003; Molm & Cook, 1995) and the triadic model of supervision (see Introduction Chapter).

Many national and international researchers advocate for the development of closer university-school partnerships as a means to support improvements in the practicum (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Goldrick, 2009; Goodlad, 1994). A strengthened activity between university personnel, school-based staff and teacher candidates may support the needed shift in roles and responsibilities and encourage partnerships to be formed in a reciprocal manner. With improved communication and collaboration between stakeholders it may be possible to overcome some of the problems associated with the practicum (Hargreaves, 1994; Hastings & Squires, 2002).

**A global perspective**

The perennial problem with traditional practicum models has been a lack of connection between campus and field-based content and practical experiences (Zeichner, 2010). Teacher education institutions have worked hard to overcome the issues of the past and have, to varying degrees, developed university-school partnerships (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Goodlad, 1994; Zeichner, 2010). This study of the quadracipreciprocal model, amongst others (Bullough et al., 1997, 1999; Hammerness et al., 2005; Zeichner, 2007, 2010) demonstrates that whilst these partnerships are working at a fundamental level there is much scope for improvement. Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) suggest that when the purpose of field experiences are taken for granted their value becomes limited.
Two in-depth studies in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Tatto, 1996) showed carefully coordinated field experiences and campus content are influential and effective in supporting teacher candidate professional development. This current study, as do others, contends that whilst that may be so, to some extent, it is the quality of the relationships themselves within these experiences that make or break the practicum (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Dinsmore, Wenger, 2006; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hammerness et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2010; Le Cornu, 2009; Levine, 2011).

Over a number of decades there has been much consideration and work around trying to strengthen university-school connections, with some (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Goodlad, 1994) arguing clinical experiences should be central with other program aspects emanating from there. Others however, such as Smith (2000), caution against viewing university-school partnerships as the panacea, indicating they are but one factor of effective teacher education. Nevertheless, these bridging partnerships are becoming increasingly relevant in Australia. Research over the past decade highlights the need for educators to build collaborative relationships between campus and field-based experiences (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998; Australian Parliament, 2007; Brady, 2002; Kruger et al., 2009; Ramsey, 2000).

**The Australian political context**

**Teacher education needs in Australia**

In Australia, over the past few decades there have been multiple inquiries and reports undertaken by national and Victorian governments investigating teacher education. The 1998 Senate Inquiry (A Class Act: Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession) reports many comments on teacher training and frequently refers to poor quality, inappropriateness and inadequacy in preparing teachers for the profession (Australian Parliament, 1998). Within the 1998 Senate Inquiry Report the practicum component was the most frequently attacked area of teacher preparation citing the lack of time and exposure to teaching opportunities, the poor quality of supervision, and lack of interest by mentor teachers as being the main thrust of inadequacies discussed.
The 2005 Victorian inquiry into the suitability of pre-service teacher training recognised a need for improvement and careful consideration for the future of quality teacher training programs. It was stated in the report:

> There is no doubt that the schools of the future will require reflective practitioners who have a sound knowledge of both subject matter and of pedagogy, who have the ability and willingness to fill leadership roles in the development of curriculum and who can lead change in the school environment to meet the changing needs of the community.

*(Parliament of Victoria, 2005, p. 70)*

It seems not a lot has changed over time. The 2005 Victorian inquiry report also stated:

> Positive elements of courses were less likely to be identified during either the Committee’s consultations or the commissioned research, than were negative opinions regarding pre-service teacher education.

*(Parliament of Victoria, 2005, p. 103)*

The Parliament of Victoria’s (2005) concerns surrounded the guidelines for the practicum in particular:

> According to the Guidelines, supervised teaching practice (also known as professional practice or teaching practicum) is defined as...

> ‘a period of time spent in schools where the prime focus for the trainee teacher is to practise teaching under the supervision of a mentor who should be trained for this role – to spend time with teachers and classes, observing, teaching small groups and whole classes, and undertaking the range of tasks that make up the teacher’s role including planning, assessing and reporting’.

*(Parliament of Victoria, 2005, p. 141)*

One concerning factor here is that the report highlights guidelines of the practicum and defines it as a component of teacher education where mentor teachers should be trained for the role. Yet it appears in Victoria, at least, few, if any, mentor teachers are trained for their supervisory or mentoring roles.
The National Inquiry into Teacher Education (Australian Parliament, 2007) stated that there were ongoing concerns about the quality of teacher preparation. Within the area of teacher education the practicum was identified as the key persistent problematic area with the report stating:

*The problems with practicum have been outlined in nearly every report addressing teacher education in the last decade. The fact that these problems have still drawn so much attention in this inquiry indicates the need for major reform in this area, involving all major players and all members of the system.*

(Australian Parliament, 2007, p. 73)

Australian teacher educators, researchers, and regulatory and government bodies have attempted to improve teacher education and the associated professional experiences over a decade following world-wide trends advocating practicum reform (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2006; Australian Government, 2014; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Dobbins, 1996; Kruger et al., 2009; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Leigh, 2010; McKinsey & McKinsey, 2007; Ramsey, 2000). Whilst there may be some areas of improvement, research (as outlined above) shows that this situation has not yet improved greatly.

**The practicum needs**

It is evident in research literature and government reports that the placement of pre-service teachers, particularly in the early stages of their studies, is becoming increasingly difficult (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008, Australian Parliament, 1998, Kruger et al., 2009). Low-morale, inadequate resources, intensification of teachers’ workload and mounting pressure from an increasing number of teacher education providers all contribute to this ongoing issue (Australian Parliament, 2007; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Parliament of Victoria, 2005). The practicum in general is recognised as having numerous inherent flaws. In a recent study Ure and Learning (2009) highlighted that teacher candidates were discontented with their practicum experience claiming that whilst there were positive areas, many teacher candidates reported some “areas were covered poorly or not at all” (Ure & Learning, 2009, p. 39). This concern and the
research that surrounds it will continue to cycle until the nature of the quality of the practicum, rather than the quantity of days practising teaching is addressed.

In 1989, it was recommended that the Australian Council of Deans of Education “review the structure, the quality, and the effectiveness of the practicum in teacher education with particular attention to the quality of the practicum and clarifying and strengthening university-school partnerships” (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1989, p. 30).

A decade on, the Australian Council of Deans of Education (1998) report of The National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Project, once again questioned the benefit of, and made recommendations for, building university-school partnerships. They argued that field experience should be planned, conducted and evaluated in close collaboration with appropriate school-based personnel developed within the framework of the collaborative arrangements and partnerships of the course as a whole (Ramsey, 2000).

**A call for sustainable partnerships**

Sustainable partnerships are needed in Australian teacher education and should be the focus of education providers. Continued encouragement of professional collaboration by teachers, teacher candidates and teacher educators is necessary to enhance the collective commitment to learning to become a teacher (Brady, 2002; Kruger et al., 2009). As noted, in Australia, literature reports the desire for teacher educators to form partnerships, which has been advocated by a number of official reports (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998; Australian Parliament, 2007; Brady, 2002; Kruger et al., 2009; Ramsey, 2000). Building on the national agenda, local Victorian government also supports closer connections between universities and schools (State of Victoria, 2013).

Ramsey’s (2000) review highlighted the need for strengthened professional collaboration, and today, this important recommendation is still largely unfulfilled. Ramsey makes further recommendations around including teaching institutes to support the development and strengthening of university-school partnerships, encouraging these institutes to foster collaborations and develop ‘criteria, processes and procedures’
formalising an accreditation for those schools working in partnerships (Brady, 2002). Although, Ramsey (2000) does not provide explicit recommendations around how these formalised processes might be established or monitored, much political uncertainty around the longevity or influence of teaching intuitions, like the state-based institutions, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), and the national regulatory body the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), are fragile at best.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training report ‘Top of the Class’ (Parliament Australia, 2007), proposed the Commonwealth offer support for partnerships in teacher education (Kruger et al., 2009). The ‘Top of the Class’ report defined partnerships as the:

*Sharing by the stakeholders in teacher education in the responsibility for the partnership and ‘a willingness to work together with other partners’.*

*(Parliament Australia, 2007, p. 79)*

The report favoured increased partnerships as a condition of teacher education in Australia. Kruger and his colleague’s (2009) report defined educational partnerships as:

*Partnerships are a social practice achieved through and characterised by trust, mutuality and reciprocity among pre-service teachers, teachers and other school colleagues and teacher educators.*

*(Kruger et al., 2009, p.10)*

Kruger and colleagues concluded their research by outlining how “successful partnerships bring the stakeholders together around personalised and localised interests in learning, and school student learning in particular” (Kruger et al., 2009, p. 10); likening their research to that of creating and working within social learning systems, or developing communities of practice (Wenger, 2000).

University-school partnerships require mentor teachers, teacher candidates and teacher educators to be active in and essential to, the practice. But more than this it requires partnerships that extend beyond the traditional model of partnering with individual
classrooms and heralds a move towards partnerships with clinical teaching sites; engaging whole school communities (Zeichner, 2002).

For more than a decade researchers and teacher education providers have been working towards redefining this model of teacher education to one where university supervisors and the practicum component are more connected to the academic program (Bullough, Draper, Smith & Birrell, 2004; Carnegie Corporation, 2001; Goodlad, 1994; Mule, 2006; Teitel, 1997; Ure & Learning, 2009). Many of these researchers advocate the establishment of professional development schools (PDS), where schools and universities agree to work together in a combined program of teacher education. In Australia, or Victoria at least, the building of strengthened partnerships appears to be further developing through the establishment of ‘Teaching Academies of Professional Practice’ as means to improve pre-service preparation (State of Victoria, 2013). The quadraciprocal model appears to be one model that could support the development and sustainment of such partnerships.

**The practicum – problematic, programmatic or pragmatic**

Much has been written about the practicum component of teacher education programs. Literature on practicum experience for teacher candidates ranges from issues surrounding the quality of the practicum itself (Australian Parliament, 1998; Korthagen, et al., 2001; Parliament of Victoria, 2005; Sachs, 1997; Ure & Learning, 2009); theory-practice links (Kenny, 2009; Korthagen, et al., 2001); positive and negative experiences (Allsopp et al., 2006; Korthagen, et al., 2001; Paese, 1984; Ure & Learning, 2009; Wilson, 2006); the feedback provided (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Boud, 1999; Dodds, 1989; O’Sullivan, 1990); who supervises, why, and what terms should be used to label those supervising/mentoring teacher candidates (Mitchell, Clarke & Nuttall, 2007; O’Sullivan, 1990; Paese, 1984; Rickard, 1982); time spent in ‘practice teaching’ that is: what is deemed to be an appropriate amount of experience vastly contrasted by concerns about what is taught, learnt and experienced being more important than duration (Ure & Learning, 2009); more prolifically practicum models (Boud, 1999; Bullough, 2005; Bullough & Draper, 2004; Cogan, 1973; Dewey, 1933; Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Groundwater-Smith et al., 1996; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2006; Goldhammer, 1969; Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Kenny, 2006; Sanders, Dowson &
Sinclair, 2005; Sim, 2006; Shulman, 1986; Wilson, 2006) to a more recent and intense focus on the importance of strengthening the partnership between teacher education providers and schools (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Brown & Shipway, 2006; Bullough, Draper, Smith & Birrell, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Iceman-Sands & Goodwin, 2005; Mule, 2006).

A large body of research varying from small qualitative studies (Allsopp, et al., 2006; Hampton, 2009; Kenny, 2009; Williams, 2007; Wilson, 2006) to larger university and government based research (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Kruger et al., 2009; Raisch, 1994; Ramsey, 2000; Rodgers & Keil, 2007; Sinclair, Dowson & Thistle-Martin, 2006; Ure & Learning, 2009) and Senate (Australian Parliament, 1998) and State (Parliament of Victoria, 2005) inquiries have examined the role of supervision in teacher education. What all of these research reports have in common is a structural or cognitive focus. What appears to be lacking in the literature is a more pragmatic approach towards the practicum; a focus on the affective and relationship concerns within the practicum.

Within pre-service teacher education programs, the field-based practicum for student teaching is the most intensive exposure to the teaching profession experienced by prospective teachers (Cohen, Hoz & Kaplan, 2013). Increasing importance of the practicum is evidenced by the intensity of research surrounding it, as well as the amplified time allotted to it. Despite its growing importance there is still much to be learned about the practicum experience.

The practicum is widely accepted as being a mutually beneficial relationship (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Dobbins 1994, 1996; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Hastings, 2004; Martin et al., 2011; Pinder, 2008). Whilst much research espouses the practicum as being of mutual benefit and a genuine professional development opportunity for mentors, there has been little research into exactly what it is that mentors learn in the pre-service teacher practicum (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Hastings & Squires, 2002; Levine, 2011; Montgomery, 2000).

It is not the intention of the researcher here in this doctoral study to minimise the importance of praxis, classroom management, planning, curriculum, assessment and the
like as crucial aspects of teachers’ work but much energy and effort is expended on the
minutia of these areas. In reviewing the broad range of literature outlined above, far
less energy and insight is placed on the pragmatics of the practical results of
relationships built in the practicum than is needed. As such it is suggested here that
given how positioning, power, and effective relationship development play major roles
in the success, or otherwise, of the practicum placement for many teacher candidates,
more research and work is required in this area.

Traditional model of the practicum

The triadic model

Traditionally pre-service teacher training models have been constructed around a triadic
model of supervision, involving a student undertaking teacher education, a school-based
teacher in a supervisory role and a university based supervisor, visiting the student
infrequently. The practicum supervision has been most usually undertaken by specially
selected supervisory staff rather than by tenured or contract academic staff. Typically
the supervisory roles are carried out by doctoral students, retired teachers and teachers
on leave, or retired education academics (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). Potentially this
distinction between academics in the campus-based programs and that of the school-
based supervisors and selected university supervisors can cause a separation resulting in
lost opportunities for professional development and the strengthening of university-
school partnerships. It has been claimed, by a number of researchers that across a host
of programs and teacher education providers, many supervisors carry out the bare
minimum number of schools visits, they often do not know the pre-service teachers they
are visiting, know little to nothing about the program of study itself and spend minimal
time observing pre-service teachers teaching classes (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Borko &
Mayfield, 1995; Caires & Almeida, 2007; Goodlad, 1990b; Slick, 1998). At the end of
their visit, university supervisors are asked to produce a written report with limited
discussion with the pre-service teacher, or moderation with the supervising teacher.

Bullough and Draper (2004) make note of the triadic model of supervision as being
hierarchical with the more powerful member being either the supervising teacher or the
university supervisor depending on the moment in time and the attending members in
that moment. Traditionally, there was little communication between the academic program and the practicum (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Goodlad, 1990a; Rajuan, Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Ure & Learning, 2009; Zeichner, 1996). A divide in mentor teachers’ and university supervisors’ beliefs and theories about pedagogy and practice often persisted and caused tensions. By opening up lines of communication and providing options for support the problems of typically hierarchical structures may be lessened (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

The previous notion of the ‘novice-expert’ under a triadic model may not be conducive to a fully productive and reciprocal relationship (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Goodfellow & Sumsion, 2000; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006). What the contemporary landscape of teacher education calls for is a supportive and nurturing mentoring relationship between teacher candidates, mentor teachers and university support staff.

**A contemporary view**

*The changing face of the practicum*

In the field of teacher education there are reports, via research literature, that there is an ever increasing shift from the traditional model of the practicum to one where a new model of supervision and university-school partnerships are seen as the contemporary approach. These teacher education programs with strengthened partnerships hold the promise of changing relationships and improved teacher education preparation (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Martin et al., 2011; McLean Davies et al., 2013). University personnel working within and between schools strengthening partnerships could bring about the much needed shift in roles and responsibilities (Hastings & Squires, 2002). This in turn may reduce the power and authority affect in relationships and create supportive frameworks for developing social learning networks, or communities of practice (McNay, 2004; Wenger, 2000).

According to recent research the views on teacher education and the practicum experience favour a supportive, collaborative and collegial approach to ‘mentoring’, albeit clinically based, rather than the historical ‘novice-expert’, top-down supervision, or ‘instructor’ style apprenticeship model (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Grudnoff &
Williams, 2010; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; McLean Davies et al., 2013). Teacher educators need to recognise and adeptly shift the current practice of the top-down supervision, ‘instructor’ approach, in the practicum to a new paradigm of collaboration and cooperation in a nurturing ‘mentoring’ relationship. This will likely assist new teachers in their professional development (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Martin et al., 2011).

In amongst the surfeit of research on mentoring in teacher education this view almost bears resemblance to an environment where a teacher candidate might find guidance, reciprocated learning and friendship. But this type of relationship is not frequently found within the literature on teacher education (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000). As such the researched experience leaves a deficit model as an example for improvement, rather than a successful model for replication. McNamara (1995) argued that the quality of the mentoring relationship influences the teacher candidate’s capacity to reflect on their pedagogical approach to teaching and incorporate new strategies (cf., Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006).

**Relationships in teacher education**

**Relational epistemology and the practicum**

Conceptually, relationships are founded in relational epistemology which begins with the assumption that all people are contextual social beings. People’s lives begin in, and are lived in, relationships with others. The quality of these relationships directly affects one’s abilities to develop a “sense of self”; to become knowers (Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 241). Particularised contexts affect who we are and how we interpret the world, according to Thayer-Bacon “we are contextual social beings” (p. 241). Relational epistemology then assumes that people have a past and have been affected by others’ views and individual experiences which help shape one’s identity (Dewey, 2001; Thayer-Bacon, 1997; Moss et al., 2004).

How people make sense of their world is through their particular contextuality. Therefore, knowledge development and cognitive pursuit is value-laden and dependent on social context (Fuller, 2002). Drawing on Thayer-Bacon’s view of relational
epistemology, being a ‘knower’ is directly connected to knowing (p.243). Thayer-Bacon, like Dewey, asserts:

_Inquiry as a dialectical relationship between inquirers and their objects of inquiry is a relationship that is dynamic, flexible, and reciprocal._

_(Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 243)_

The representation of relational epistemology here assumes a direct relationship between experience and meaning. It presumes continual improvement of previously socially constructed ideas, where new meanings are created for experiences based on enlarged perspectives developed over time and as such “knowledge is something people develop as they have experiences with each other and the world around them” (Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 245).

The development of cognitive and affective concerns is fundamental to successful professional relationships (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Development across these areas is largely viewed as a reciprocal endeavour in the building of professional relationships (Ralph, 2003). This notion supports teaching and learning in the practicum being treated as a social constructivist practice in order to build professional relationships through developing understandings about each other’s beliefs and the construction of skills and knowledge (Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Thayer-Bacon, 1997).

**Social and professional networks**

Relationships in the context of this study refer to the social and professional networks and connections people make in developing a sense of belongingness experienced by teachers, teacher educators, and teacher candidates (Johnson et al., 2010). As reflected in the literature, the interpersonal relationship that develops between mentor and mentee is paramount (Awaya et al., 2003; Rajuan, Beijaard & Verloop, 2008).

Education professionals and researchers have long known the mentor-candidate relationship is critical in the practicum experience and that mentor teachers play a pivotal role in the development of teacher candidates (Le Cornu, 2009). Given the many conflicts pre-service teachers may face during their practicum, acknowledging the
support of mentors is of the utmost importance. Supportive and collaborative practicum environments can only occur where there is an understanding of the roles of the supervisory construct members (Haigh & Ward, 2004). When all members of the supervisory construct have a clear understanding of each other’s role and what is expected of the teacher candidate there is greater collegiality in the relationship (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Martin et al., 2011; Rawlings, 2012). Personal and professional issues associated with the role of being a ‘student teacher’ are constantly attended to by teacher candidates. Complex in its nature, intensified by dimensions of cognitive and affective demands of the experience, aspects such as agency and identity play second fiddle to high emotions (Dobbins, 1996).

Professional engagement and relationship development are perplexing for some teacher candidates as they struggle to navigate the new landscape, content and personalities encountered along the way (Ure & Lysk, 2008b). Research suggests that teacher candidate learning is strongly influenced by the professional culture of the mentor teacher (Ure & Lysk, 2008a) and professional relationships are characterised by the school culture (Johnson et al., 2010). It is widely known and accepted that mentor teachers can influence identity, create power tensions, educate, nurture, support and advocate the development of positive dispositions for new teachers. Therefore the practicum needs to become the site for reciprocal professional relationship development to better support socialisation, induction and professional learning (cf., Le Cornu, 2009; Loizou, 2011).

**Relationship effects on professional development**

Relationships between teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and other supervisory agents, take on various forms, but the relationship between the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate is a crucial aspect of the practicum experience (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Professional relationships are complex and need to be negotiated for a variety of reasons. Often the success, or failure, of the practicum can be attributed to the relationship developed between teacher candidate and mentor teacher (Le Cornu, 2009; Santoro, 1999). Therefore, establishing a sound and effective relationship is a fundamental factor that requires a highly professional approach by all members. The emotional facet of the supervisory relationship should firstly invest in a positive
interpersonal relationship to ensure the “necessary conditions of honesty, authenticity, encouragement, solidarity, collaboration and mutual help” before the productive and rewarding achievement of technical supervision (Caires & Almeida, 2007, p. 516).

Research into professional relationship development indicates when working towards the development of strong and supportive relationships it is important to: “promote a sense of belonging, acceptance and well-being; foster pedagogical and professional growth; and promote collective ownership and responsibility” (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 3). Effective and supportive professional relationships are based on caring, respect, mutual trust, and integrity which promote positive attitudes and resilience (Gu & Day, 2007; Johnson et al., 2010).

As the practicum is a highly social and politically complex environment a measure of conflict and struggle over power amongst participants is to be expected (McNay, 2004). Any effort to minimise these power struggles is supportive of developing and sustaining effective relationships, which in turn support increased professional development.

Members in the educative process involving the practicum often encounter conflicts and tensions before, during and after practicum experiences. Disparities between theory and practice, planning and implementing lessons, classroom management, mandated requirements, pedagogical approaches, beliefs, identities, power, positioning and agency all contribute to actual and perceived realities of the field-based experience (Beach & Pearson, 1998; Bullough et al., 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Jeffrey & Polleck, 2010; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). Many teacher candidates are unable to deal with these conflicts and grapple with effective solutions. Some simply avoid or minimise conflicts while others become overwhelmed and the situation turns into an unmanageable state leading to a sense of futility, failure and often a resignation or flight from that particular setting or the system altogether (Beach & Pearson, 1998; Gu & Day, 2007).

Teacher candidates sit in the centre of the practicum expending energy learning how to ‘manage mentors’ (Maynard, 2000), striving to balance demands and maintain desired relationships to have positive experiences and obtain favourable teaching evaluations (Bullough & Draper, 2004). Hastings (2010) notes that the practicum can be
emotionally-demanding when a mentor teacher feels they are under the “public gaze” of the teacher candidate and university based mentors, often causing relationships to be “strained” and “stretched” (p. 208). The representation posited here recognises that teaching, learning, and learning to teach are supported by, and entrenched in, relationships with others (Goodfellow & Sumsion, 2000; Walz-Michaels, 1998).

The emotional dimension in the practicum

Arguably the teacher candidate has the most to gain or lose out of the practicum; as such this study initially explores the implications of emotions predominantly for the teacher candidates and the mentor teachers. However, in order to provide a broader and more complete picture it does consider the emotional impact for all members.

Emotions and the teacher candidate

Traditionally, pre-service teachers, undertaking undergraduate degrees, have typically been younger than the supervising teacher and potentially enter the practicum with comparatively little ‘real-world’ or workforce knowledge (Butler, 1998, Hastings, 2010). In contrast, in a contemporary setting an increasingly changing complexion of the teacher candidate is emerging. Teacher candidates, undertaking postgraduate degrees, are now more likely to be older, have their own lives, have children, have workforce experience and possibly be in a phase of career change. This shift in the pre-service teacher profile is not what mentor teachers traditionally expect or are used to (Hastings, 2010). This change brings with it distinctly different experiences, dispositions and a new set of needs, and unexpected emotional tensions and conflicts.

Studies into the emotional dimension for teacher candidates (Beach & Pearson, 1998; Dobbins, 1996; Hedrick et al., 2000; Sumsion, 1998) highlight the need to carefully consider the emotional needs before, during and after the practicum. The practicum is a time when teacher candidates are immersed in complexities of practice (Phelan et al., 2006) and are exposed to conflicting and competing understandings about what it means to think and act as a professional. Research conducted by Brookfield (1990) and later illuminated by Dobbins’ (1996) study claimed that living and learning in the practicum is highly emotional because it involves great threats to students’ self-esteem. Teacher
candidates do not expect nor are they prepared for the intense affective experience of the practicum (Dobbins, 1996).

Teacher candidates often encounter and need to develop coping strategies to deal with a range of conflicts and tensions during clinical experiences. They typically experience disparities between theory and practice; university-based expectations; school-based planned curriculum needs; students’ reactions to them as not being the ‘real teacher’; their beliefs about their abilities often oppose the so called ‘expert’ supervising them, as well as conflicting beliefs and ideologies about what constitutes ‘good’ teaching and political realities of the school environment (Beach & Pearson, 1998; Courneya, Pratt & Collins, 2008; Davies et al., 2007).

Whilst these conflicts and tensions vary across a number of areas, this study aimed to focus on issues around intra-personal (self-concept, identity and self-positioning) and interpersonal relationships with the main stakeholders in the professional development and support roles for teacher candidates, those being; the mentor teacher, clinical specialist and teaching fellow.

**Emotions and the mentor teacher**

Teaching is a value-laden enterprise and closeness in values and morals impacts on the emotional experiences of all participants (Hastings, 2010). For a long time mentor teachers have consistently been identified as an important participant in teacher education programs and much research attests to their impact and guidance of neophytes’ beliefs and practices (Barker & Burnett, 1994; Blocker & Swetnam, 1995; Hastings, 2004; Hulshof & Verloop, 1994; Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006; Koerner, 1992).

The practicum program can, and on occasion does, cause a routine situation to become fractured so that mentor teachers experience tensions and emotional distress if they feel they are being judged by the teacher candidate or the university supervisor. These emotionally demanding situations reveal disappointment, frustration, anger, guilt and hurt when teacher candidates cannot meet the mentor teachers’ expectations (Hastings, 2010).
An apparent resistance to applying a new or different discourse to the practicum can lead to emotional dissonance. This coupled with the perceived lack of expressed value of mentor teachers, by teacher candidates, is often perceived to be an adamant dismissal of the mentor teachers’ professional competence and can be a contributing factor in the emotional strain (Hastings, 2010). Hastings (2010) asserted, when a novice appears to lack commitment and dismisses advice powerful negative emotions can be aroused in the mentor teacher. As knowledge and identity are inextricably intertwined feelings of disequilibrium in one of these two areas has the potential to affect a teachers’ identity, and this questions the foundation by which teachers live and work (Clandinin, Downey & Huber, 2009). Mentor teachers feel a sense of loss when their practices are criticised or they feel devalued by others (Hastings, 2010).

Whilst not all emotions experienced by the mentor teacher in the practicum are negative, positive emotions have less of an impact on the sense of self than do the negative social emotions. According to Leary (2000) many of these emotions could be classified as social-relational as they are directly linked to relationships that mentor teachers have with ‘critical’ others.

**Matching candidate and mentor in the practicum**

In Hastings’ (2004) study, most mentor teachers indicated the practicum was more likely to be successful if they ‘got on with’ the teacher candidate. When the personalities of the mentor teacher and teacher candidate do not match the practicum tends to be less successful. Leary (2000) attested to the need for people to maintain interpersonal connections with other people in order to deal with high stakes emotional work involved in developing supervisory relationships. One of the main difficulties in developing relationships is, as Hargreaves (1994) stated, “cultivation of relationships is often superseded by the completion of tasks, schedules and procedures” (p. 102). Time needs to be allocated specifically to the development of relationships.

Hastings’ (2010) research demonstrated that mentor teachers felt a range of emotions when working with teacher candidates. Jeffrey and Woods (1996), and Hastings (2010) reported how mentor teachers felt guilt, fear, anguish, despair, depression, humiliation and grief all produced by a mismatch between power and positioning factors and their
personal beliefs about themselves and their work. As mentor teachers approach the practicum with personal experiences, perceptions and beliefs, emotions then arise from thoughts founded in one’s prior experiences and current events (Hastings, 2004). These emotions are often irrational, unpredictable, unconscious, unbidden and uncomfortable and serve to impact on teacher identity (Hastings, 2010). Hastings (2004) suggested that there may be a causal link between emotions and their impacts on identity but did not investigate to that extent in her research. That emotional and identity impact is touched on when investigating the experiences of participants in this study.

**Theoretical perspective**

**Positioning theory**

Positioning theory draws its theoretical perspective from social constructionism that is concerned with how social phenomena or objects of consciousness develop in social contexts. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999) it is based on two main premises: 1) what people do is subject to judgements and; 2) what people do is a product of interpersonal interactions. As such positioning theory itself is concerned with local moral orders as ever shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting. This involves a tri-polar relationship, evident within the conversation of position, speech acts and storylines (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Dixon, 2008).

Harré and van Langenhove (1999) expressed this tri-polar, relationship as a negotiation of responsibilities within an equilateral triangle; nodes which represent position, illocutionary force, and storyline. Each node performs a specific function in a speech act (Rice, 2011). The first node, position can be referred to, as in this study, as the social force of an action as an actor or actors interact to mutually determine one another, generally or at least initially, through discourse. The second node, illocutionary force is the strength of statement, or that which is achieved in saying something as a speaker tries to enact positioning. The third node, storyline refers to the discursive construction of personal stories by speakers. Together these nodes form a mutually determining triad where positions may emerge naturally within a discursive social context. As positioning
itself occurs in different ways, initial positioning can be challenged (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

*Ordinal positioning*

The discursive nature of positioning allows positioning of self and others to occur in a number of ways, for example; first, second and third order positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Most first order positioning is generally of a tacit nature and occurs unintentionally or unconsciously. First order positioning, refers to the way in which persons locate themselves and others within a moral space or storyline. For example, asking a teacher who they are as a teacher. Their response will place them within an ongoing lived storyline and indicate their self-position. Left uncontested or questioned this level of self-positioning will remain. However, if first order positioning is contested or questioned, second order positioning may occur. As such, second order positioning occurs when first order positioning is not taken for granted. Third order positioning occurs when further discourse ensues about the positioning and often, but not necessarily always, when a third person enters the conversation or a separate conversation is held. Second and third order positioning, unlike first order positioning, is always intentional (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

*Relational positions*

Positions are relational. Within conversations and episodes we position ourselves and others, or are positioned by others. Positions can and do change, but rarely by chance. Positions and repositions are constructed through conversations or social episodes (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Positioning theory focuses on understanding how psychological phenomena are produced in discourse.

The act of positioning is often based on interpretations of culture within particularised environments, and as such positioning occurs based on understandings of what is appropriate and expected for a particular “kind of person’ or even several different kinds of people” (Gee, 2000, p. 99) who act in particular ways, within roles, or circumstance, within a certain context. Thus allowing meanings to be interpreted and understandings developed.
Harré and van Langenhove (1999), asserted personhood emerges as positioning and repositioning occurs through discourse and interaction. Within conversation, or social acts, we intentionally or unintentionally position ourselves and others. The problematising of roles and positions often brings into play the power available to those involved (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999; Dixon, 2008). One can position or be positioned as powerful or powerless in relation to a social construct or role. People can differ in their capacity, willingness or intention to position themselves and others, and that can vary between contexts. Power differentials may also exist in particular contexts which will affect one’s ability to position (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

**Intergroup positioning**

Positioning theory aims to analyse social interaction over time as, “unfolding sequential structures of meanings, ordered in accordance with local rules, conventions, and customs of correct conduct” (Louis, 2008, p. 21). Acting beyond the individual, within the mutual relationship and group, authority shapes individual positions, group relations and collective identities. Social identity theory assumes individuals are motivated to develop and identify with distinct identities that define them as individual or as a member of a group (Tajfel, 1978). With that in mind and the knowledge that positioning is the ongoing process of construction of the self through talk, it stands that positioning occurs as the discursive production of ‘selves’ as individuals, but also as ‘selves’ within groups. Thus positioning occurs through intergroup relations (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999).

The term ‘intergroup positioning’ refers to “the process by which individual persons or groups of persons position themselves and other individuals on the basis of group membership” (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999, p. 183). This level of positioning is fundamentally achieved through use of pronouns as a linguistic device and either affiliates or disaffiliates members to the group. Representatives and mediators hold important roles in intergroup positioning and support particular rights and obligations of the speakers.

Group representatives hold a socially ascribed right to ‘speak on behalf of’ others. They may hold a greater level of power or position within the group and may engage in second order positioning. In triadic models in teacher education this may be seen where
power struggles occur between the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher or between the supervising teacher and university supervisor, reflecting their sense of the moral order and their place within it (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Tan & Moghaddam, 1999). Different responsibilities and obligations reflect differences in the distribution of power and authority in intergroup relations.

Mediators may present in many forms and may appear impartial or disinterested. Consequently a mediator may also hold the most power as they are typically positioned as trustworthy, fair, or impartial and as such may be granted more freedoms and rights to control the conversation. In their impartiality, mediators may often appear to have no real position, however, following Tan and Moghaddam’s ‘intergroup’ positioning theory, “to make a claim to a neutral and objective position is still to adopt a position” (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999, p. 185). Importantly, mediators play an influential role in intergroup positioning as they typically work to assuage fears and align relative positioning within and across groups as they attempt to position themselves positively and favourably. This action supports alternate storylines to emerge in a collaborative and negotiated manner, providing novel approaches to old problems (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999). The question is: who in a quadraciprocal model has the power to act as a mediator?

Stratified layers of domination within societies and social groups archetypally enable the more powerful to force those of lesser power to conform often causing them to act against their own interests (Erickson, 2004). The notion of hegemony ideologically protects the interests of the powerful from critical scrutiny creating a ruling intellectual force. Thus having the potential support may increase power through technical knowledge (Erickson, 2004). Changes in discourses are linked to, and have the potential to be the catalyst for, changes in the distribution of power in society and social groups resulting in the transformation of power relations, albeit a less than straightforward discursive event (Erickson, 2004). In terms of managing such transformation within the intergroup positions in teacher education, and as an initial point of conjecture, the answer may lie in the power dependency of relationships in the practicum.
Positioning, power and relationships

Whilst there are few studies into power relations between mentor-mentee relationships of the practicum, some are pertinent and worthy of further consideration here. Power in relationships developed in the practicum is a pivotal component that is highly deserving of close examination in order to better comprehend and balance power in this critical learning and socialisation event (Loizou, 2011).

The generally accepted view is that within the practicum teacher candidates appear to hold the lowest level of power between their school and university-based mentors (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Ritchie, Rigano & Lowry, 2000; Veal & Rickard, 1998) as such a power structure is often created within the mentor-mentee dependent relationship. These power structures are frequently communicated in the literature as scenes of serious dissatisfaction, dashed hopes and claims of abuse by mentor teachers, where candidates tell of struggles of power and authority (McNay, 2004). In some experiences power has been described as a “commodity disproportionately held by some groups and wielded over or used against others” (Ritchie, Rigano & Lowry, 2000, p. 165). This is an unfortunate common tale of the practicum experience, particularly in triadic models of supervision. Fortunately not all mentor-mentee relationships have such power structures and stringent roles of authority; moreover they seem to be diminishing in frequency as the importance of these critical relationships becomes more widely recognised as key to successful professional development and new practicum models are being established and implemented.

Recent accounts of the interplay of the powerful, powerless and empowered in respectful and professional relationships suggest there is not always a natural power hierarchy in mentor-mentee relationships (Loizou, 2011). This is not to suggest that power is held equally by these parties, but rather concepts of mutuality and a sharing of knowledge and expertise. These relationships support Foucault’s (1997) idea that power relations are mobile and power can flow from one member to another changing the hierarchy of the relationships and in turn the power status of each. Teaching experiences in field-based practicums that develop through interaction within partnerships have a transformative potential for teacher educators and teacher candidates (Martin et al., 2011). New partnerships and practicum models in teacher
education claim to encourage more unrestricted opportunities for participants than did previous school-university partnerships (Zeichner, 2010).

With the recent research literature beginning to echo positive findings of new partnerships and practicum models, going some way towards improving the practicum and teacher education experience, what remains consistent and clear is that despite the newly formed models, mentoring is still a relational phenomenon (Bigelow & Johnson, 2001). Understanding relationships in the practicum is still the key to increasing positive experiences for teacher candidates. No definitive and noteworthy body of empirical evidence is available to classify effective and ineffective mentors. Nevertheless, mentoring a neophyte teacher requires one to be altruistic, ethical, and a strong role model with values of equity, reciprocity and cooperation. Like other intimate relationships power dependency plays an important role in interpersonal development (Bigelow & Johnson, 2001; Cast, 2003; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999).

**Power dependency in relationships**

Erickson (2004) draws on the work of de Certeau (1984) to emphasize how interlocutors tactically negotiate discursive concords, thus offering ways of understanding power relations. The practicum is an active location of discourse where identities begin to emerge, positions are forged, and relationships of power are negotiated, and re-negotiated (Santoro, 1999). It is through the process of relationship development where intergroup members seek to negotiate power and position and begin to make sense of their experience. The activity of positioning and being positioned is shaped by each member’s personal ecology and their role within a given context. These factors impact intergroup membership determining success, or otherwise, of relationship development and ultimately success in the group.

Dependency of individuals within a relationship creates a power structure, and the level of dependency determines the level of power. Those who are less dependent on the relationship will have a greater power advantage (Molm & Cook, 1995). Cast (2003) identified two important dimensions in the dependency of individuals in relationships. Her research into identity and power in relationships revealed individuals with greater *structural power* (education/knowledge, occupational status or gender) or more
relationship power (feelings of attachment and commitment) are more able to control meanings in the situation and as such are “more able to behave in ways consistent with their identity” (Cast, 2003, p. 189). As such, “being powerful increases the salience of an identity” and supports congruency between identities and behaviours (Cast, 2003, p. 197). More powerful individuals are able to influence others and have greater resistance to imposed identities.

Few researchers have made links between studies of power-dependency theory and negotiated or reciprocal exchanges (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999). Emerson’s (1972) analysis of power-dependency within relationships provides a framework for exploring this notion. According to Emerson power-dependency is based on the value of exchange and the availability of alternatives. That is, the more highly resources are valued and the less access an individual has to alternatives increases the dependency in a relationship. For example, the greater level of dependency person A has on person B the greater level of power person B has over person A. Thus person B has a greater level of influence and holds a higher level of power in the structure (Cast, 2003; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999).

In recent years there had been much evaluation and debate around the power-dependence theory and research continues in the area of power distribution in networks. Despite the debates about differences in theoretical findings all theories seem to share two commonalities; negotiated exchanges occur within binding agreements; and available alternatives have an effect on opportunities. Cook and Emerson’s (1978) experiments, amongst others, into the impact of alternative partners’ availability demonstrated that power is assumed to be derived from the availability, or not, of alternatives. That means the more available alternatives there are, the less power-dependency and vice-versa (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999). In the practicum context this may mean the more available alternatives a teacher candidate has for support the less powerful any one member may become.

The delicate interplay of power, emotions and identities can enhance or endanger the relationship and willingness of members to participate. Social structures are inherently power hierarchies with varying levels of power dependency between the members. Power dependency can shift and change as intergroup dynamics fluctuate and members
themselves shift and change. In this study the goal was to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of their perceived social/professional reality. In this way, this study largely involved looking at the ways social/professional phenomena are created, institutionalised, known, and made into tradition within the quadraciprocal model.

**Positioning, power and identity**

An exchange around positioning and power in the practicum is incomplete without the inclusion of identity. Drawing on the work of Stryker, Burke and colleagues, identity theory has developed and evolved through the interplay of social structures and the process of self-verification (Burke, 1991; Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Burke & Stets, 1999; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Under the banner of ‘symbolic interactionism’ Stryker and Burke (2000) suggested that when individuals interact they establish a definition of the situation (Stryker, Sheldon & Statham, 1985). Within these ‘situations’ individuals seek to verify their identities when interacting by attempting to match situational meaning with identity meaning (Cast, 2003). Typically individuals’ identities are verified in three ways; “by behaving in ways consistent with their identity, by influencing the behaviour of others, and by resisting the identities that others, in turn, seek to impose on them” (Cast, 2003, p. 185). This process of attempting to match situational meaning with identity meaning is intensified in a close or dependent relationship, such as the mentor-mentee relationship in teacher education.

Symbolic interactionism suggests through controlling situational meanings individuals aim to define the self and thereby confirm their identity. Within groups individuals interact through the process of self-presentation attempting to control meanings in the situation whilst ‘casting’ others into supporting identities (Cast, 2003), inherently shifting positioning and power within and between group members. This process of casting or “altercasting” allows individuals to define the situation, make meaning and in turn increase their relative power and impose identities on others (Cast, 2003, p. 187). Through role-taking and altercasting, others in the group imagine what identity is expected of them and consequently begin to behave in different ways to match the imposed identity, often losing power, or increasing dependency within the relationship.
Moving beyond a static notion of role requires a dynamic understanding of identity and power in which identities are considered to be multiple and shifting (Moje & Luke, 2009). The concept of “plural identities is often used to signal the idea that one person might enact many different identities, both across a developmental trajectory and within a variety of different contexts” (Moje & Luke, 2009, p. 418). With this understanding in mind, identities are produced in and through activity and movement in and across spaces, as boundaries are crossed. That is, they develop and evolve through altercasting and positioning; through interacting across time and spaces and identities are accepted or resisted as individuals take up positions (Davies 2008; Davies & Harré, 1990; Moje & Luke, 2009).

The language of ‘identity’ is ubiquitous. This study refers to and respects the interchange between social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and a common culture amongst participants, and interactions between the self and multiple roles individuals play (Stryker & Burke, 2000). In this study identities were viewed as being socially constructed and reconstructed through the negotiations of everyday interactions within relatively close and dependent relationships (Moje & Luke, 2009) and within a field or common culture. Identity, personal and professional, are central factors in being a teacher. Typically it is in teacher education programs where that identity begins to form (Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998).

As Cast (2003) posited individuals in relationships where one has greater structural or relationship power are more able to increase the salience of their identity. It is therefore, reasonable to assume that as the mentor teacher may have a greater level of structural power they may be in a stronger position to impose identities on their neophyte teacher candidates. This may be particularly so in a triadic model. As seen in the above discussion the relation of social structures and identities influences the process of self-verification, which impacts, and is impacted by, intergroup positioning and power-dependency in relationships.

This review of the literature has covered critical factors impacting relationship development within the practicum. It explored small local research and larger government studies to broader national and international research. The literature reviewed here considered the practicum experience from both historical and
contemporary perspectives and highlighted the current changing trends in the practicum supervision component of teacher education.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological and conceptual frameworks for the study. Here within are the methods and procedures developed in conducting the study and brings to the fore the ontological and epistemological positions of the study.

Introduction

This study takes on a constructivist and interpretivist approach, investigating the how and what of social reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) in relationship dynamics within the practicum experience. The primary intent of this study was to observe and record the actions and interactions undertaken by the four members of the supervisory construct during development and maintenance of their relationships throughout the practicum experience. This study was particularly interested in investigating the positioning and power elements of the relationships developed (Dixon, 2008; Ralph, 2003).

This is a qualitative transcendental phenomenological study bounded by the unique nature of a select four-member supervisory construct involved in the practicum phase of a teacher education program. This study employs qualitative data gathering methods including an extended focus group session with a cognitive mapping activity, written reflective journals and semi-structured individual interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Freebody, 2003). A phenomenological approach was undertaken due to the explicit intent to explore, describe, analyse and reflect on practices and beliefs of the participants and how they develop and maintain relationships in the during the practicum experience (Crowell, 2013; Freebody, 2003).

Research method and appropriateness of the research design

Qualitative justification

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). It situates the researcher in the local activity of the world under investigation enabling the use of a set of interpretative practices that make the world visible and transforms that world into a series of
representations for interpretation. This naturalistic approach allows the researcher to study things, objects or phenomenon in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Following questions raised by Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board⁳ about what constituted “scientifically based research” in education, Shavelson and Towne (2002) responded by stating “… historical, philosophical, and literary scholarship can and should inform important questions of purpose and direction in education”. They later reiterated:

*It’s the question – not the method – that should drive the design of education research or any other scientific research. That is, investigators ought to design a study to answer the question that they think is important, not fit the question to a convenient or popular design.*

*(Shavelson & Towne, 2004)*

All scientific research should pose significant questions that can be investigated empirically and should be linked to relevant methodological and substantial theory, (Punch, 2009) and allow direct investigation of the questions (Packer, 2011). A qualitative methodology was used here as the research question called for an evaluation of data that would enable the capturing and communicating of participants’ stories (Patton, 2002).

This qualitative research is largely concerned with people and how they view and understand their world. It is a means for exploring the meanings and understandings of individual and group perspectives of a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Trevethan, 2013).

Qualitative studies, particularly in the field of education, where humanistic relational and social affiliations abound, researchers are characteristically more concerned with an

³ NERPPB was the policy arm of the former US Office of Education Research and Improvement, which was replaced by the Institute of Education Sciences with the passage of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002.
individual’s point of view. Lofland (1971) suggested naturalistic methods intend to address three major questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the social phenomenon?
2. What are the causes of the social phenomenon?
3. What are the consequences of the social phenomenon?

Qualitative research illuminates the people involved in a phenomenon and provides insight into their lived world. Typically, environments, people, behaviours, action and activities are of particular interest to qualitative researchers (Patton, 2002). The qualitative approach allows the investigator to get closer to the participants’ perspectives through extended and detailed questioning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Kerry and Armour (2000) made the point that the purpose of writing a qualitative study was to bring the essences of the lived experiences into being.

Almost by definition qualitative researchers generally take a constructivist view, looking for ways that people give meaning to their experiences and interactions, such as building relationships in social networks (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010). This study is framed by a constructivist epistemology where meaning is created through social and relational interaction and applies an interpretive-naturalist theoretical approach. This qualitative study aims to illuminate the lived experience of the members of a newly formed supervisory construct model, with particular regard to how positioning and power impact the relationships participants formed in the practicum.

**Methodological theory**

Philosophical worldviews lie behind the approaches and methods of inquiry and often largely remain hidden in the research (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2009). These worldviews are shaped by researchers’ discipline areas and beliefs held in embracing the qualitative approach.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) pointed out that inquiry paradigms define what the researcher is concerned with and what sits within and outside of the limits of legitimate inquiry and those fundamental theoretical assumptions reflect one’s basic set of beliefs.
In this study the worldview held is one of a constructivist epistemology (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

**Interpretive paradigm**

This research is situated within an interpretive paradigm where it is the researcher’s intent to make sense of the meanings others have about the world, or phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007, 2009). Interpretivism is premised on the idea of realism as a human paradigm (Lather, 2004). It proposes that there is no one single truth rather individuals form “truths” based on their own perceived reality and that social contexts influence what is learnt and known (Creswell, 2007; Erickson, 2004; Sokolowski, 2000). Accepting this premise allows multiple realities to exist borne out of individual experiences shaped as part of larger social systems (Erickson, 2004).

Interpretative qualitative research is an approach that recognises a self-reflective process allows people to tell their ‘life-world’ stories and to explain how they make sense of their world. It recognises the researcher as the interpreter of the data allowing a focus on understanding rather than generalising (Creswell, 2007). This research is positioned within this paradigm because it is focused on exploring the understandings and realities of supervisory construct members by inviting them to explain how they make sense of developing and maintaining relationships in the practicum.

**Phenomenological research justification**

The term “phenomenology” was first used by Kant in 1764 (Priest, 2002), however, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is considered the founding father of transcendental phenomenology. Husserl was interested in the “relationship between subjectivity of knowing and the objectivity of the content known” (Husserl, 1900/1913, as cited in Packer, 2011). The word phenomenon comes from the Greek verb *phaínein* meaning to appear or show. Husserl used the word ‘phenomenology’ to emphasise that these studies represent appearances not real entities (Packer, 2011).

Husserlian phenomenology has had an important influence on qualitative research as it requires a reflective attitude of introspection and examination of the contents of one’s consciousness. It calls for breaking with the natural attitude by means of ‘bracketing’, or *epoché*, of ontological presuppositions. The process of *epoché* requires the
researcher to undertake objective detached examination of the phenomenon, freeing it from all biases and preconceptions (Packer, 2011). Husserl’s phenomenology is eidetic, or descriptive; a reflective inquiry where the essence of the lived experience is accessed and subsequently described (Crowell, 2013; Priest, 2002). Van Manen (1990) noted that phenomenology, by its very nature of phenomenon, “makes something that which it is” (p.10). Phenomenology is a methodological framework (Moustakas, 1994), an interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Punch, 2009) and an important philosophical orientation (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010; Packer, 2011).

Phenomenological study provides opportunity to describe the meaning for individuals’ lived experience within a given phenomenon; such as how to build professional relationships in a social construct within a particular context. The purpose of this study is to reduce the universal experience of a number of individuals, within the practicum relationship building phenomenon, to a common essence; a “grasp of the very nature” of the experience (van Manen, 1990, p. 1977). This study draws on transcendental phenomenology as it focuses on revealing the essence of the lived experience of relationship building for the members in the supervising construct of the practicum in pre-service teacher education. It attempts to provide a rich description of that which holds meaning of the experiences for participating members.

A phenomenological design was appropriate for this study as it provided a sustained multi-vocality for all member roles of the construct offering a shared experience from all perspectives to express the varied perceptions and reveal a universal essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; van Manen, 1990). Data collected across the three studies were heuristically examined to determine the invariant constituents and support emerging themes of the collective experience (Moustakas, 1994) of how construct members developed and maintained professional reciprocal relationships in the practicum, whilst managing impacting factors such as positioning and power.

**Philosophical assumptions**

How the researcher’s beliefs shaped this study is bounded within a ‘net’ of epistemological and ontological premises (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As a qualitative researcher awareness and regard for competing epistemologies and ontologies require
careful consideration of the personal orientation toward knowledge and truth (O’Leary, 2010). All qualitative research is influenced by ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions. These philosophical assumptions are addressed here with particular reference to a phenomenological qualitative approach.

**Ontological assumptions**

Interpretations of how any phenomenon is viewed depend on how that phenomenon forms part of the reality constructed by the researcher (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010). Accepted within the boundaries of this study are ontological assumptions that relate to the characteristics of reality, or realities, and multiple realities that were co-constructed in social contexts by the group members, or social actors (Creswell, 2007; Erickson, 2004; Patton, 2002). All experience holds within it essential meanings (Moustakas, 1994, p.68). Within this study the ontological notion that any one reality is considered more “true” than any other is acknowledged (Creswell, 2007; Packer, 2011). An underlying ontological assumption accepted by this study is that social life is inevitably plural, fluid and changeable. Its unpredictability means it varies and changes from situation to situation, and moment to moment.

The relationship between what participants perceived (noema) and how they perceived them-selves (noesis) constitutes intentionality of conscious (Moustakas, 1994, p.30). In this study noesis was preserved by careful attention to reporting multiple realities that were maintained through retention of a multiple-vocality approach. The noema for this study was the perceived experience of building professional relationships within the practicum. As this study explored a new paradigm in the construct model epoché was potentially more possible as norms of pre-existing situations and experiences were somewhat limited, as such assumptions about objective realities were not made (Moustakas, 1994). The focus remained on understanding how participants made meaning of their experiences.

**Epistemological assumptions**

During qualitative studies the researcher needs to spend much time in the ‘field’, and get as close as possible to the research participants (Creswell, 2007). Sensitising was a
starting point in thinking about the data for which the researcher had no definite idea. The sensitising (cognitive mapping) activity provided an initial guide for the research (Patton, 2002).

Using the sensitising concept involved examining how the selected concepts manifest and gave meaning to the particular focus group cohort. As a means of sensitising the researcher to participants’ epistemological beliefs about professional reciprocal relationships, an in-depth cognitive mapping activity was undertaken; findings were created through interaction between the researcher and the researched. This process supported orientation to the fieldwork and provided an insightful framework for identifying essential elements of good description (Patton, 2002).

In order to ensure this study was epistemologically sound the researcher undertook a number of different construct roles over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2007). This gave the researcher direction for further inquiries into how the concepts of positioning and power impacted relationships within the practicum.

**Axiological assumptions**

Axiological assumptions characterise qualitative research. The value-laden nature of the study, its findings, and the biases and values of the researcher are all positioned in the study (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers must be conscious of their values and biases as they impact perception and interpretation. The more the researcher’s “emotions, attitudes, beliefs, values and characteristics enter the research the less likelihood of gaining the participants’ perceptions and meanings” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 171). Reflexivity recognises the researcher is a part of the social world under investigation. The researcher brings their own biography to the research and participants’ behaviour is affected by the researcher’s presence.

In this study the researcher combated reactivity through reflexivity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007); closely and continually monitoring interactions with participants, personal reactions and biases, and stepped back from certain role functions that may have been perceived to directly impact participants. The goal of this research was to rely on the participants’ views of the situation. In addition, through the process of epoché and rigorous peer-based contestation of the findings the researcher in this study
has undertaken ongoing and considered measures to exclude personal values from the research process as much as possible. Without such actions the values may have presented a confounding variables-phenomenon that could have potentially clouded the view of reality for the participants.

**Rhetorical assumptions**

The overall study is written in the third person. The rhetoric of the research discourse is written from the perspective of the personal and literary form. Pronouns in the first person, metaphors and story-telling form the findings of, and discussion around, the participants’ lived experiences. Participant responses convey the phenomenon from their senses, “as it is felt, sensed, intuited, realised and known” (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 49). Within the interpretative paradigm the researcher in writing up the study employed terms such as ‘understanding’, ‘discover’, ‘reveal’ and ‘meaning’ to form an emerging glossary of terms which are the important rhetorical markers of this study (Creswell, 2007). The language of the researcher in this study is based on the definitions that evolved during the study rather than being pre-defined by the researcher.

**Methodological assumptions**

Methodological assumptions provide strategies or grounding for the study (O’Leary, 2010). These assumptions provide the ‘blueprint’ for the study and illustrate connections between methods and the deeper underlying philosophical issues derived from paradigms (Punch, 2009). Paradigm-related qualitative research, such as this phenomenological study necessitates an interpretivist constructivist approach. Interpretivism concentrates on the meanings people bring to situations and behaviour, which they use to understand their world (O’Donoghue, 2006). In the qualitative tradition this study called for multiple perspectives and realities delving into social complexities in order to truly explore the relationship development phenomenon, as such common qualitative methods, focus groups, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis were employed (O’Leary, 2010).

The pragmatic approach applied to this study required articulation of the research questions and associated appropriate methods developed from there (Punch, 2009). The questions that are explored in this study were derived out of personal experience of the
researcher, the researcher’s perceived gaps in the literature, and the need to explore the newly formed construct model moving the practicum experience from a traditional hierarchical triadic model to the four-member quadraciprocual model.

**The setting for the study**

This study was undertaken within the context of The University of Melbourne, Master of Teaching (Primary) teacher education program, as it provided the four-member construct required for the study. The quadraciprocual model provides a significant shift from the triadic model. Research around this construct may add to the current body of knowledge about positioning, power, and relationships in relation to the practicum component of teacher education.

The primary sector was selected due to the researcher’s own understandings and previous background and experiences as a primary school principal, primary classroom teacher and mentor teacher. Since the commencement of the research project the researcher has undertaken additional roles within the supervisory construct as clinical specialist, teaching fellow and professional practice academic coordinator, within the Master of Teaching (Primary) program, thus gaining a greater perspective of all member roles. As the researcher held no direct role in staffing, performance review, assessment or selection during the research stage there remained an independent relationship between the researcher and the participants.

**Participant selection and retention**

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experience of participants within the practicum in teacher education, where there was a particular focus on how professional reciprocal relationships were built and maintained. Through three studies: focus group (involving cognitive mapping); reflective journals and individual interviews data were collected to explore the concept of what participants perceived as a ‘professional reciprocal relationship’. Participants enacted their lived experience of building and maintaining these relationships in the broader context of their experiences during the practicum.
Participant characteristics

Across all three studies there was a total of 30 participants providing a profile of breadth and balance; each of the studies included gender, role and experience diversity. Partnership school groups (PSG) and metro-regional areas were also represented across the studies.

Due to a change in role one teaching fellow (TF) moved into a clinical specialist (CS) role during the research period. Table 1 below shows the participant profile in relation to gender, role and level of experience.

**Table 1: Participant diversity profiles across all three studies.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Level of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>TC First Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>TC Second Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants were recruited from within the supervisory construct model of the Master of Teaching (Primary) teacher education course at The University of Melbourne. Each participant was required to be a current and active participant in the practicum component of the course. Participants of the supervisory construct are considered to be school and university-based mentors and teacher candidates. Mentor teachers (MT) are defined as school-based classroom mentors. Clinical specialists (CS) and teaching fellows (TF) are defined as university-based mentors as they are directly trained by the university. Clinical specialists are directly employed by the university. Teaching fellows, whilst employed by the base school are funded at 0.5 (EFT) by the university and are honorary employees of the University. Teacher candidates are enrolled in the Master of Teaching (Primary) stream and undertake four school-based practicums across the two year program of study.

Justification of sample size

This is a focused qualitative study justified as being small due to being bounded by the quadraciprocal model under investigation. With its primary objective to gather rich
data about the experiences and perceptions of the supervisory construct members, purposeful and expedient sampling was deemed acceptable (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Purposeful and expedient sampling allowed for those people who most represent the instances under investigation, were available, most interested, and appropriate due to being engaged in the relevant activities to participate (Freebody, 2003). All participants in this study were required to be either student enrolled (TC) in the Master of Teaching (Primary) course, or be an active mentor (MT, TF or CS) mentoring a teacher candidate at the time of the study. Participants who not were in a current mentoring role or were not currently enrolled in the course were declined, including students who withdrew from the course during the study phase.

Qualitative studies are not reliant on large numbers but moreover the need for deep and rich data is best obtained from few who represent the target population in order to elucidate the particular essences of the experience (Creswell, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). O’Leary (2010) suggested there are three main considerations when choosing a sample size: 1) broad enough to address the whole group; 2) large enough to enable the desired study; and 3) small enough to be manageable. These three points suffice in this study.

Careful consideration was given to the sample size in terms of ethics and time constraints. An initial sample size of 16 was selected as a minimum requirement with the intention to draw at least four participants from each of the four metropolitan regional networks (North, South, East and West). With a greater number of responses to the invitation than expected the principles of judgement, negotiation and Lincoln and Cuba’s (1985) notion of redundancy were applied to determine when the sample size was at saturation (Patton, 2002).

Participants study 1: focus group – cognitive mapping

Participants in study 1 (n=15) were all university-based supervisors working in either clinical specialist or teaching fellow roles at the time of the study.

Diversity was evidenced by gender, levels of experience, roles and metropolitan region of supervision across all three small working groups and the focus group participants as
a whole. Table 2 below shows diversity in a balanced profile of participants involved in the cognitive mapping activity.

The focus group cognitive mapping activity was undertaken over two hours and was facilitated by the Professional Practice Academic Coordinator and Primary Program Coordinator.

**Table 2: Participant diversity profiles from the focus group study.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P#</th>
<th>Gend</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Metro Region</th>
<th>Progress / Experience</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Green - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Blue - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Blue - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Blue - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Blue - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Inner North</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Red - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Red - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
<td>Red - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>Inner North</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Red - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>First year</td>
<td>Red - 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants study 2: reflective journals**

Participants in study 2 (n=8) were mixed and balanced across all roles providing two reflective journals from each member group. Diversity was evidenced by gender, levels of mentoring experience, roles and covered most metropolitan regions of supervision. Teacher candidates who participated in this study were first years and had just completed their first practicum experience.

**Table 3: Participant diversity profiles from the reflective journals study.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gend</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>PSG</th>
<th>Metro Region</th>
<th>Progress / Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carli</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerrie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 above shows diversity in a balanced profile of participants involved in the reflective journals study.

Participants study 3: individual interviews

Participants in study 3 (n=19) were mixed across all roles. Diversity was evidenced by gender, levels of experience, roles and metropolitan region of supervision. First and second year teacher candidates participated in this study. Table 4 below shows diversity in a balanced profile of participants involved in the individual interviews study.

Table 4: Participant diversity profiles from the individual interviews study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>PSG</th>
<th>Metro Region</th>
<th>Progress / Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carli</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>CS</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Inner North</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Inner North</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maree</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belinda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerrie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TC</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>First year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>TF</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Highly Experienced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentor teachers were all experienced or highly experienced and had worked with pre-service teachers, from a range of universities, for many years. All mentor teachers in this study had had prior experience in mentoring Master of Teaching candidates and working within the four-member supervisory construct model. Mentor teachers being considered ‘experienced’ was based on them having experience in mentoring Master of Teaching candidates from one to four years. Mentor teachers determined as ‘highly experienced’ had been a part of the program mentoring Master of Teaching candidates for an extended period, typically beyond four years.
One teaching fellow (TF) in her first year of the role she was considered ‘experienced’ as she was a highly experienced teacher who had mentored candidates previously and had undertaken intensive induction into her new role. She had worked in the TF role for six months at the time of the study. One clinical specialist (CS) who was in his first year of the CS role, was considered ‘highly experienced’ as he had moved from the TF role where he had had three years of experience. All other teaching fellows and clinical specialists had worked in their roles since the program inception (six years).

Methods

Overview

Data were collected for this study across four semesters capturing candidates and mentoring experiences at critical stages in the course: new candidates commencing the course; semester 1 and 3 practicum completion, semester 2 practicum experiences, and semester 4 internship experiences.

Focus groups and individual interviews were held at the university and school sites depending on where participants determined to be the most convenient and the most appropriate course of action for the individual interviewees. Participants were provided with a structured reflective journal and asked to respond to one practicum experience. Questions in the structured journal were in relation to personal experiences around relationships, agency, positioning, power, emotions, and identity.

Focus group and cognitive mapping activity

Focus group

Group interviews can make an important contribution in education research (Punch, 2010). The focus group structure was used as a qualitative data gathering technique. The explicit use of a group was to extricate the group’s epistemological beliefs about relationship development through social interaction. In this activity the role of the researcher shifted to one of facilitator, moderating, monitoring and recording group interaction.
The focus group interview was highly structured with focused questioning undertaken for two hours where participants worked within a cognitive mapping framework, see appendix L. The benefits to this study in using focus groups are as follows:

- Time and cost savings, fifteen people were able to be interviewed at the same time.

- Interactions among the participants, particularly in forming groups in a cross regional and/or partnership school group situation further encouraged the sharing of perceptions and experiences. Participant responses provided checks and balances to other data collection methods enhancing data collection (Krueger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

- The extent to which there was a relatively consistent, shared view was able to be quickly assessed (Patton, 2002).

- Particularly useful for rich data gathering as for probing aspects of people’s beliefs and behaviours was expedited (Morgan, 1997; Punch, 2009).

- Sensitising the researcher to the research and activities in field thus supporting decisions about ways of organising further directions (Patton, 2002).

This activity provided high-quality data in a social context where people were able to consider the views of others (Patton, 2002). Focus group data were used to increase the confidence in the emergent patterns from the other data collection methods (Morgan, 1997; Patton, 2002).

**Cognitive mapping as a data collection method**

In essence, cognitive mapping displays a graphical representation of an individual or groups’ perceptions about a problem or issue and shows the relationships between them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The term ‘cognitive mapping’ used here describes the task of mapping a group of people’s thinking about an issue or concept (Eden, 2004). The concept in this case is the epistemological beliefs of a select group on the notion of what constituted professional reciprocal relationships.
Data collection for the cognitive map

Data were collected from a range of teaching fellows and clinical specialists guided by the Professional Practice Academic Coordinator (the focus group’s primary facilitator) and Program Coordinator (a secondary facilitator). Only teaching fellow and clinical specialist members of the supervisory construct were selected for the focus group activity as they are the team rolling out the new construct. Given their particular and unique roles, it was expected it would be their understandings of the professional reciprocal relationship that would be projected to the participating schools and mentor teachers.

The cognitive mapping activity was undertaken in a focus group setting over a two hour period. Three small groups were organised from within the larger group context. Each group contained at least one clinical specialist and a number of teaching fellows. The primary facilitator led the questioning, managing time and tracking behaviours and engagement. The secondary facilitator supported the understanding of requirements for participants, helped generate discussions and encouraged engagement, keeping participants on track.

A range of questions were presented to the group in sections with each section being time constrained, from anywhere between five to fifteen minute blocks. The focus group activity explored participant views of what they perceived constituted a professional reciprocal relationship. The activity was designed to highlight participants’ perceptions of factors that support or hinder the building of these critical relationships in general terms. Other forms of data collection, reflective journal and individual interviews, further explored how construct members enacted, or ‘lived’ the notions addressed in the focus group topic.

By means of the focus group, it was intentional to explore ‘enacting’ cognition in the complexity of the lived experience of the cognitive mapping activity. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1999), with a Vygotskian view, argued that cognition and knowledge are produced in socially situated activities (Kincheloe, 2003). As such the cognitive mapping activity was designed to explore individual and collective knowledge of the concepts and ascertain if this would lead to producing a new practical form of shared knowledge and understandings represented in an action-oriented performative manner.
As the data for this map was collected in a group setting findings are not claimed to be those of an individual’s cognition (Eden, 2004). Data derived through the focus group activity was intended to represent a subjective ‘collective’ world view of the participants and provide a broadly generalised understanding of what constitutes a professional reciprocal relationship.

**Document research**

Documentary products can be especially important in qualitative research providing a “rich vein for analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 173). All manner of document research and analysis can help develop understandings about the immediate natural and detailed behaviour of participants or the cultural and symbolic context and significance of that behaviour (Punch, 2009).

One direct form of documentation, reflective journals, is included in the data collection for this project. Reflective journals provided data on participants’ beliefs and emotional experiences around relationship development, agency, positioning, power, emotions, and identity.

**The reflective journal**

The reflective journal forms part of the artefacts for study participants and reflects their overall general experiences in their most recent practicum. In this way the status of the reflective journal as documentary evidence is increased in value, reliability and validity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It was critical in this study to gain the voice of the participants in their words, created in their time of their own experience. The reflective journals were very personal to the participants and as such relayed personal details and feelings that may not have surfaced within other methods of data collection. These documents potentially render more visibility to the phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008).

In this study it is believed that, as Freebody (2003) suggested, the reflective journals as *texts* do indeed mediate for a community; at least in this case for these participants these texts support and give shape to: “the identities and practices of individuals; relationships
among individuals; and relationships between individuals and the institutions that bear on their lives” (p. 178).

**Context of the reflective journal**

Eight participants responded with a written reflective journal. The eight journals were analysed for their content around personal thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the respondents. Whilst participants were encouraged, via regular fortnightly emails, to write a ‘contemporaneous’ journal, due to extreme time limitations in the day-to-day activity of the practicum experience it appears all participants completed a ‘retrospective’ account of their most recent practicum experience. The reflective journal asked participants to answer a range of questions in short descriptive or narrative form to share their thoughts (beliefs) and feelings (emotions) about the personal interactions enacted and observed during their most recent practicum.

The reflective journals were collected as part of the semester one practicum experience. For the teacher candidates who participated this was their first and only practicum experience at that point of data collection. Mentor teachers, clinical specialists and teaching fellows had experienced several previous practicums, with a range of teacher candidates often across a number teacher education programs. All participants were asked to reflect on their current or most recent practicum experiences. These recounts of experience and observations typically present a comprehensive coverage of the participant’s reality at the time they were completed. The reflective journal tells how the practicum experience was perceived by the participant (Freebody, 2003).

**Individual interviews**

The interview is the most prominent data collection tool used in qualitative research (Punch, 2009). It is used to access people’s perceptions and meaning in order to develop understandings about their constructs of reality. Thus the purpose of the interview is then to allow entry into another person’s perspective. As such, qualitative interviewing starts with the assumption that the other person’s perspective and meanings are important and can be made explicit (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2009). Once interviews are conducted, data are coded and results are reported in participant literary form and written summaries are presented in more formalised language. Verbal data are
either elicited from solitary words, phrases, brief statements or explanations or storytelling (Packer, 2011).

Typically, and as in the case in this study, semi-structured interviews followed a general plan of questioning but a great deal of latitude was required in order to allow participants to ‘tell their story’. The aim of the semi-structured interview was to encourage the participants to speak “in their own words” to ensure a first person account of the experience was shared (Packer, 2011, p. 43).

In this study interviews took place either just after a block or during a two-day placement phase. The interviews were undertaken for approximately thirty-sixty minutes involving standard open-ended questions to produce rich valuable data through prolonged intimate conversation (Minichiello et. al, 1991; Punch, 2009). All individual interviews were recorded via a digital recording device and converted to an MP3 file for professional transcription. Analysis involved comparing, coding and summarising. All participants were made to feel comfortable by the researcher expressing appreciation and respect and including appropriate personal conversations prior to the interviews. Further, interviews were conducted at the participants’ preferred venue, either the university or school setting to support participant comfort.

**Data analysis overview**

This study employed an inductive and interpretive analysis approach, whereby, the researcher built patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up, by organising the data into increasingly abstract units of information from which the researcher made an interpretation based on what was seen, heard and written (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Freebody, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data obtained from the reflective journals and individual interviews were analysed using the Moustakas modified Van Kaam (1959, 1966) method for phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Data from the cognitive mapping activity used the same phenomenological data analysis method and balanced that with a more structured formalised numerically based approach, based on Eden’s (2004) weighted extended domain analysis.
**Phenomenological analytical framework for data analysis**

Phenomenological analysis seeks to elucidate meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of people bounded by a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Using Moustakas’ (1994) four step process of *epoché, reduction, imaginative variation* and *synthesis* of meanings of the essences of the phenomenon were explicated.

Taking on the perspective of *epoché* the researcher bracketed biases and values to minimise personal involvement in the phenomenon. Rigour was supported by this phenomenological ‘attitude shift’ made possible through the process of *epoché* (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). Following the *epoché* process was the need for *reduction*. This involved further bracketing the data and checking for extraneous intrusions. Transcripts were heuristically examined via the process of horizontalisation; spreading out the data for examination viewing it line by line allowing all perspectives equal weight. Data were organised into meaningful clusters. These clusters were peer reviewed and rigorous discussions were undertaken to evaluate and add meaning to the cluster labels. The researcher then undertook a delimitation process whereby repetitive and overlapping data were eliminated. Invariant themes, or horizons, emerged and imaginative variation was carried out. Imaginative variation required the researcher to view the data from varying perspectives and angles and phases of review and over an extended period of time. Expanded themes provided the substance for the individual textural portrayal of the participants’ experiences. From these the structural descriptions of the whole groups’ experiences were discovered. The final stage of the emerging textural-structural synthesis revealed the underlying essence of *what* was experienced and *how* it was experienced (Creswell, 2007).

The fundamental richness of the experience has been captured in this study by means of the overall heuristic approach to data examination involved a highly personal approach involving recurring phases of “*immersion, incubation, illumination, explication* and *creative synthesis*” (Patton, 2002, pp. 486-487). This elongated and in-depth approach allowed for bringing together the pieces that emerged into a total experience, showing patterns and relationships required quiet times of contemplation whilst “living with the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 487).
Criteria for evaluating research

Rigour – trustworthiness and authenticity

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness here is defined as attaining research balance, fairness and completeness (Patton, 2002). Trustworthiness was achieved via the methods of participant selection, depth, richness and scope of the data collection and analysis in this study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher was acutely aware of the need for a scrupulous and methodical approach towards data collection and analysis in order to maximise trustworthiness.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1986) proposed that constructivist research required more conventional criteria for the evaluation of inquiry findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Gomm, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 1986; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). As such this study conforms to the notion of ‘trustworthiness’ in terms of credibility, as an analogue to internal validity; transferability as an analogue to external validity; dependability as an analogue to reliability; and confirmability as an analogue to objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 2002). In general not all of these techniques could be fully employed in this study but principles for credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability have been carefully applied, where possible, to guarantee rigour and trustworthiness.

Credibility

Prolonged engagement in the field

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, and having worked with many of the participants in various roles, enabled the building of trust. The development of deeper understandings about contextual and cultural nuances, and checking for misinformation and distortions were achieved by the researcher undertaking a number of roles across varying contexts within the supervisory construct. This coupled with the sensitising activity supported understanding and credibility for the researcher (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). The researcher having worked with people within this particular construct model, in different roles over approximately five
years has helped validate the research (Fetterman, 2010). Rival explanations were actively considered and appropriately addressed over time (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Member checks**

Member checking is considered by Lincoln and Guba to be one of the most critical techniques for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2007). The researcher solicited participants’ views on the credibility of the findings and interpretations. This *writ* large approach involved returning preliminary data analyses, interpretations and conclusions back to the participants so they could judge the accuracy and credibility of the account (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2007). For the most part participants accepted the interpretations and conclusions. Some discussion was raised by the focus group members around the findings of the cognitive mapping activity causing a re-analysis of the findings and redrawing of the map to better represent participants’ intentions of meaning.

**Dependability and confirmability**

Dependability was increased in this research by the process of data collection in the following ways (Creswell, 2007): keeping meticulous and detailed field notes, by a single researcher; using good-quality audio recording equipment and transcribing audio recordings; and external auditing. Field notes in the context of this study were largely computer based records used as means of tracking the research stages, participant activity and progress through the stages.

Rigorous debate and contestation of methodological theory and early methods as well as data analysis of initial codes, clusters, themes and findings were undertaken through external auditing by supervisors and critical friends. These debates caused the researcher to engage in cyclic reflection and re-evaluation of processes and procedures undertaken from early stages of the study to the writing up of findings.

Critical friends in this study were senior academics selected by the researcher for their varying fields of expertise. Two critical friends entered debate of the methodological theory over a number of sessions. A further critical friend, and senior colleague, debated and contested processes, data analysis methods, and findings throughout the duration of the study.
Transferability

Peer review

Peer review (or debriefing) provided an external check of the research process in much the same way as interrater reliability checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Two research supervisors and an additional two independent and external critical friends were selected for the initial peer review and external auditing of the research process and ensuring products of the account (Creswell, 2007). All documents, field notes, interview questions and related processes were subject to multiple formal and informal peer reviews and/or debriefings. Notes were maintained by the researcher from the formal peer debriefing sessions (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Limitations

All research has limitations (Patton, 2002). Whilst phenomenological research has its own limits, when exploring the lived experience (Moustakas, 1994), this study presents additional limitations. This study was limited to the lived experience of participants, but beyond that it involved only the supervisory construct members of one practicum model within one stream of a teacher education program at a single university. Purposive and expedient selection of participants bounded within the single model may render the findings less generalisable. Its small participant size also limits the overall study; nevertheless the rich stories provided are valid and useful. Accurate recall of experiences and the participants' ability to clearly articulate their perceptions may present additional limitations.

Although rigorously and continually contested, this study was framed by the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher. The researcher's various roles in the program and close relationships with many of the participants may be perceived as a limitation and that has been acknowledged. The bracketing process may be perceived as a further limitation of the researcher's personal involvement; this too has been carefully considered and acknowledged.

A final limitation around making extended comparisons may be that a single four-member team working in one practicum experience together did not form part of the
study due to limited willing participants. This meant that a linked group could not be explored for influences within a microsystem; as a team of four in a single experience.

**Ethics**

The ethical context is of primary concern for any education research project, as empirical studies inevitably carry ethical issues involving the collection of data from and about people (Punch, 2009). Ethical obligations are based on moral obligations with consideration to the professional code of conduct overlayed.

Prior to undertaking this study the researcher undertook initial considerations around key ethical requirements and possible issues. Disclosures were made to all participants involved in the study to ensure they were well informed about all known aspects of the study before providing informed consent. Facts that may influence a participant’s decision to engage with the research were provided in plain language statements in a manner they could understand. All participants were aware participation in this study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. See appendices A-K for ethics approvals, plain language statements and informed consent outlines.

Issues of well-being and safety were constantly at the forefront of the researcher’s mind in all aspects of the study (Noddings, 2002). The researcher was acutely aware of the potential vulnerability of the clinical specialists, teaching fellows and teacher candidates in particular when sharing their experiences and opening themselves up to scrutiny. Documents, recordings, and transcripts were carefully and securely stored. Pseudonyms were used in an effort to maintain confidentiality of participants and initially prepared profiles were removed from the study to minimise the risk of identification.

This research was conducted with the utmost integrity and professionalism observing all protocols and ethical considerations to preserve the integrity of the researcher, the participants and their respective sites, the university and the research community. Having met the requirements of The University of Melbourne for doctoral candidature this researcher was therefore deemed a suitable person to conduct the study. Ethics approval for this study was granted.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Study 1 – focus group - cognitive mapping

Introduction

This focus group study explored the epistemological beliefs of a group (n=15) of university-based teacher educators (clinical specialists (CS) and teaching fellows (TF)) to determine their perceptions of professional reciprocal relationships. The aims of this small targeted study were twofold; to explore the epistemological beliefs of the members of the practicum supervisory construct and whether their beliefs were active, or enacted in their mentoring roles; and to sensitise the researcher to the participants’ beliefs in relation to the broader quadraciprocal relationships study.

Building the map

Defining the structure, exploring emergent properties and reducing complexity

During the process of creating the map the researcher undertook extensive and rigorous analysis methods and phases across an extended period of time, see appendix M. The protracted process of mapping and re-mapping through various analysis phases acted as a device for establishing an understanding of the concept under investigation.

Data analysis: For the cognitive map

Whilst cognitive maps are often analysed with the aid of computer applications and frequently produce quantitative results, the small size of cognitive map from the focus group is best described through a qualitative analysis approach (Eden, 2004).

The cognitive map from the focus group activity was analysed using a blended phenomenological method (Moustakis, 1994; van Manen, 1990) and a structured cognitive mapping domain analysis approach (Eden 2004). The phenomenological approach required combining the horizontalisation, or line-by-line, method for data analysis (van Manen, 1990) with a more formalised numerically based approach. In exploring the cognitive mapping techniques of analysis this line-by-line method were
aligned against the weighted extended domain analysis as outlined by Eden (2004, p.683).

**Phenomenological data analysis approach**

Data obtained from the focus group activity were analysed through and extended reiterative analysis process, see appendix M. Raw data were reviewed and categories into three effects matrices (a pre-mapping process), one for each small working group in the focus group. The effects matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used to determine the invariant constituents and applied to the Moustakas (1994) modified Van Kaam (1959, 1966) method for phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994:120-122).

The invariant constituents, or emergent properties, were then clustered to enable the interrelationship between clusters to form summary characteristics of the overall map. These clusters allowed for identification of the core epistemological beliefs (conceptualisations) or the ‘super-ordinate values’ of the map.

**Structured cognitive mapping domain analysis approach**

To add rigour to the analysis of the invariant constituents and enable mapping of all three matrices on to one map, a formalised process of reductionism was undertaken to construct the initial map and refine the emergent properties, or ‘nodes’. This network reductive phase supported the development of the hierarchy and linkage structures, providing further opportunity for analysis of the structure of the map itself. A further weighted extended domain analysis was conducted to reduce complexity and highlight dominant features, such as cross-concept linkages.

The map, see Figure 1, was then revealed characterised by a hierarchical structure with a means/ends graph with goal type statements at the top of the hierarchy.

The participant ideas and understandings of what constitutes a professional reciprocal relationship were reflected upon and analysed in terms of how these understandings were perceived and experienced based the various member’s roles within the construct. These activities were designed to surface individual perceptions and understandings and develop a single collective understanding of the concept of a *professional reciprocal relationship* and how they are developed and maintained.
**Reductionism**

Reductionism in mapping is typically used for reducing complexity and making meaning in highly complex maps (Eden, 2004). This process is required and allows for the discovery of the ‘nub-of-the-issue’. Taking into consideration the structural features of the mapping process, hierarchy and linkage, opportunities for further analysis allowed for more focused mapping.

Using the method of reductionism ‘clusters’ were formed and reduced to break the map into a system of interrelated themes (Eden, 2004). In order to alleviate some of the complexity in the initial map the super-ordinate values were separated out and individual maps were created. Using a manual process likened to the “Jaccard coefficient method”, as broadly described by Eden, (2004, p.679) clusters were formed and reduced by putting similar, or relatively similar, words or nodes into the same cluster until an acceptable level similarity was achieved. This formed clusters that were tightly linked to one another with a similar number of arrows, or bridges. During this process other clusters were minimised or eliminated based on emergent themes. This process supports the robustness of the map and renders it relatively insensitive to small structural changes. Each cluster formed out of the reductionism process provided for the interrelationship between clusters and summarised the characteristics of the overall map.

In order to create the map several phases of analysis and development took place. Photographic samples of the completed flow charts, other symbolic representations, and samples of the effects matrices are provided in appendix M.

- **Stage 1: Reviewing and analysing raw data with participant conceptual links and numbered and coded priority and hierarchical indications.**
  
  - Pre-mapping interviews were conducted with the three mixed cooperative groups of Clinical Specialists (CS) and Teaching Fellows (TF) to enable them to write out their thoughts and ideas using structured flow chart or concept mapping style structure. Participants worked cooperatively across two hours following a guided cognitive mapping activity to construct a series of flow charts and linked concept maps of they believed constituted the notions of a professional reciprocal
relationship. Raw data collected in the cognitive mapping activity was linked and draw together by the participants to show their beliefs and understandings of linked and potentially hierarchical aspects required for building professional reciprocal relationships.

- **Stage 2: Creating individual group effects matrices**
  - Beyond the focus group activity the analysis and mapping phases were continued. Using data collected in the cognitive mapping focus group three effects matrix grids (Miles and Huberman, 1994) were created to collate the group responses into manageable sets of data. The researcher grouped and categorised common themes across the three small group responses to develop three distinct matrices of participant responses.

- **Stage 3: Collating all responses by alpha order to support coding and data reduction.**
  - Pre-mapping interviews and matrices were culled for key concepts using a manual form of clustering, likened to the Jaccard Coefficient method. Words were sorted and clustered for similarity to determine invariant constituents.

- **Stage 4: Initial map drawn for member checking.**
  - The map construction was commenced to show the key concepts and the participant’s connections were added.

- **Stage 5: Invitation for feedback on initial matrices and the draft cognitive map via member checking.**
  - At this stage it was determined the map was too dense to make meaning and cognitive mapping data were further analysed in order to reduce complexity and simplify reading of the map.

- **Stage 6: Applying new data analysis methodology – weighted domain analysis**
  - The map data were further analysed and reduced using a weighted extended domain analysis method as outlined by Eden (2004). This method of analysis revealed a more closely knit number of invariant constituents leading to more closely aligned emergent themes and meta-themes.

- **Stage 7: Re-drawing the cognitive map**
The final version of the map was drawn. A small number of participants reviewed the map and a rich description was written about the findings.

The robustness of this analysis generated a map with a smaller number of concepts (super-ordinate values). Multiple iterations produced increasingly simplified maps as true summaries and detailed paths whilst maintaining causality and direct, and indirect, linkages. The newly formed map did not vary to the extent that could be seen to significantly identify differences in cognitive complexity, but rather served to reduce networking complexity in the graphical form.

Exploring the cognitive map

A cognitive mapping exercise was used to discover if the participants held and enacted a shared vision or understanding of professional and reciprocal relationships in the practicum. The next step was to learn what were the participants’ beliefs and understandings, and what behaviours were needed in order to develop and maintain professional reciprocal relationships when working within the mentoring role.

The goal of the focus group activity was to develop a collective understanding, or group portrayal. The resultant storyline presents a realist account of the three groups and their common core understanding of the professional reciprocal relationship and how that should be enacted in their respective roles. The rich discussion of the findings from the map encompasses the textural and structural elements in the final section below.

The cognitive map displayed below, in figure 1, represents participants’ concepts about important factors that support the building of professional reciprocal relationships and arrows show the relational connections between them. The focus group’s cognitive map depicts and explores the cognitive and epistemological beliefs of what constitutes a ‘professional reciprocal relationship’ and how they are developed and maintained according to participating CS and TF members.
Figure 1: Focus group – cognitive mapping activity – Map of perceptions and consensus around professional reciprocal relationships.

**Structural properties of the map**

According to Kelly’s personal construct theory (1955) humans attempt to make sense of their world through analysing similarities and differences. As such, in cognitive maps we seek to identify each statement, or node, as bi-polar with causal effects of the first statement on the second statement (Eden, 2004). This cognitive map was drawn with Eden’s “rules for its development” in mind (p. 673).
In this study, the cognitive map is intended as a representation of the collective beliefs around what the university-based mentors perceive and enact as professional reciprocal relationships. Careful and rigorous analysis of the data revealed numerous invariant constituents and meta-themes of the perceived meaning of what constitutes a *professional reciprocal relationship*. These themes determined the major, relevant, and invariant meanings that provide living descriptions or highlights of individual and collective understandings (Moustakas, 1994). The following findings are framed by the cognitive mapping activity’s emergent themes of understanding professional roles, responsibility, interconnectedness, respectful behaviours and accountability. These emergent themes provided the framework for creating and shaping the map in figure 1 above. The protracted process of mapping and re-mapping through various analysis phases acted as a device for establishing an understanding of the concept. Mapping in such a way allowed the development of a graphical representation of the world view of the participants (Eden, 2004).

Meta-themes support each hierarchical cluster on the focus group map. On the map these themes present as a super-ordinate value, or ‘head’ (for example, Understanding Professional Roles), which is a ‘sub-goal’ for the higher goal of developing and maintaining a ‘Professional Reciprocal Relationship’. The ‘tails’ represent the most detailed factors or actions that need to occur in order for the sub-goal to be addressed. For example ‘induction must be adequate’ in order for participants to work through the other nodes and eventually reach the sub-goals to develop and maintain a professional reciprocal relationship.

Getting to the central issue or concept of an issue is the most critical and often the most difficult aspect of cognitive mapping; ‘domain analysis’ (Eden, 2004). This final level of analysis was applied to the focus group’s cognitive map.

This process enabled management of the complexity of the map whilst retaining direction and reality of the concept. The additional formalised analysis revealed the insufficient level of analysis undertaken earlier and allowed for the natural emergence of the location for the concept of ‘Understanding Professional Roles’ as the central ‘nub-of-the-issue’. The mapping of complex issues and managing the complexity was an important factor from the added-value of the domain analysis phase as it provided
summaries to ensure simplification without losing perceptions of significance (Eden et al., 1981).

**Potent options**

Hierarchical clustering allowed nodes to appear in more than one cluster and added to the emergent characteristics of the map (Eden, 2004) and the concept of professional reciprocal relationships. These nodes are typically known as ‘potent’ options. Potent nodes, or options, have significant impact because they cross many super-ordinate values and reach many ‘sub-goals’. These potent options indicate the “complexity of possible action within the context of multiple criteria” (Eden, 2004, p. 680). Meaning they have the potential to impact positively or negatively on relationship development.

In the focus group map primary and secondary potent nodes were revealed. The revelation of the ‘primary’ potent nodes highlights a theme of ‘mutuality’ across all super-ordinate values. This theme of ‘mutuality’ is summarised and classified from concepts such as partnership, collegiality, mutual respect, and working together for mutual benefit. All these concepts have a ‘duality of benefit’ theme or are of a reciprocal nature. The ‘secondary’ potent nodes highlight the concept of ‘regard for professional integrity’. This concept has major impact on the ‘sub-goals’ of Responsibility; Understanding Professional Roles and Respectful Behaviours. These primary and secondary potent nodes appear across a number of clusters, thus representing ‘core concepts’ in developing and maintaining professional reciprocal relationships.

Whilst these potent nodes appear to be positive concepts in the focus group map, they also have the potential to cause dilemmas and multiple ramifications for goals. Review of the cognitive map in this manner can highlight the need for support of individuals to understanding the complexity of their role.

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4 On the map (Figure 1, page 66) these can be seen as unshaded boxes with a solid line (primary potents) or unshaded boxes with a broken line (secondary potents).
Virtuous and vicious feedback loops

To generate meaning in map analysis, formal coding was required to produce a ‘structural components model’ that demonstrates, how “options lead to outcomes, means lead to ends and the head of the arrow shows a more desired outcome or goal” (Eden, 2004, p. 681). This structural components model was used in coding and creating the focus group map.

In the focus group map formal coding highlighted and extended typical coding limits by the addition of the negatively impacting nodes and the multidirectional arrows in possible positive and negative impacts. The inclusion of these additional arrows and symbols was particularly useful when discovering and highlighting ‘feedback loops’. The discovery of these feedback loops in the focus group map was a crucial outcome of the analysis of the map.

These feedback loops in the focus group map are of great interest as they imply the possible existence of dynamic considerations in the development and maintenance of professional reciprocal relationships. On the focus group map, feedback loops appear in both positive and negative forms. For example, the nodes leading away, or detracting, from the super-ordinate value ‘Respectful Behaviours’, show that concepts such as ‘professional arrogance’ can lead to a ‘power imbalance’ and that is where a negative feedback loop (denoted by the double-ended solid arrow head and broken tail line) has the potential to exist and grow. These negative feedback loops are also present in two other core areas. In the area of ‘Accountability’, factors such as a ‘breach of confidentiality’ and ‘lack of discretion’ also have the potential to create and grow as negative feedback loops. A similar scenario is present in the area of ‘Responsibility’, where actions and behaviours of members are ‘deliberately ignoring protocols’ or work towards ‘different goal and political agendas’; there is potential for the existence and growth of negative feedback loops. These negative feedback loops are also known as ‘vicious circles’. Some notable findings to these vicious circles were found in participant’s actions when enacting their mentoring roles (e.g., Michael’s experience commencing on page 101).

Positive feedback loops are also present on the focus group map. They too have potential for decline or growth. The double-ended hollow arrow head and solid line
arrows depict the positive feedback loops. The concept of ‘adequate time lines’ allowing ‘time to develop the personal relationship’, and vice-versa, represents a positive feedback loop in the area of ‘Responsibility’. Of greater significance on the focus group map are the multiple positive feedback loops, or ‘virtuous circles’, linked to the secondary potent nodes ‘regard for professional integrity’. This provides an opportunity for strengthening these concepts and beliefs. Many participants within the broader study spoke favourably about the length of time they had to develop relationships with their mentors.

Of particular concern here is the potential for vicious circles to grow. As such, actions or behaviours likely to cause vicious circles need to be observed closely. According to Eden (2004) some loops are self-controlled and as such any agitation in the state of the variables will result in de-stabilisation of the dynamic causing potential degeneration in the loop. In the nature of relationship building such fragile personal dealings could spell disaster for a given relationship or relationships.

**Summary of the findings from the cognitive map**

The virtue of collective sharing, by participants, of their cognitive or subjective beliefs, either by explicit actions or implicit behaviours, acknowledged that there is a potential for growth or decline in feedback loops and control of these areas. Participants appeared to be aware of these potential problems. This is evidenced in the map where participants identified detractors of respectful behaviours being professional arrogance and vacuous praise that lead to power imbalances.

Feedback loops in maps are a measure of the complexity of issues (Eden, 2004) involved in developing and maintaining professional reciprocal relationships. In other types of problem solving mapping, these loops can be erased by opting to change the problem solution pathway. In the area of relationships, when dealing with people, potential feedback loops cannot just be ‘rubbed-out’. These types of issues in relationship development need a more delicate and carefully considered approach and possible major strategic change. As an example, changes in policy will potentially change the direction of causation, possibly minimising potential dangers. But this will
not necessarily eliminate virtuous or vicious feedback loops and may indeed create new ones.

The creation of the map located ‘Understanding Professional Roles’ at the centre making this core concept of greatest significance to this group. When this concept was addressed, focus group participants largely moved beyond the notion of individuals’ understanding of their respective roles and raised the concept as a broader notion. They felt there was generally a good understanding of the technical application of their roles, especially by university-based members, due to substantial induction and professional development. Whilst there was agreement that members largely knew how to pragmatically enact their mentoring role, there was a general sense that not all members, particularly mentor teachers (MT), understood the program and university requirements or how to effectively mentor. There was some discussion around MTs and TCs taking more time to review their work ethic and approach, and the need to reflect more deeply on their behaviours and practices was identified. The idea that not all supervisory construct members seemed to be aware of their role within the ‘relationships’ could potentially lead to moral or ethical dilemmas or personal identity issues and potential isolation from others.

Professional integrity was raised as a core part of the role of an educator and was believed to be a critical factor in professional behaviours, especially when it came to notions of reciprocity. Across all groups was the belief that undertaking their respective roles provided opportunities for both personal and professional growth. Examination of the map shows participants felt very strongly that having a clear understanding of their professional roles was central to developing and maintaining effective and functional professional reciprocal relationships. The centrally located concept of understanding professional roles demonstrates the participants of the supervisory construct as a collective consider this to be a significant aspect or goal.

Participants considered communication to be key to developing relationships and strengthening connectedness to one another and others in schools. They perceived that having shared understandings and congruent goals strengthened relationships, increased connectedness and improved self-efficacy, which in turn encouraged more collaboration in their relationships. This in turn ensured greater equity and improved partnerships.
They believed that these factors could be adversely affected by not investing enough time in relationship development and focusing on self-interests. These notions were recognised as having the potential to impact negatively on the connectedness of individuals and broader university-school partnerships.

Participants noted concepts such as responsibility, interconnectedness and respectful behaviours as ‘messy’ conceptual activities and understanding professional roles and accountability as minimal ‘seemingly direct’, or ‘well defined’ processes as key to building relationships. They believed giving and receiving constructive and sustained feedback enhanced conflict resolution, supported personal relationship development and strengthened collegiality.

Participants stated they sometimes found it difficult to work with others who were ‘in-it for themselves’. They felt very strongly that partnerships required a two-way, give-and-take model where compromise was key to building strong relationships. They noted that managing theirs and others’ emotions was not always easy and the practicum experience often increased emotional tensions, but the ability to effectively manage emotions led to and was developed out of professional sensitivity. This in turn allowed for modelling of appropriate behaviours and practising diplomacy which develop mutual respect and strengthened relationships. By examining the map it can be seen that these concepts are potentially at risk of negative feedback loops if concepts such as professional arrogance and power imbalances are allowed to grow.

Clinical specialists (CS) and teaching fellows (TF) participating in the focus group believed most strongly that reciprocal relationships would be supported by concepts of respect and duality such as ‘collegiality’, ‘mutuality’ and ‘regard for professional integrity’, or maintaining practice within a code of conduct. Issues of confidentiality and discretion were noted as areas of potential danger needing to be monitored. Participants identified that, by developing a focus of working together for mutual benefit, professional reciprocal relationships can be developed and maintained.

One of the greatest potential negative impacts was the possibility of one or more members of the supervisory construct not ‘living’ or enacting their espoused beliefs. These types of potentially negative actions, as revealed in the map, could impact
relationships. For most participants consensus about the meaning of, and required behaviours to build, professional reciprocal relationships were established and confirmed. All participant responses were taken on face value and included in the creation of the map.

**Study 2 – reflective journals**

**Introduction**

This targeted small study (n=8) used reflective journals to explore a sub-set of participants’ *thoughts* (beliefs) and *feelings* (emotions) about their personal interactions and relationships developed during their most recent practicum experience.

The journal was set up in two sections, the first: *thoughts and beliefs* around power and positioning with sub-categories related to identity and agency. The second section included: *emotional factors* around power and positioning with sub-categories related to pedagogy, professionalism and personal traits. A final question was asked to summarise personal behaviours, attitudes, and strategies used to help build professional relationships. All eight participating members of this data collection method completed all sections, with only one not answering the final question. A sample of the Reflective Journal is provided in appendix N.

Analysis of the reflective journals presents an interpretation of the eight participants’ experiences of being part of a new supervisory construct. It includes perceptions of clinical specialist (2x CS), mentor teachers (2x MT), teaching fellows (2x TF), and the neophyte primary teacher candidates (2x TC). Data were collected at the completion of the participant’s most recent practicum from first year TCs and a range of T F, CS and MTs, capturing the views of the first placement (for TCs), and those of transitioning and experienced mentors. The outline of how the reflective journal data were analysed can be found in appendix O.

After careful reflection and rigorous analysis data revealed a range of invariant constituents and meta-themes of the lived experience of the supervisory construct member’s intra- and interpersonal interactions during the practicum experience. These findings determine the major, relevant, and invariant meanings that provide living
descriptions or highlights of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The emergent themes; identity, positioning, power, agency, emotions, and professionalism framed the individual textural-structural descriptions (ITSD) for each participant.

**Intra- and interpersonal experiences**

*Textural portrayals*

Following the reflective process, using the process of imaginative variation discovery of the actualities and the potentialities the researcher enhanced or expanded versions of the invariant themes (Patton, 2002). These expanded versions of the invariant themes formed the basis of textural portrayals of the intra- and interpersonal experiences of the participants during the practicum.

**Individual textural-structural descriptions (ITSD)**

By drawing together the participants’ written responses and aligning them within structural format with the broader themes of the study the perceived lived experience of the participants are presented here to provide a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the intra- and interpersonal experiences of the each of the participant construct members. Each of the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions (ITSD) below provides a summarised systematic review of the emergent themes for each reflective journal. A completed sample of the ITSD analytical framework is provided in appendix S.

* Double quotation marks in the following descriptions indicate direct quotes taken from the participant responses.

**ITSD: Jacqui - teacher candidate (first year)**

Jacqui, a first year teacher candidate, had just completed her first placement. She was in a new environment coming from the corporate world. She was accustomed to methods of communication and particularised processes from her previous profession involving corporate training. Jacqui found the new educational landscape of the primary school a vastly different territory to her corporate training facility. In her placement she was faced with young learners and found “grappling with the social and emotional aspects of children beyond the curriculum” a challenge. During her initial practicum experience
Jacqui began to develop an emergent teacher identity but was not confident within that image. She felt she was an actor “playing the part of someone that [she was] not overly confident being”. She believed she and her MT “had different personalities” and at times “did not feel comfortable to ask questions”.

Jacqui felt she was “encouraged to position [herself]” but believed she lacked the level of confidence required for the placement. She felt there were power positions in relation to the people supporting her and believed that was “largely due to their experience and roles”. Jacqui “also got a sense that [her] MT liked having a sense of power and authority in [their] working relationship and at times was not very accommodating”. She found her school-based support staff “accommodating to an extent”, but not as much, or in the same way, as the university-based mentors (TF and CS). Because Jacqui did not feel much support from school-based staff she “learned to not ask as many questions or provide [her] opinion even though it had been encouraged” by her MT and others. On the other hand Jacqui found the university-based mentors supportive and their “sharing and reflecting” time gave her “more confidence”.

Jacqui was able to observe a range of skills in her MT, but appeared to practise few herself. Of the practices she observed she felt that she “would probably have a different approach towards some aspects of teaching”. She was a little frustrated by not being “equipped with the skills and knowledge to determine how” to support children’s learning. During her placement Jacqui identified areas for improvement such as “time management; developing and maintaining a rapport with the children; [being] compassionate; [and] reflection with students at the end of each lesson”. She felt she could not have “everything in place and not everything [was] going to go to plan”. By the end of the placement Jacqui was “still determining what it [was] exactly that [she] would do differently”.

Jacqui sensed and experienced a range of tensions and stresses but despite there being a “lot of stress” her MT’s “emotions were generally calm”. A range of experiences emotionally impacted Jacqui both positively and negatively. “On a weekly basis [she] would experience quite a lot of anxiety” attending the placement. She felt “frustration, sadness, happiness, loneliness, acceptance, rejection, anxiousness, fatigue, fulfilment,
and vulnerable” at various times. She saw these as positive experiences and felt “good about feeling all of these things”. She believed “it adds to the experience and helps [her] grow [and] become more discerning”. Jacqui felt less connected to the school than she had expected and found solace in the academics and the academic program. When attending placement she felt she “was a part of the environment but in most instances [she] sat on the periphery, observing the different characters interact with one another”. At times Jacqui “did not feel like [her] opinion was valued by [her MT]” which she felt “had affected [her] ability to learn”. Her MT was involved in various committees across the school and “her power was exercised quite a lot”. In order to fulfil subject requirements Jacqui made “use of the staff room to build rapport with other teachers”. She maintained a professional approach and relationship with her MT despite feeling there were some differences between their styles and personalities. Jacqui believed the ongoing verbal feedback during the placement and final written report was incongruent. She felt she had missed opportunities to learn and wished things “had been discussed with [her] before it was recorded in [her] report”. This meant that Jacqui did not have “any time to make adjustments/improvements”. Jacqui felt she worked hard by implementing a range of strategies to build and maintain relationships with all people during her placement. Overall she found it “difficult to find consistency in what was said and done, what was agreed to and what actually eventuated” when working with her MT. Jacqui believed “much of this was due to the sheer nature of the school environment”.

ITSD: Kerrie – teacher candidate (first year)

Kerrie, a first year teacher candidate, had just completed her first placement. She had not worked for some time as she has been raising small children. Her previous work, of many years ago, was a lab technician. In her previous role she saw herself as one of the many members of a team. During her placement experience she believed her “teacher identity evolved”. Kerrie began to see herself as a “facilitator of learning”. She felt that the people she interacted and worked with during the placement had “similar personality traits” as her own and found it was “easy to get along with them” as a result. Kerrie did not see that the personal aspects of others impacted her in the practicum.
Kerrie believed “power is subject to perception”. She revealed that if she had thought other construct members were somehow in control of her she would have felt “frustrated and anxious about their opinions”. Kerrie firmly believed that she positioned herself as a “peer to the other teachers” and was in a “position of power in terms of [her] own learning”. She believed that the construct mentors, CS, TF and MT, had power over grades but she was in control in “terms of the amount of effort [she] put in to [her] teaching”. Kerrie’s practicum experience was in an open plan learning environment, which she saw as opportune as the structure enabled her to “witness several approaches to teaching”.

Kerrie’s practicum experience was filled with emotional happenings. Her own emotional episodes were “mostly related to factors outside of school”. Whilst she did share her personal emotional experiences with others, she consciously managed it so that her personal issues would not “affect [her] teaching”. Nevertheless, “emotionally, [she] felt like [she] was on a rollercoaster!” Whilst her MT and broader school team experienced “grief” after two deaths closely linked to staff members of the school, Kerrie worked hard to remain focused on her teaching to minimise the emotional impact those events had on her. She put “maximum effort into [her] teaching”, trying to manage her “requirements of uni” and her “busy family life” which was physically and emotionally “draining, exciting, nerve wracking, satisfying and fun”. Despite the tensions of her commitments and the emotional impacts she was “very comfortable” during the placement. She recollected she also felt a lot of “support and kindness from the other [construct] members”. During the placement Kerrie “maintained a positive attitude”. Her emotional sharing and positive attitude implied a level of connectedness, yet, conversely, she expressed “surprise” that “no effort” was made to introduce her or the other candidates to the staff.

Kerrie found it “quite difficult to get to know the staff. She felt that she had made headway by the “end of the practicum”, however she firmly believed that was “mostly through [her] own efforts!” Kerrie believed everyone behaved “very professionally in general. She felt it was up to her to “build professional relationships”, and she implemented a range of strategies when doing so. She “showed an interest and concern for the people”, she “persisted in getting to know as many of the staff as possible” and
she consistently showed “appreciation for the assistance” they offered. She also worked hard to show she was implementing changes to her teaching based on feedback provided. Kerrie even went as far as buying “pastries for the staff”. She thought “they are very good for helping build relationships!” Kerrie’s observation of mentoring practice demonstrated to her that “everyone has their own teaching style” and that they seemed to be “effective in their own way”. Kerrie believed it was up to her to make the “most of the opportunities provided”. She focused on “gathering and using feedback” and believed that all of her mentors (TF, CS and MT) “helped [her] to become a better teacher”.

**ITSD: Tania – mentor teacher (highly experienced)**

Tania, a highly experienced classroom teacher in the upper primary years, had been a mentor for pre-service teachers for many years, across many universities and teacher education programs. She identified herself as a highly experienced teacher and felt “very confident about [her] planning and teaching”. Tania saw herself as being “open to growing and changing over the years”. She believed she instilled in her own students and TCs the ideology that “we are continuous learners and not stagnant”.

Tania did not like the idea that one person had power over another and preferred to “treat the student [TC] as a person of equal position, giving them the responsibility and confidence to make decisions”. She believed she positioned herself “as a friend, mentor, someone who was modelling best practices”. Tania felt strongly that there was a “shared responsibility [between] all staff, [herself], student and the university fellow”.

Tania felt she “connected well to [her TC] student [by] being honest and open”. She expressed that together, her and her student [TC], “experienced successes, stressful situations and therefore [their] emotions were ones of calmness, challenges [and] successes”, but all was positive and supportive.

Tania believed she built good relationships through “openness, fairness [and a] sense of shared responsibility”. She felt everyone was “very professional, on time, prepared and motivated”. Tania believed her mentoring style supported the sharing and developing of one’s own philosophy until the time when the TC needed to develop their “own and use it in [their] teaching experience”. As the placement progressed Tania distanced
herself “somewhat from the modelling and allowed the student to find their position in
the classroom”.

ITSD: Sharon – mentor teacher (highly experienced)

Sharon, a highly experienced classroom teacher in the lower primary years, had been a
mentor for pre-service teachers for many years, across many universities and teacher
education programs. She identified herself as a “teacher, friend and mentor” and felt
that she “was giving back to the profession by assisting a new teacher”. She believed
her role as a mentor enhanced her “self-concept as a professional”.

Sharon felt that she “was in a team” environment, supported by the others around her.
She did not perceive of or “notice particular positions of power”. She was cognisant of
“other people in positions of power” but showed no signs of concern as they were
relatively known to her and she felt she “was in a partnership rather than [being] an
underling”.

Sharon was confident in her teaching skills and knowledge and had supervised many
candidates over her years of involvement in the Master of Teaching but found the most
recent candidate was “very strong” and Sharon was “impressed” by the candidate and
was “challenged” to improve her own skills. She felt that the “skills [and] knowledge
of others [TF and CS] involved have been likewise impressive and thorough”. Working
in the MT role “also made [her] reflect on [her] own practice and how [she] might
improve it”.

With the hectic pace of teaching, Sharon “occasionally felt a little pressured when
reports were due”, although overall she “generally felt calm and relaxed throughout the
practicum”. She believed that she was “thoughtful and helpful during this time”.

Sharon revered all construct members and felt they “absolutely all worked in a
professional manner”. She believed that “all dealings had been exemplary”. Sharon felt
that she was “absolutely fortunate” that the “calm, professional manner of all involved
had made it a very pleasant experience”. She felt that she had “developed a strong
rapport” with the candidate as they “spoke openly” about professional progress and
social matters. Sharon believed that her mentoring style provided opportunity to the
candidate to have “a friendly, professional and thoughtful practicum”. She trusted that she “provided an open and thoughtful platform for discussion, planning and reflection”.

*ITSD: Michael – teaching fellow (highly experienced)*

Michael, a highly experienced educator whose background stemmed decades, had been with the Master of Teaching program, working within this construct since its inception. He has a large network of colleagues in and beyond the partnership schools. Michael saw himself in a position where he had “commitments to three parties; the candidate, the school and the university”. Working in the TF role he believed he had a moral imperative as “a servant to each of these parties”.

Michael believed he had “a great deal of autonomy” in his role and was “quite confident that [he could] position [himself] to achieve” whatever he needed to achieve. At times, particularly quite recently, he felt more positioned “by the demands of the university”. He recognised there were “degrees of power within the program” and believed they extended across the university and schools. He also believed there was a “strong case for the position and power of all these people within the program”. He clarified his perception by stating “within any organisation there must be positions of power for the structure of any partnership to be maintained and for the successful functioning of the program”. Whilst Michael agreed power was essential he observed “power varies greatly from school to school” but at the university few key people “hold the most power”. He found one of the greatest complexities of his role was the need to be “dealing constantly with a number of people in power at the university and within the school”. Michael found that “identifying the power figures and then to work with them” was one of the most difficult tasks of the role. He also found at times “working with so many institutions can be very difficult”.

Michael had confidence in his skills and knowledge and knew that he was the “person the schools turn to whenever they have a question, query or concern”. He also believed the “academic staff have a very clear and organised course content and structure” but recognised that from time to time he was a “little compromised by [his] need to be loyal to the university, school and candidate”.
Michael acknowledged that the role of TF working closing in the practicum created space for a range of emotions. He noted he felt “trepidation, anxiety, elation, satisfaction, frustration, anger, fear, nervousness, tension, pleasure, guilt, confusion, pride, annoyance, excitement [and] relief”. He also recognised that it was possible for him to “experience many of these emotions many times throughout the course of a semester” and that those “emotions vary as the semester goes through different stages”. Michael observed “candidates experience many of the listed emotions” and they tended to experience “more negative emotions at times of greater stress”. He believed he was impacted by the emotional states and experiences of the candidates and would “feel many of the same emotions as the candidates at the [same] time” as them; when they were under the most stress. Michael believed during the last practicum he had “felt more stressed and perhaps frustrated and even angry at stages than in any other semester”. He attributed those intense feelings to dealing with a “greater number of at risk or demanding candidates”.

Michael perceived “the professionalism of the university staff, school staff and candidates [was] outstanding”. However, more recently his “belief in the professionalism of two mentors [MTs] was brought into question”. He felt the “lack of professionalism in each case caused [him] to deal with awkward situations”. Michael believed that situation caused him to “act irrationally and therefore jeopardise [his] own professionalism” which caused him to feel “uncomfortable and guilty”. He observed there were “great differences between the skills and abilities of [school-based] mentors and this can cause great strain”. Michael felt he had a great sense of “responsibility to develop a partnership between the university and the school and then to maintain that partnership for the benefit of the candidate’s ongoing development”. He believed that to build and maintain the relationships he needed to demonstrate “strong credibility, openness, reliability, transparency, understanding, diplomacy [and] discretion”. He saw his role as a complicated one when trying to “negotiate a pathway that successfully links all people so as to maintain a successful partnership for all”. He recognised care was needed when he was to make “judgment calls”, sometimes “on the run” and at other times he needed to involve others. He was careful to “consider the whole team in the partnership”.

ITSD: Linda – teaching fellow (1st year in the role)

Linda, an experienced teacher, was in her first year of working in the TF role. She was being mentored by an experienced CS in her partnership school group (PSG). Linda worked half time in the TF role and half time teaching in the upper years at the base school. She did not think much about herself in the role as she was “mostly too immersed in [her] observations and [her] role”. Nevertheless, during the placement, Linda saw herself as a “support and a reliable source of assistance”. She believed she was “someone who could help them [TCs] become great teachers”. Linda regaled she was “always confident” in her ability to “assist individuals in improving”. She observed that “personal characteristics did not impact” candidates directly, but if personal processes impacted the “class dynamics” it did in turn impact the candidate and in one case made “classroom management difficult as a result”.

Linda was a confident educator with a strong sense of self-efficacy. She had “great control over [her] own thoughts”, which she felt “reflect [her] purpose and role”. As a consequence, she “did not feel positioned by others”. Linda had a “great respect for people in power”, but did not feel that “anyone was in power”, as such. Although, she believed TCs saw “people in power” and often work hard to work with them. Overall she was “impressed by the collegial manner” TCs were treated by their mentors.

During her classroom observations, Linda tried to put herself in the “children’s shoes and tried to observe the lesson through their eyes”. She was “often highly impressed” by the pedagogy and practices she saw during the placement. She recalled that only “occasionally [she] was disappointed” and used those moments as “opportunity to reflect on [her] own practice and make improvements where necessary”. On the occasion where she did witness “weak pedagogy” she “discreetly” discussed with the TC “alternative practice” and strategies she believed “allowed them to grow as teachers” rather than have them “reflecting negatively on the mentor teacher”. During her observations she found “extremes” in mentor practice that had the potential to impact candidates’ agency. She observed, “mentor teachers who have strong practice were a wonderful influence on teacher candidates”. Conversely, she observed “candidates who had weaker mentors [MTs] did not progress as much”.

Linda was usually able to keep separate her cognitive and affective domains, restraining herself from emotional reactions to enable her to focus on the pragmatics of the support and mentoring role. Although, she did feel “conflicted” when a candidate said she was nervous about Linda observing her. Linda did observe emotional reactions in others. She recalled “light bulb moments” and experiences of “interest, worry, confusion, anxiety and strength” from others around her. She noticed intense emotional impacts on others and expressed concern that the “feelings being experienced were so new and incomprehensible” to the candidates experiencing them, that they needed support to identify and verbalise their emotions. Linda recalled she “witnessed emotions getting the better of the TCs”. Those moments required deep discussion with “support and advice on how to deal with such emotions”. Linda declared construct members “dealt with these feelings often” and were also “often asking for assistance” themselves. She saw it was her role to support the TC and MT in these situations.

Despite the difficulties and complexities Linda experienced and observed she believed all participants in the practicum were “highly professional”. She found it “comforting” to know she was working with so “many professionally minded people”. Linda was able to build professional relationships through “regular interaction” and noted that some MTs were more “open to discussions” than others, but all of them “appreciated” the “regular contact and feedback”. Whilst Linda observed varying practices in MTs she believed they worked in a “respectful manner” and “provided a great role model” to the candidates. Linda was very conscious of her situation and believed that she always acted in a “professional and discreet manner” knowing and “respecting” that she was in a privileged position watching how others run their classroom.

*ITSD: Carli – clinical specialist (highly experienced)*

Carli was a highly experienced educator whose work spans four decades. As an academic working across universities and an educational consultant Carli had been working within the Master of Teaching program for many years. She had a large network of colleagues in and beyond the partnership schools, and the university. Carli saw her “professional identity was to foster the ‘new’ into the professional”. She saw her role “as guiding the TCs to increase their expertise”. Carli believed the program philosophy “seem[ed] to be in line with [her] professional understanding of [her] own
philosophy”. So that working in the CS role allowed her to work within her “own beliefs and behaviours”. Carli believed that identity and the “personal relationship between MT and TCs is vital”. She saw understanding personal attributes as “an important factor when determining placements”. She thought her role was to “hold all those threads” together.

Carli spoke hesitantly of the notion of ‘power’ and found it “intimidating and frightening” and claimed to hold no notion of power “as a means of achieving results”. She believed candidates to be “teachers, and therefore colleagues”, and hence did not see “increased knowledge brings any sense of power”.

Carli was a highly skilled and experienced educator with strong agency, but saw that she was “also learning new strategies and approaches”. She acknowledged that her “knowledge and expertise [was] increasing”, and reflected that she had “become increasingly more competent” working in the CS role. Carli was aware she brought “competence (the expertise)” to the role but also acknowledged “an awareness of changing conditions of the demands of education”.

Carli regaled “immense pleasure” in seeing how TCs were “developing their skills and their love of teaching”. She conversely recognised “disappointment” when she saw candidates who brought “little emotional passion and belief to their relationship with students”. This typified the contrast of emotions and experiences in the practicum.

**ITSD: Preston – clinical specialist (highly experienced)**

Preston, a highly experienced educator and CS, had worked in the program for many years with previous experience as a TF. Preston had also worked in the finance sector with teaching being his second career; he had this ‘second career’ in common with the candidates. Preston saw his identity was to “represent the human face of the university”. He believed “personality and pedagogy” interplay in education. He used the information he had in this area “carefully in determining the suitability” of matching MTs and TCs.

Preston observed that some mentors (MTs) “operate on a power relationship”. He strove not to place candidates with those MTs unless he was left with no other option. Preston observed that some MT practices were “not the best”. He saw there was a
“gulf” between what the students were learning at the university and the practices they were experiencing in the classroom. Preston believed that “cognitively” he needed to be “across all aspects of the MTeach” that way he could ensure “consistency in delivery”. He believed it was important to “provide the bridge between the theory” and the practice. Over time Preston felt he had developed a “clearer idea of the aspects” required for effective classroom observation. This year in particular he noticed a “huge gulf in pedagogy between PPS1 [semester 1 placement] and PPS3 [semester 3 placement]”. Preston reflected on his knowledge of the role as he mentored a new TF and considered that there was a “lot of assumed knowledge that comes with time”.

Preston felt there was “always a range of emotions across a practicum placement”. He found it “highly gratifying” (a sense of pride) when he saw candidates having positive learning experiences as he observed them “flourish”. Conversely, when the experience was not so positive and the TC struggled, he found it “emotionally taxing”. Preston saw his emotional role was to “provide support”. He believed it was his responsibility to “alleviate concerns and assuage fears in a supportive environment”. Preston observed that the health and well-being of self and loved ones impacted TCs emotionally and “affected their abilities in the classroom from time to time”. He posited that “emotions are a necessary” factor and could be “harnessed to achieve great things”, but stressed candidate “welfare is paramount”.

Preston observed that the majority of TCs were “highly professional”. Some, however, had yet to learn the social graces of professional netiquette, as some use of technology “reflects poorly” on the candidates and their perceived “professionalism” by adult peers. Preston prided himself on leading the partnership school group (PSG) and believed his PSG team focused on “developing strong TC relationships based on trust”. During the practicum, Preston observed multiple lessons and noticed there was a “range of mentor practice”. He recognised that most MTs were “highly supportive”. He believed there was room for improvement and increased “critical reflection of practice” and “teacher sensitivity”. Preston reflected that there was a requirement for candidates to “quickly develop an understanding of the culture of the classroom”. He believed they needed to

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5 ‘MTeach’ is a colloquial term used by persons involved in, or familiar with, the Master of Teaching program.
“work in with the mentor teacher” and that by working with the MT they would develop a greater level of skills. Preston believed candidates “need to work out the ‘lay of the land’ before they can establish the perimeters in which they will work”. In some cases when candidates attended meetings they found the environment “somewhat threatening”.

**Synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences**

The Textural-Structural Synthesis (TSS) is the final step in the Moustakas (1994) modified Van Kaam (1959, 1966) method for phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). The TSS below was constructed by integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a composite description presenting the universal essences of the lived experience of participating construct members during the practicum to represent the group as a whole.

As teacher candidates enter the practicum experience they are immersed in a new landscape of learning. Personal paradigms shift and change to support working in a new environment. Teacher candidates, particularly those in their first placement, need to fully immerse themselves whilst they try to build multiple key relationships. They try to learn quickly and perform with confidence, demonstrating skill and agency in the new field, albeit at a novice level. In this relatively new landscape they search for familiarity, connections and support. In the space of the classroom the teacher candidate needs to figure out and enact why they are there and who they are as a learner and teacher. For the candidate this means finding a fitting identity, often either drawn to, or repelled by, their mentors’ approaches. Throughout the practicum, all members of the construct were compelled to ask questions of the self and engage with reflective practices.

Teacher candidate experiences of the practicum revealed vastly different experiences from one another and have a much greater personal and professional impact than those in the mentoring roles. Positioning, power, emotions, agency, identity, professionalism and the ability to develop relationships have considerable impacts on the practicum experience.
Experienced teacher educators (TF, CS and MT) had highly developed professional identities and approached their work with a strong sense of who they were as a teacher and mentor. Mentors, across all roles (TF, CS and MT) in this study brought a wealth of experiences to the practicum and demonstrated very strong agency in their roles.

It appeared to some that when candidates were mentored by ‘weaker’ mentors (MTs) they professionally developed at slower rates and were often unaware of the needs for improvement in their own pedagogy. Conversely, when candidates were with strong mentors, it appeared they developed a greater level of professional knowledge and skill. When mentors observed other mentors, regardless of their role, strength or style, they internally reflected on their own practice looking for ways to improve themselves (e.g., see Linda’s reflections from page 86).

Despite the mentoring style, candidates were exposed to varied teaching approaches during the practicum. They had opportunities to observe more expert others, obtain specific and detailed advice, and in turn took time to implement what they had witnessed their MT trial. Candidates also took opportunities to apply or practise theoretical aspects they brought from the university classrooms.

CSs and TFs worked across multiple contexts and had the bigger picture (whole program) perspective in mind at all times. They reflected the need to consider the university requirements, school needs, individual candidate development, mentor teacher needs and expectations, student benefits as well as their mentoring partner, or team’s needs (e.g., see Preston’s reflections from page 88). Mentor teachers worked to welcome candidates into their classrooms but at times negated to extend that welcome beyond the classroom. Mentors (TF, CS and MT) endeavoured to impart their knowledge and skills to the novice teacher candidate (e.g., see Sharon’s reflections from page 83). Candidates often required extensive support in developing relationships in the school context. When they were emotionally vulnerable, lacked confidence or agency, or disagreed with the modelled practices, they and their mentor teacher often needed additional support to build or repair relationships.

Personalities played a key role in the interactions of the practicum experience. Many agreed the closer matching of personal styles served to create more harmonious
relationships (e.g., see Jacqui’s reflections from page 78). Clinical specialists and teaching fellows agreed that having intimate knowledge about the candidates’ and mentor teachers’ personal styles supported their ability to match MTs and TCs. Mentor teachers’ feedback in the journals was very positive about the level of connectedness they experienced with their candidate in this particular placement but did acknowledge that they had experienced times when the relationships had not worked so well and those were not such positive experiences.

All participant members in the construct, in this study, invested themselves professionally, personally and emotionally. In some cases, particularly for teacher candidates, the emotions were so intense that they lost self-control. Feelings of anxiety, frustration and confusion were common amongst the interwoven tapestry of strong, often mixed emotions experienced by all at various times throughout the practicum. The practicum space provided a highly active and occasionally volatile playground for the vast ecology of personal and professional lenses brought to it by various personalities and experiences of the construct members. As sharp, active and diverse as negative emotions were so too were positive emotions often present at the fore in the experience. A common metaphor expressed by teacher candidates for the emotional experience of the practicum was the ‘rollercoaster’, with its ups and downs, twists and turns, and occasional jolts and movements between fear and elation. In most cases the emotional impacts were dealt with through the building of strong and trusting relationships.

All construct members saw that the building of relationships was the key to a satisfying and successful placement. They knew that to act in a professional manner was imperative in building relationships. Relationship development in the practicum was seen to be the responsibility of all members, as those relationships were recognised as fragile constructs that needed constant nurturing. It appeared the stronger the relationships were so too was the level of professional development and reciprocity.

During the practicum some interpersonal interactions served to increase candidates’ self-esteem, agency, confidence and professional development whilst others left candidates feeling uncomfortable and potentially disempowered by stronger power players. Whilst most of the construct members felt they were able to interact in ways
that enabled them to position themselves there was always at best a veiled awareness of multiple layers or shrouds of ‘more powerful others’. All mentors shared similar understandings believing the university or school leaders had more control, which for many translated to more power. Power, perceived or realised, either negatively or positively, impacted on all construct members to varying degrees and in varying ways. Many participants did not like to view power as a means of control, but knew it was present.

Notions of identity, positioning, power, agency, emotions, professionalism and the development of professional relationships impacted the success of the practicum for many teacher candidates. A mentoring relationship in this context is highly complex and emotionally charged (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Martin et al., 1999). During the practicum experience mentors and candidates attended to both personal and professional issues associated with the roles of learner, teacher and mentor. Relationships between teacher candidates, mentors and other supervisory agents, take on various forms, but the relationship between the mentor teachers and the teacher candidate is a crucial aspect of the practicum (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Goldrick, 2009).

The goal of the use of reflective journal (texts) in this study was to allow for producible and recognisable methods of communicating in a meaningful way one’s personal perceptions and emotions of the practicum experience. The inclusion of journaling, such as the use of the reflective journal, allowed a cultural history of experiences and emotions to be recorded in explicable terms to present a history of the practicum. These journals allowed that history to be drawn on for educative and reflective purposes (Freebody, 2003). In the case of this doctoral research project these texts enabled access to an important source of learning that may not have emerged in the interview environment.

Study 3 – individual interviews

Findings from the individual interviews

Data were collected from both first and second year Teacher Candidates (TC) capturing the views of those in the early-mid and final stages of the course. Experienced mentors, teaching fellows (TF) and clinical specialists (CS) and mentor teachers (MT) provided a
broadth and depth of views from a mentoring perspective. Individual interviews (n=19) ranged between thirty to sixty minutes were conducted at either the university or school sites, see appendices P and Q for the interview guides. Participants were offered a choice of interview venue. All participants were interviewed at their preferred venue. Interviews were transcribed using a professional transcription service. Each transcript was reviewed over several reflective phases to draw out invariant themes and meanings. Themes and their meanings were rigorously contested and re-categorised during further phases of review, reflection, and peer-based analysis. The meanings of the themes were reflected upon and analysed in terms of how the events were perceived and experienced based on the various member’s role within the construct. Multi-vocality was preserved in the exhibition of members’ perceptions of their intra- and interpersonal interactions and professional performance during the practicum experience. Data obtained from the interviews were analysed using the Moustakas (1994) modified Van Kaam (1959, 1966) method for phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

The findings of the study uncovered the phenomenon of how the supervisory construct members experienced the practicum and those findings were captured under the major themes of the study.

**Exploring the lived experience of construct members in the practicum**

Participants who were involved in the reflective journals largely reiterated their practicum experiences during the interviews. Where reiterated responses were evident they have been included here again as a record of the interview and a reference of the strength of the experience for participants. The interviews, however, did provide expanded views from the reflective journals and with the additional participants allowed for a broader data collection.

**University-based mentors**

**Clinical specialists (CS)**

*Carli*

Carli, a highly experienced educator, saw herself as a “conduit” between the institutions (school/university) and the people (mentor/candidate). She felt it was up to her “to hold
all those threads” together to foster the new TCs into the profession. Carli believed that identity and the “personal relationship between MT and TC is vital”.

Carli spoke hesitantly of the notion of ‘power’ and found it “intimidating and frightening”. She did not believe in exercising power “as a means of achieving results”. She believed candidates were “teachers, and therefore colleagues” hence did “not see that her increased knowledge brought any sense of power”. Despite Carli’s denial of power she positioned herself and others. She positioned herself as she “deliberately [tried] to lose that university lecturer stance” and saw herself more as a “university pedagogy advisor” when in schools. She actively ‘positioned’ the MT by giving them the “idea that the mentor teacher [had] been selected because they have teaching pedagogy skills that can be passed on”. Carli declared that she put that “kind of a slant” on the relationship. She also stated that she made it clear to the MT that she was there as “clinical specialist, not their friend”. She felt strongly that she needed to “hold that position” whilst recognising that it was okay to “form a personal relationship with people”. Carli felt she always had to hold the position that she was there as a “university observer”. Carli also created a positioned stance between her and the candidates, so they would understand that she was the “expert” and they were the “novice”. Carli clearly distinguished for candidates that they needed to be a “teacher and not a friend”. She believed she was supporting the teacher candidates by helping them to position themselves as a teacher. She further positioned the TCs in that she believed they were “that little bit older, so the maturity level [was] there”.

Carli believed the way she worked within her partnership school group (PSG) “really is a process that works well”. When working with others Carli was aware of the cultural and political nuances of being in someone else’s classroom and recognised it had the potential to cause discomfort and create power relationships. She tried to be “unobtrusive” and attempted to understand the “parameters” of MT’s expectations. Carli believed that she brought “openness”, to the relationships. She would “listen” and “take on board” important factors such as “personalities…attitudes…workloads”.

Carli instilled in candidates that they “have got to know their students”. Likewise, she believed she needed to “know the teacher candidates…know the mentor teachers and…know the culture of the school”. Carli believed in order for strong collegiate
relationships to be built she needed to have “the same ideals [and] principles” as the MT and the TC. She firmly believed understanding personal attributes was “an important factor when determining placements”; it helped her make placement recommendations.

Carli believed there was reciprocity in the construct. She could “only speak very positively of [her] own growth”. Her exposure to “current educational issues…good literature…width of educational environments” had expanded her professional knowledge. Whilst she saw herself as having “professional knowledge, professional acumen”, she acknowledged that her “knowledge and expertise was increasing, and reflected that she had “become increasingly more competent” and was “learning new strategies and approaches” by working in the CS role.

_Preston_

Preston, a highly experienced educator, saw his role was to “represent the human face of the university in the practicum subjects”. It was his “responsibility to ensure that the material provided in the practicum subject was delivered to candidates”. He also needed to make sure the “university voice” was being represented. He set “high expectations” for TCs, himself and his TF. He was also particular about MTs selected for mentoring.

Preston positioned himself as a leader in his partnership school group (PSG). He believed that the “buck stops” with him. Preston positioned himself in such a way that he felt the PSG was his “patch” and ultimately “anything that goes on in the network” was his “responsibility”. He positioned his TF in light of those ideals and she undertook “a lot of the administration and more frequent visits to the schools”.

Preston worked with the candidates to position them as “guests” to work with the MT in a classroom that ultimately “belongs to the mentor [MT]”. He believed the candidates needed to learn to “respectfully observe…evaluate…in a sensitive manner” when they were in a classroom. He stressed candidates needed to “work in ‘with’ the mentor teacher”; that way they would develop a greater level of skills. Preston observed candidates “vie for positioning in the school environment” and he needed to manage them because TCs thought they needed to position themselves against their peers and become competitive to get a job. Preston observed that some mentors (MTs) “operate
on a power relationship”. He strove not to place candidates with those mentors unless he was left with no other option.

Preston firmly trusted he had “strong relationships with all of the schools” and that he had worked on building those relationships over a number of years. Preston felt it was important for him to have “conversations with the teaching fellow about aspects of what’s going [on] out in the school practices” so that he could work to ensure relationships were maintained and strengthened.

During the practicum, Preston observed multiple lessons and noticed there was a “range of mentor practice”. He recognised that most MTs were “highly supportive”. He believed there was room for improved and increased “critical reflection of practice” and “teacher sensitivity”. Preston posited that overall “mentors [MTs] keep getting better and better”, but did observe that some MT practices were “not the best”.

Preston believed “personality and pedagogy” interplay in the practicum. He used this information “carefully in determining the suitability” of matching MT and TC. He was very open about candidate skills when setting up “relationships with mentors”. He provided just enough information to create an “eyes open attitude” for everyone. Preston asserted his main goal was to try and make the TCs the “best teachers” they could be. He saw his emotional role was to “provide support”. It was his responsibility to “alleviate concerns and assuage fears in a supportive environment”. He believed that a candidate’s “welfare [was] paramount”.

In ‘his’ PSG, they “work together as a team”. In working collaboratively with his TF, Preston affirmed he read all feedback on classroom observations, asking for himself to be cc’d into all correspondence so that he could ensure a “consistent message” and the university’s requirements were being reflected in the feedback. Preston also ensured all CS and TF classroom observations and post lesson discussions with the TC were shared with the MT to open up dialogue and improve feedback. He felt that created a “three way [mentoring] partnership”. Preston felt that “candidates benefit more” when they are in “strong relationships”. He believed the TCs were “entitled to the full benefit of the program”. Preston firmly believed the schools and all construct members were “working together for the betterment of the candidate”. He also perceived the TF and CS roles “dovetail very closely together”.

Preston believed, in his PSG, there was reciprocity. He believed by being able to “participate in all of those classrooms and see all those different ranges of practice”, impacted his development. He asserted there was “always something that any of us can learn by going into someone else’s classroom because every environment is different”. He felt that all members could “actually learn from each other and that’s the collegians support” that needed to be developed.

Teaching fellows (TF)

Angela

Angela, an experienced generalist classroom teacher, saw herself “as the enabler”, as someone there to “nurture the teacher candidates”. She saw her role was to “advise them, to give them honest feedback and to make them feel good about themselves”. Angela viewed the combined team efforts of construct members was “working to develop” the TCs. She saw the TF role as really “almost no different” to teaching; when “a child needs development”, so too did the candidates. She had confidence in her mentoring abilities.

Angela positioned herself with the MTs in a way to show them it was her “responsibility” to “enable” the TCs. She acted as an advocate for the TC. She also believed that she positioned herself as the “person that may intervene” when support was needed. Such that when a MT was “finding a student [candidate] particularly stressful”, she would step in and deal with that situation. She held that she was the person MTs would contact if they wanted anything “clarified” or if they had a “problem”.

Angela got “really excited” when she saw candidates performing and saw “something really good”. Conversely, she felt “absolutely distraught when things go badly”. She also became “quite frustrated” at times, particularly when she had to think about how she was going to “change the situation” when it was not going so well. She affirmed TFs needed “quite a skill set to be able to deal with lots of situations and lots of personalities and not have it affect you….or the other person”. Angela knew the MT could impact the candidate and TCs had impacted on MTs. She felt it was her role to stop those situations from occurring. Angela managed those situations to support the
MT and TC. Angela enjoyed working in her PSG with her current CS with whom she felt “comfortable” as they were a “co-operative” team. Over the years, Angela and her CS had built a very strong partnership; they “shared the load”.

Angela confirmed the reciprocity of professional knowledge development had been a huge opportunity for her. She stated:

_I’ve learned an awful lot. I feel as if it’s kept me current, more so than I was when I was at school actually. It’s changed how I perceive schools and classrooms and it’s made me appreciate more I think how some teachers can impact not only their own students, but our students._

Angela acknowledged that “personality…time [and] workload” impacted the experience but believed that “everyone’s there to help each other”.

**Linda**

Linda an experienced teacher saw herself as a “support” and “reliable source of assistance”. She believed she was “someone who could help them [TCs] become great teachers”.

Linda did not feel “positioned by others”. Whilst she had “great respect for people in power”, she did not feel that “anyone was in power”, as such. Although, she believed candidates saw people in power and “often work hard to work with these people”. Linda positioned herself as a role model. She believed if she presented “professionally” TCs would follow her modelling.

Linda had respect for classroom teachers and observed personal protocols. She was conscious of her presence in another teacher’s classroom and always liked to “touch base with them [MT] before” she went in to observe. She found being in the base school was good because she had “more contact” with MTs and she found that to be beneficial. Linda was very conscious of her situation and believed that she always acted in a “professional manner” knowing and “respecting” that she was in a privileged position.

Linda believed it was important “knowing all along where the [TC] is at” because it provided information for improvement and enabled her to contribute comments to TC
assessment. In one situation Linda felt “conflicted” when a TC said she was nervous about her observing. Initially Linda was concerned about the relationship she was developing with the candidate and could not understand why the TC did not want her to observe. Linda recalled:

She was practically on the verge of tears every time I would come and observe her. I spoke to her about why this was the case and she said that she's always had a lot of pressure throughout school to perform and now getting up in front of a class, it's exactly the same, except she's the one who's doing the pressuring.

Linda felt she needed to get to know the candidates better, to “delve a bit deeper” so that she could understand and in turn provide better support. Linda believed “dealing with those sorts of anxieties was important”, because together (she and the TC) “needed to get over” that situation. Linda felt it was important and “really useful to understand them [TCs] as a person”. She felt that supported her understanding about “why they might be having particular issues” with something in the classroom that they were not coping with. Linda appreciated in her role she had a “responsibility towards the teacher candidates”. She needed to keep them “moving forward all the time”.

During her observations Linda found “extremes” in mentor practice that had the potential to impact candidates’ agency. She observed MTs who had a “strong practice” were a “wonderful influence” on the TCs. Conversely, she observed TCs who had “weaker” MTs “did not progress as much”. Linda found she needed to provide more support in those cases. She offered TCs strategies that allowed them to “grow as teachers”. Whilst Linda observed varying practices in MTs she believed they worked in a “respectful manner” and “provided a great role model” to the candidates.

Linda also observed emotional reactions. She noticed intense emotional impacts on others as TCs expressed concern that their “feelings were so new and incomprehensible” that they needed support to identify and verbalise their emotions so they could move forward. Those moments required deep discussion with “support and advice on how to deal with such emotions”. Linda recounted MTs “dealt with these feelings often - often asking for assistance”. She made herself available to MTs who needed extra support and advice.
Linda built professional relationships through “regular interaction” and noted that some MTs were more “open to discussions” than others, but all of them “appreciated” the “regular contact and feedback”. Linda firmly believed everyone in her PSG was “clear about who's doing what”. She affirmed that she was available to provide mentors “extra support with regards to their student”. She felt a major part of that was “listening” and making sure she was “hearing what [was] being said”. Linda believed that she ensured there were always “options for further communication”. She perceived her relationships were “not as strong with the mentor teacher as it is with the teacher candidate” but attributed that to spending “more time with the teacher candidates” as they were “directly under [her] umbrella”.

Linda believed that there was reciprocity in the construct and being in the TF role had given her a “lot more exposure to a lot more classrooms”. She had been “able to see really good practice”. Linda believed “when you see other situations, you get a better feel for what you're doing yourself”. Her observations are moments of “opportunity to reflect on [her] own practice and make improvements where necessary”.

*Michael*

Michael, a highly experienced educator, saw himself in a position where he had “commitments to three parties; the candidate, the school and the university”. Working in the TF role he thought he had a moral imperative as “a servant to each of these parties”. He believed within the university side of things he was “at the lowest level” and in the school situation saw himself “as almost separate in a lot of ways”, more of a “link person in regard to the partnerships with the university”. He found the TF role “extremely satisfying”.

Michael believed he had “a great deal of autonomy” in his role and was “quite confident” that he could “position [himself] to achieve”. Recent episodes he experienced left him feeling more positioned “by the demands of the university”. He recognised there were “degrees of power within the program” and believed those extended across the university and schools. He also believed “position and power” were important because “within any organisation there must be positions of power” for its success. Whilst Michael agreed power was essential he observed “power varies greatly from school to school” but at the university a few key people “hold the most
power”. He found one of the greatest complexities of his role was the need to be “dealing constantly with a number of people in power at the university and within the school”. Michael found that, working across many institutions, “identifying the power figures” and working ‘with’ them was one of the most difficult tasks of the role.

Michael recognised that his position could affect others because he was the “person that links to the school and the [university]”. He also believed in his position, as opposed to that of the CS, there was “more credibility” in the schools and that helped to “break down any barriers” within the team. Michael firmly believed the TF was “very much one that creates a positive relationship with the clinical specialist and the schools”. He believed the roles of the TF and CS did “complement each other”. He clearly defined himself as the “communicator” in his PSG.

Michael revealed he had “felt more stressed” due to dealing with a “greater number of at risk or demanding candidates”. He believed he was impacted by TCs’ emotional states and experienced “many of the same emotions as the candidates at the time that they are under most stress”. Michael knew the MT “anxieties and politics” could affect the TC and vice versa. He perceived that the way he worked with others and sorted out issues, was as a “team”; that he and the people he worked with worked through things and talked about things together.

Michael had confidence in his skills and knowledge and knew that he was person the schools would turn to whenever they have a question or concern. He believed that from time to time he was a “little compromised” by his need to be “loyal to the university, school and candidate”. Michael saw that working with TCs was the “most important part” of his TF role, and felt it was where he worked “most positively”. He believed if he was providing support and feedback then the candidate was going to “perform in a better way”.

Michael perceived the professionalism of the university staff, school staff and candidates was outstanding. He worked hard to develop relationships where there was “trust between the groups”. He felt TFs needed to have a good understanding of the program and what the construct members were “trying to achieve”. His relationship with the CS was “really important” because it needed to be a “trust[ing] and cooperative
Beyond the relationship with his CS he realised he needed to be “communicating very strongly” with the MTs and others within the schools who were really important in regard to making the practicum work. Michael worked to build strong relationships by “building good lines of communication and then maintaining them and having everything as open as possible”. He felt he had a “responsibility to develop a partnership between the university and the school and to maintain it for the benefit of the candidates’ ongoing development”.

Michael declared that working in the TF role offered reciprocity in terms of professional development and support. He saw the role as an opportunity to “actually influence others about trying new things”. He attributed that ability to him having been “out and seen the ‘whole world’ and that made a difference” to him. Michael saw that his role enabled him to “bring back ideas” to his school and they were “starting to realise that there are other places out there with great things happening”.

**School-based mentors**

Mentor teachers (MT)

Sharon

Sharon, a highly experienced classroom teacher, saw herself as a “conduit for the student [candidate]”, a “link in the chain...between the parties”. Sharon identified herself as a “teacher, friend and mentor” and felt that she “was giving back to the profession by assisting a new teacher”. She believed she was working “in a team” environment, supported by the others around her.

Sharon did not see that the attitudes or positions of others affected her at all as she believed she was working within a “very professional relationship”. She did not perceive of or “notice particular positions of power”. She was cognisant of “other people in positions of power” but from her perspective there were “no signs of concern of possible power-plays”. Sharon knew the people in positions of power and believed she was a part of a “partnership rather than an underling”.

Sharon believed that being in the base school was very useful as the TF had intimate school knowledge. She believed that helped because in-depth knowledge of the context
supported the TF role and teaching was “really important to have the classroom component”. Sharon believed that even a very small component of teaching could “make a huge difference”:

You understand the clientele and the background of the children...in a way that you could not understand if you're not teaching at that school.

Sharon recognised her mentoring style could “have a big impact”. She saw the way that a MT interacted on a “personal level” could develop a “rapport with someone” and relationships could be affected by personal styles. Sharon supposed there could be “conflicts about perspective...in philosophy and understanding”. She acknowledged that working with the TF and CS in those situations provided a “supportive environment” for candidates who might be struggling.

Sharon respected all construct members and felt they “absolutely all worked in a professional manner”. She believed that “all dealings have been exemplary”. Sharon felt that she was “absolutely fortunate” that the “calm, professional manner of all involved” had made mentoring a “very pleasant experience”.

Sharon believed that construct members’ roles “complement each other well” and there were “multiple opportunities” for the TF and CS to visit the classroom. She perceived there was a lot of support given the “increased number of times” that the CS and TF went into her classroom to visit. It made a difference in terms of “seeing the regular progress” and the ability to update and be able to “catch anything that’s going wrong”. She had close communications with her TF and CS as she regularly met with them “when they come in to supervise”. She also maintained communication via email exchange in relation to the TC’s progress. She engaged in “incidental chats” with her TF and CS on a regular basis. Sharon “really enjoy[ed] working in a team teaching situation” with her TF and CS. She believed that some “communication could be simplified, particularly about the requirements from the university side”.

Sharon believed there was reciprocity in the construct as she learnt something every time she had a new TC; it helped her “sort out processes” in her classroom and could “really highlight flaws [and] strengths” in her practice. She felt that the skills and knowledge of others involved had been likewise impressive and thorough. Working in
her MT role also made her reflect on her own practice and how she “might improve”. She believed her role as a mentor enhanced her “self-concept as a professional”.

_Cherrie_

Cherrie, an experienced classroom teacher, saw herself as acting in an “action research model”. She saw her role was to share what she knew about “the craft” to “model” and to “articulate the process” and then to give TCs feedback on whatever they felt that they wanted to improve on. Cherrie also recognised that she may see “something very glaringly obvious too” and that would require her to “suggest to the TCs that they should perhaps work on” that area as well.

Cherrie saw that positioning did have an impact but “more so [on] the teacher candidate”:

_I guess you've got to be very careful...there is a sort of power play involved...as a mentor teacher you have an input into how well they do and teacher candidates are very, very upset if they don't do very, very well._

Cherrie positioned herself and the TCs by way of asserting she would “always start with the intention of having a collaborative team teaching type relationship”. She further positioned candidates based on their course completion stage, so if they were in their second year and it was their last teaching placement she adopted what she called the “Vygotskian principle” of gradually releasing her role towards them, allowing them to gain “some sort of autonomy”. If they were not at that stage then she adopted a “more supervisory role” as opposed to a “collegiate role”. She believed it really depended on the teacher candidate.

Cherrie believed the emotional impact of working with candidates could vary. It could be very exciting at times but “when you have a student that's failing...like you haven't found the way to fix it” there was an “element of stress”. Cherrie’s personal and emotional experience of dealing with a failing candidate made her feel like she had “failed” too.
Cherrie was able to “unpack” that situation with her TF and CS, they had “discussions about it” and together they were able to “rationalise” it. She found that “was very good and very reassuring”. Cherrie felt like she had “been fortunate, with the supervisory people” and believed she established “good relationships” based on “mutual respect” with her TF and CS. She declared the TF and CS were her “mentors in a sense”; if she “had a problem [she] would ring up and say, ‘What's your take on this type of thing?’” She found support from the other construct members, as they were “collegiate and collaborative and always willing to discuss candidates”. She felt everyone had “very clear defined roles”.

Cherrie did express her concern over her ability to feel completely comfortable when reporting or commenting on candidate progress:

_There's almost an expectation and I think that's increased actually...some teacher candidates coming in with an expectation that they're going to get a very high thing [mark]...I think we were all very careful about sort of making negative judgments on any of the students, but being fair...having a sense of responsibility for the teaching profession._

In these situations Cherrie called on her TF and CS for consultation and support. She saw their input as being a “moderation session”. She realised “if you're not on the same page then that probably would affect the student's results”. Cherrie acknowledged that assessment, or making judgements about a candidate’s progress was a “subjective decision when it comes down to it”. She posited that having similar “perspectives of what constituted fantastic teaching, what constituted just good solid teaching and what constituted someone who needed some extra support” helped her make consistent judgements.

Cherrie acknowledged that there was reciprocity in the practicum experience:

_I'm always quite keen to have students...it's very good for my teaching...I'm forced to think more carefully about how I'm organising, questioning etcetera, so it's good for me._
Cherrie believed “reflection on your practice” was the main thing. She felt she could “always improve something”.

Tania

Tania, a highly experienced classroom teacher, identified herself as “very confident about planning and teaching”. She saw herself as being “open to growing and changing over the years”. She believed she instilled in her students the ideology that “that we are continuous learners”. Tania believed “that if you model, if you scaffold, if you support and be passionate about their [TC’s] career choice then success should be there for them”. Tania felt if the candidate did not do well it was also “a bit of a reflection on [her]”. She really believed that she puts her “heart, soul and effort into” each candidate because that was the “role” of a mentor and that was her “responsibility”.

Tania said she preferred to “treat the student as a person of equal-position giving them the responsibility and confidence to make decisions”. She believed she positioned herself “as a friend [and] mentor; someone who was modelling best practices”. Tania positioned her role as the one in control, giving the candidates “some freedom” but that depended on “their ability”. She felt if they had “potential” then she “enjoys watching that” and gave them more freedom. Yet, she denied that roles or positions affect relationships.

When others came into her classroom, Tania did not feel like they were “judging” her but she did feel strongly that a candidate’s performance was a “reflection of [her] professionally”. Tania believed that mentors (MTs) “have a very important role” in the development of new teachers and she positioned herself as the giver of knowledge. Tania conveyed she was “teaching them [TC] constantly [her] methodology”:

I always talk to them about my philosophy of education, I always say to them it’s very important to know...what you think, what you believe in.

Tania would like to see “more screening” of MTs as she believed not all teachers are “suitable to be mentors”.

Tania believed that the “most important relationship is to make sure she [has] a relationship with the student [TC]”. She needed to “develop personal relationships so it
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[w\as] enjoyable”. She took her role “very personally”. Tania saw she had built good relationships through “openness, fairness [and a] sense of shared responsibility”. She felt everyone was “very professional, on time, prepared and motivated”.

When Tania had the TF or CS visit she liked to take that opportunity to tell them everything that she knew about her TC, she would talk about “their progress, their issues”. Tania viewed the relationships with the TF or CS as one of support, when issues arose she would “contact them and follow through”.

Tania suggested that she believed there was reciprocity in the construct. She believed MTs “absolutely” do learn from TCs. It challenged her to stay new and “strive to be a better teacher”.

Molly, an experienced classroom teacher, identified herself as a “facilitator”, someone who was there to help the TCs with “little bits here and there”. She believed that candidates needed to “find their own teaching style and the way that works for them” and the mentor’s role was to “help them work that out”.

Molly positioned herself as a guide, someone who was there to provide guidance and support. She also realised that the MT had the “ability to make or break [the] whole experience within a school”, depending on how that “mentor functioned”. If the MT positioned themselves as “someone who talked down” to a TC or saw them as “some little person that is still learning” then that could be “really hard”.

Molly believed she worked in a manner that supported the development of the TC’s professional agency. She approached the TC asking, “What are you learning?” then encouraged them to share their ideas and “put them into practice”. Molly proclaimed that “part of being a good mentor is modelling that continuous drive for learning”. She wanted “them to continue to improve their practice”.

Molly believed that building relationships had its own “emotional implications”. She acknowledged “candidates can get quite anxious” and realised that was usually about university requirements and their own workloads. She realised at those times of high
stress mentors needed to be “considerate of the emotional impact that...actions or feedback or behaviour might have upon the teacher candidate”.

Molly knew if she was to “ever have any issues in dealing with the candidate”, that she could always go to the TF and CS and they would “always offer advice”. She would catch the TF and CS when they would “pop-in...have a quick chat” about how things were going. She saw the TF and CS worked hard to support TCs:

I always get the impression that they [TF/CS] really want the best for them [TCs]. I think they really try hard to make sure that everybody’s got the best experience happening. The second they [TF/CS] think anyone is struggling, they’re right on top of it because they’re like let’s address this now and help you through this...it seems to be quite a positive thing.

Molly considered that the TF and CS are “probably careful in the way that they choose their mentors”. She saw there was reciprocity in the experience and stated that she “actually really like[ed] learning from them [TCs] and having them there...it’s important for [her] professionally as well”.

Amy

Amy, an experienced classroom teacher, identified herself as a “facilitator/advocate...a ‘go to person’”. She saw the mentoring role as something teachers have a “responsibility” to do and should do if they were “capable of doing it”. Amy considered that she was providing the “real in-school-based experience” needed by new teachers.

Amy was aware her position “absolutely” affected others, but recognised that in order to be a “successful teaching mentor” you needed to appreciate that it does not “mean that you are the be all and end all and are always right”:

It’s very, very rare that you see a mentor that thinks they’ve got that power over the candidate...but I think it does happen.

Amy believed that if she positioned herself like a “facilitator” then she was “going to have a much more successful relationship”. She positioned the MT role by suggesting it
was “up to the mentor to manage that relationship because they were the professionally experienced person in the relationship”:

...somebody that they can sort of bounce ideas off and reflect with...a supportive role that allows them to observe teaching and get feedback on their teaching as a means to help them reflect.

Amy saw the role of the TF and CS as quite useful in “providing that bridge between teacher candidate and mentor”. She believed the TF and CS provided clarity to the university requirements.

Amy believed she had developed a “fantastic professional relationship” with all construct members; “that is worth role-modelling to the teacher candidate”. She thought it worked “really well”. Amy believed the TF and CS liked the MT taking a lead role in managing the relationships:

...I think that the relationship works really positively...it’s quite supportive. If there has been some sort of an issue with teaching candidates then we [MT/TF/CS] can bounce ideas off each other.

Amy saw her relationship with the TF and CS as supportive when they came in to visit. It was a way the she could “take a load off”, as they could give the MT an “outlet” and support by giving them “more to think about as well”. Amy confirmed that she worked with the TF and CS “very similarly”. They gave her “a bit of extra advice” about how she could do things as well. Amy affirmed that she stayed in touch with the TF and CS regularly by “emailing so that we can make sure that we have communication”. She saw one way of dealing with any issues was through regular contact that way she could explain what was “happening [in] her school” and they could tell her about “uni and that sort of thing; we can work more flexibly”. Amy recognised that if the TF and CS were not willing to appreciate that flexibility, then that could “really affect the situation and the whole experience”.

Amy confirmed she saw there was reciprocity between the construct members. By working in the construct, building the relationships with the TF and CS, she asserted:
I think that it really sort of keeps you self-aware and it sort of enables a lot of self-reflection on our part. It gives you that opportunity to regularly do a bit of a self-check...You know, it makes you sort of second-guess what you’re doing. It does keep you on your toes and I think it helps you develop best practice.

Amy clarified that she saw her relationships as “quite reciprocal” and “successful”:

...if you see yourself as being...open to their ideas and that they feel respected and that it’s a mutual respect, then you’re going to have a much more successful relationship.

**Teacher candidates**

**Teacher candidates (TC) - 1st year**

**Jacqui**

At the time of the interview Jacqui had completed two placements. During her initial practicum experience Jacqui began to develop an emergent teacher identity but was not confident within that image. She felt she was an actor “playing the part of someone that [she was] not overly confident being”. By the time of her second placement she had realised that professional identity “constantly changes”.

In her first placement Jacqui found “grappling with the social and emotional aspects of children beyond the curriculum” a challenge. She felt she lacked teaching skills and was “really anxious before entering into the school” because she felt she was just not equipped to perform the role and did not have all the skills needed to perform as a teacher. She identified that she needed to do a “lot of reflection”.

Jacqui sensed that her MT liked having “power and authority” in their relationship and often was not very “accommodating”. She and her MT “had different personalities” and Jacqui believed that affected her relationship development and learning. At times Jacqui “did not feel like [her] opinion was valued by [her] mentor teacher” and that “affected [her] ability to learn”. Jacqui observed her MT was involved in various committees across the school and “her power was exercised quite a lot”. She found her MT “accommodating to an extent”, but not as much or in the same way as the TF and
CS. Because Jacqui did not feel much support from the school she “learned to not ask as many questions”. Jacqui felt she was “encouraged to position [herself]” but believed she lacked the level of confidence required for the placement. She felt there were power positions in relation to the people supporting her and believed that was “largely due to their experience and roles”. Initially Jacqui did not seek support from her TF and CS and increasingly felt less connected to the school. During that time she turned to her CS and TF for emotional and pedagogical support. Jacqui found the TF and CS supportive and their “sharing and reflecting” time gave her “more confidence”.

Jacqui learnt there was “definitely a difference in the relationships” between the TF and CS. She believed that her TF had been the most supportive but acknowledged both “provoked an awful lot of thought and had an awareness of where we were at but also the next step, so what [she] needed to do next”. Jacqui believed her TF and CS were always ready to “work through” her needs and that was “brilliant”. Jacqui felt her relationship with the TF was “stronger purely because they do take on more of a nurturing role, they're nurturing you to become what you inevitably want to become”.

Jacqui believed that there was reciprocity in the practicum and that her MTs could learn from her as well:

...there is “always going to be learnings for anyone, you never stop learning...look at candidates that are coming through and identify what they can bring to the classroom.

Kerrie

Kerrie had almost completed her second placement at the time of the interview. She had not really considered her identity before but saw having a teacher identity was important. She believed her teacher identity “evolved” during her placement experience. She began to see herself as a “facilitator of learning”. Kerrie believed that her professional identity emerged as she was enabled to “try out [her] own things”. She felt that the people she interacted and worked with during the placement had “similar personality traits” as that of her own and found it was “easy to get along with them” as a result.

Kerrie believed that “power is subject to perception” and that she and the other construct members were “equals on the journey”. In her first placement Kerrie
“definitely felt like a peer” and believed that she “was treated like one...because [she] went in and...acted like one”. She thought the CS, TF and MT had power over grades but she “was in control” of the effort put into her teaching.

Kerrie’s first practicum experience was in an open plan learning environment, which she saw as opportune in terms of the structure enabling her to “witness several approaches to teaching. She believed that modelling helped her practice improve. Kerrie also believed that her outcomes were based on her “performance as a teacher” and she strongly insisted that she had “control over that”.

With a range of emotional episodes, Kerrie’s placement was physically and emotionally “draining”. She implied a sense of connectedness to the school, yet she expressed “surprise” that “no effort” was made to introduce her or the other TCs to staff. It was up to her to “build professional relationships” and she found that “quite difficult”. It took some time but she felt had made headway by the “end of the practicum”. She felt a lot of “support and kindness” from her TF and CS” as she called on them as needed.

During the placement Kerrie “maintained a positive attitude”. She focused on “gathering and using feedback” and believed that her TF, CS and MT “helped [her] to become a better teacher”. Kerrie thought the relationship between her TF and CS, was “a great relationship”, but felt the “teaching fellow definitely [took] the lead on most things”.

Kerrie always held in the back of her mind that if she could not manage to make the placement work, she had the support of the TF and CS:

I see the benefit of their experience, they know so much about teaching and school life...they’re there to help us if we need it, and just popping in little bits of advice here and there and just helping out on every stage of the journey...they obviously have an important role to play.

Kerrie appreciated the “input from the teaching fellow and the clinical specialist”, and she found that “reassuring”. She asserted she made every effort to work with others, she was conscious of doing that “without creating any conflict, to just keep gently pushing [her] own agenda”.

Kerrie firmly believed that if she placed herself on the “same sort of level” as others in the construct she was going to be able to “quickly establish that relationship”. She believed:

...we’re all adults, we’re all grown-ups. I’m not a school kid anymore.

Kerrie saw there was reciprocity in the relationships she had developed and in her placement schools; she considered how others could learn from her:

...definitely, I think I’ve had a lot of life experience...I’ve done a Masters in librarianship as well, so I have a passion for children’s literature, and I guess I’ve got skills that they don’t have...we can learn from each other.

Maree

Maree had just completed her first year of placements at the time of the interview. She found her first placement “very challenging”. In her first placement Maree wanted to become the students’ “friends or sister”. She since realised that she needed to develop her classroom relationships as a teacher. Maree always saw herself “as a learner”.

Maree believed she positioned herself as a “person who’s quite friendly”, so she worked to “create conversations and find similarities” between people. She believed that helped them “work well together”. Yet, she also claimed she found it “hard to start a conversation or ask questions” because of her English language skills. She said she would “love to open up more” to her MTs, but her language barrier inhibited her. Maree lacked professional agency and considered her English as a Second Language (ESL) background accounted for that.

She was concerned in her first placement, as she was “nervous and did not really know what to do”. She struggled a lot with “lesson planning and looking for activities”, but did get a lot of support from her TF and CS during that time. Maree “learnt a lot of things” from her TF and CS content wise and also picked up teaching strategies. She continued “getting a lot of help and ideas” from her TF and CS and valued the support she was getting because it came from “professional and experienced teachers”. She revealed “their advice and the conversations” helped her with “planning lessons” and
developing “behavioural management strategies”. She highly valued her TF and saw her as the most supportive member of the construct.

Maree considered that she had the “potential to bring in new ideas for integrating art into a generalised classroom”, but recognised that she was mainly just learning from her mentors.

Mary

Mary was in the early stages of her second placement at the time of the interview. Mary believed, as a more mature candidate, she needed to carefully consider her professional identity. She was “very aware” about how she came “across to children, other teachers and to parents”. Mary saw herself as a passionate and emotional person “very warm” and “quite intuitive”. She felt she was more the type of person who had her “attention everywhere” and tended to “put her hand on a kid’s back” in ‘motherly’ fashion to show her nurturing side. She considered herself as becoming “reflective” but not necessarily very good at “communicating self-reflection”. She perceived she was “getting better at being far more clinical, far more pragmatic”.

Mary positioned herself as a candidate. She was aware and “really sensitive” to her presence in someone else’s classroom. She recognised that she was a “visitor and a guest” and appreciated the MTs “accommodating” her. Mary was conscious of “taking away” her MT’s opportunity to teach by “being the teacher in their place”. She considered that might be a “bit disruptive for them”. Mary recognised that they were “gracious” about it, but her awareness remained. Whilst observing her MTs teach she tended to “make mental notes of what they do really well”. She willingly pointed that out to them and believed it helped her build a “better relationship”.

Mary revealed there were a number of shifting patterns in her, and her professional agency had been developing. She identified that she had “become much more reflective”. She summarised her reflective process:

I don’t like spinning around myself that much but you have to actually do it with this course.
Mary declared, that in the classroom “you really have to be reflective and they [mentors] force you to be reflective… so much of it is personal”. Mary elaborated on her perception of reflecting on her practice:

*I mean it’s professional but it’s personal. That I missed something is personal for me and so it is a bit of an emotional rollercoaster in that sense because you do have to expose yourself in that way and then not only be criticised but reflect on it. You just want to run away from that stuff usually. ‘I learnt my lesson’, I just want to go now and you can’t. They make you stand still and really look and stare it down and I found that quite confronting.*

Whilst Mary found self-reflection quite confronting she also saw enormous benefit in it.

In her first placement, Mary felt like her MT’s “style” required her “to bring a lot” more to her teaching practice than she had at that point. By her second placement Mary felt “more prepared, as a person”. She believed she had made herself “more useful” and was “more comfortable”. Mary was “very nervous to constantly be in a new environment” having to get to know everyone was challenging but found the support of her TF “really helpful”.

Mary made a “big distinction” between the MT and the TF. She felt “very supported” by her MT, but believed that relationship “depends on how organised they are”. She believed “if they are organised they are happy to have you there”. Mary really liked her TF but was “very aware that it's a professional thing”, whereas with her MT she saw that to be a more humour-based relationship. Mary confirmed it was her TF that she was most supported by and she reveres that support:

*…you email her, she’s right back…nothing passes her by. I mean sometimes I wish some things would but nothing passes her by. She’s got eyes everywhere – you know that you can email her any time and she will get back to you. She is very, very, very good at what she does. She’s very liked by everybody.*

Mary saw her progress through the course had been a steep learning curve:
It’s been very confronting…it’s made me feel like I was back at school again…I’m being evaluated and it brings back all those feelings…I felt very vulnerable and very sort of insecure.

Mary appreciated her TF had helped her through those difficult times. She believed there was reciprocity of learning in the practicum and whilst she was not entirely sure what the others learnt she would like to believe that they could learn from her too.

**Lyn**

Lyn was in the final stages of her second placement at the time of the interview. She revealed, that because of her past teaching experiences overseas, she had “spent 10 years thinking” about her professional identity as a teacher. She appeared to have a strong sense of personal agency. She shared that she was looking “forward to developing [her] certain type learning culture in a classroom”. Lyn saw herself as a “go-getter”, someone who was not afraid to “speak up”. She thought that some people might read that as “a little pushy”.

Lyn felt a range of different emotions during her practicum. She felt “proud…for getting over a specific hurdle” and “frustrated” because there was something she knew intellectually but “still haven’t been able to achieve”. She also felt it was “a little annoying” that mentoring was “not consistent across the board”. She was conscious of what “other people [TCs]…report back…the kind of feedback they were given” by their MT and she wanted the same, but was not getting it from her MT. Lyn was cognisant of not letting her “frustration show in order to remain professional”.

Lyn believed the support she received from her TF and CS was beneficial:

They have a lot to give…observing them…being able to talk to them and getting the benefit of their advice and their experience…that is definitely really good…more than one gives you different aspects and gives you different opinions.

Lyn looked forward to getting to the point at which she could “turn off the rules” and “go by instinct and by experience”. She valued that in her TF and CS. Lyn did not see a “clear definition” between the TF and CS but noted she saw her TF more. She
enjoyed working with her TF; she helped her to “figure out some goals” which Lyn thought was “impressive”:

She’s been very supportive and open to me trying anything but also really clear on, “This is what ‘we’ need to do next. This is what ‘they’ [students] need to do next” so it’s not just sort of a free for all...she’s very good at that.

Lyn felt strongly that she was supported by a “team effort with the four people and the seminars”. She found that was “really helpful” and it made her “feel a little safer and more secure”. Lyn found it helpful that TCs went “into schools straight away” and that they tried “different grades” and “different schools”. She felt that there was a “brilliantly positive sort of growing and learning kind of attitude that’s been built” by her TF and that extended to her “personally - one on one” as well. Lyn felt “very supported” by that.

Lyn felt “balance” in the assessment of the practicum “was a little off”. She believed the TF and CS are better placed to assess the practicum, at least with moderation from the MT. She asserted MTs had “a different idea” about what the TCs were to be marked against.

Lyn believed that there was reciprocity in the practicum experience. She thought the TF and CS broaden their learning by hearing examples from the TCs about their experiences. She thought by “hearing about different backgrounds and different experiences in the practicum” helped “broaden their ability to teach the rest of the cohort”. Lyn thought they might use the experience to “build up knowledge”. She also thought the MTs might learn “new techniques”. Although she recognised that people in schools would need a “good culture” and be accepting of new ideas.

Elaine

Elaine was in the final stages of her second placement at the time of the interview. She attributed the practicum experience to feeling like she was “becoming more of a teacher”. Elaine strongly felt like she was a “part of the profession already just from the support, from all the staff, the peers and the people on placement as well”. She believed
her mentors had “accepted [her] like one of their peers”. She found that “an amazing and really reaffirming experience”.

Elaine believed that her acceptance into the profession was partly attributed to her positioning herself as somebody with a “keen attitude and positive attitude”. She presented herself as someone who was “ready and willing to give anything a go”. She believed a “good attitude” really helped build the relationships and then there was that trust there as well.

Elaine was significantly impacted by her practicum experiences:

...it’s been challenging ‘cause I feel for the kids. I’ve been in a school where it’s quite a high welfare [area] and that’s really impacted me just the way they [the children] live their lives and the way they’re even treated by some teachers in the school or not treated so well by some teachers. That’s been such a big impact on me...school really is their happy place...It’s like all this extra responsibility I feel on me just to make sure that all these kids get what they want and still feel safe and happy and secure when they come to school. It really hit home.

During times like that, Elaine experienced moments of self-doubt about her teaching and found that seeking support from her TF and CS was really helpful:

When I’m feeling stressed. I don’t feel I can teach anymore. Just knowing that I can talk to them [TF/CS] and they’ll be like, ‘Hang on. You know we’ve seen you in the classroom and we know that you’re able to do and you love doing what you do’...just being able to talk to them and talk through it is amazing.

Elaine felt “fortunate in the two placements” she experienced. She found her MTs had been “amazing and supportive”. They provided her with “plenty of resources and help” and they were just “really, really nice people”. Elaine appreciated the support offered to her by her TF and CS, “just knowing that they’re there and they’re happy to give advice” is helpful:
You know the first time we met them they were like, ‘Here’s our mobile number. Here’s our email. You can contact us if it’s an emergency anytime you need us’. So just knowing that if something really is going wrong that there is that support there no matter what. That’s really reassuring. Yeah, I’m very grateful.

Elaine believed the TF and CS listened to her needs and thought it was a sharing relationship in that way.

Daniel

Daniel was in the final stages of his second placement at the time of the interview. He had considered his professional identity and saw himself as the kind of teacher who was “able to embrace individual students” and meet their “needs…and interests”. He believed he would pursue teaching approaches that enabled students to “have the controls and explore and direct their own learning”. Daniel had an interest in “engaging with arts and the creativity” but also considered the “welfare perspective” of students. Daniel was interested in developing a safe learning environment where there was a focus “on learning as opposed to getting the right and wrong answers”.

Daniel positioned himself as a “self-directed” learner. He saw the self-directed learning approach had been an “important part of actually getting something out of the practicum”. Daniel believed that he had not “completed” all of his study and he “might not be entirely competent and know everything” he should know by that stage, so he took on a “fake it ‘till you make it approach”.

Daniel thought there was “confusion” about the practicum report, and claimed the MTs were not sure what “actually comes under some of those criteria”. He felt there was really just a bit of “ticking it off, rather than going digging deeper into what actually would constitute a lower level or higher level in that particular criteria”. Daniel thought MTs needed support with understanding the criteria and being more consistent in their assessment.

Daniel experienced “frustrating moments” with his MT’s “closed view about theory discussion”. He often tried to engage in professional theoretical discussions with his MT but found the whole “refusing to even engage” with theory “annoying” and difficult
to deal with. Daniel saw that as “a personal clash”. He also found it “frustrating” trying to “work with the different personalities”. Daniel perceived those issues as a “challenge” and he needed to find “a way of working around” them, he needed to rise to the challenge.

In his first placement school, Daniel observed the people were unwelcoming and “very cliquey”:

...they kind of did not want to know us at that school, so that was definitely a bit of a tension there to try and handle.

He noticed that most people, including his MT, did not speak in the staff meeting as only “one or two people lead most of the discussion”. Daniel considered those people to be the “ideas people” and other people “just don't speak”. He sought support from his TF:

He's been very handy for just discussing...issues without rocking the boat too much or offending anyone...he's definitely been that sort of good middle ground...he's very in touch with that teaching culture, like the school culture, like how teachers are within a school framework. I've definitely found that having [the TF] for that has been definitely very useful, just for how to approach things and phrase things without going into the wrong territory.

Daniel appreciated there was a “theoretical expertise there from the clinical specialist”. He valued seeing “how they developed their personal connections by incorporating some of their personal identity” whilst “still working with in that sort of teacher role”. He felt that he had “been able to approach everyone and get some kind of advice” when needed. Daniel found that he developed the strongest relationship with his CS, because they both had the arts passion and he was able to engage more fully through shared “interests and having that professional engagement”. Daniel thought there was reciprocity. He generally believed there was “something to learn from everything”.

Belinda

Belinda was in the final stage of her course at the time of the interview. She first considered her professional identity when in her first placement school. She believed she had a “very interesting teacher”, and it helped her identify the type of teacher she would like to be, but it also highlighted for her the type of teacher that she did not want to be as well. Belinda believed that “coming towards the end” of her course she felt the “strongest” about her identity. She felt that she was “now ready”. She believed she was “much more confident” and understood who she was a teacher, what she wanted and how she wanted to run her class.

Belinda acknowledged “at times” it was “very stressful” and there were times when she was “really overwhelmed”. She had a difficult lesson experience and “broke down a little bit”. That was in her first year and was a “big milestone” for her. Belinda felt “supported” because she had a “fantastic TF and CS” who provided support and advice. She felt “comfortable emailing them [TF/CS] and asking them for advice”, she knew they were “always willing to help”. Belinda had been with her current MT all year and thought “she knows what I like and what I dislike and my style of teaching” and “we have a really strong relationship”.

Belinda had some doubts about her skills but believed by going through the job selection criteria she had re-affirmed her abilities. She sought support from her TF reviewing and reflecting in preparation for her job applications.

Belinda believed that there was reciprocity in the practicum. She had a “really strong relationship” and trusted that her mentors (MTs) did learn from her as well. Belinda thought her TF had “learnt quite a lot” from her as well.

Amelia

Amelia was in the final stage of her course at the time of the interview. She had considered her professional identity and had developed a “strong kind of angle of social justice”. She saw that stance as a “responsibility”, an “opportunity to provide a sense of social equity” to young learners. Amelia saw herself as “providing equal or equitable
resources, as being an equitable resource for all kids”. At that stage in her course she did not “really feel like a student” she felt more like a “learning professional”. Throughout her placements Amelia had been able to “implement ideas” and “act upon things” that she felt were “important”.

Amelia reflected on her practicum and thought it was “like a bit of a runaway train”, in that once it got to a “certain point” it was “really hard to do anything about”. Amelia had some difficult practicum experiences. In one instance she worked through a placement where the “teacher's style” was not in line with what was taught at the university. Amelia confirmed she “learnt” from that placement and had a “really great experience with the kids”, but she felt more “confident” when she had the “research and the theory” behind her and could see results.

Amelia questioned her MT’s “understanding of university marking policies”. She suggested their “ways of assessing is probably something that's a bit lacking”:

...essentially having the mentor teacher assess...they’re not trained in assess[ing] us and be[ing] responsible for such a large part of our mark, I think there's real issues when there's no strong connections with the university. I think that having this other person that has nothing to do with the university marking a university rubric is a bit challenging for them.

Amelia strongly believed MTs needed “some training” to ensure assessment was “equitable for all students”. She also asserted that working with a MT, who was perhaps not on the same page as the university was “really draining” and that “combined with course load and everything can be overwhelming”.

Amelia believed emotions could “impact strongly” when on placement:

...like when you see a classroom where it's not fair, where you witness you know, discrimination or you know, beat up between students or between teachers and students. It's really upsetting and I guess it kind of makes me a bit angry. I think it impacts strongly basically I think if you have a strong teacher identity and a reason for going into teaching and when you don’t see that reflected in a classroom it's really
challenging. It's no good screaming about it, you've got to find other ways in a school to kind of be diplomatic about it and just slowly make an impact.

On that occasion Amelia requested a placement school move. She sought assistance from her TF and CS and was surprised when her opinion was taken on board; she was listened to and the move was approved. That “meant a lot” to her, she felt valued.

Amelia appreciated the “breadth of knowledge and understanding” she gained from “working in [and] observing a variety of settings”. She found support from the “mentor teacher in a more positive placement” situation and acknowledged they were “quite understanding”. Amelia appreciated that her TF and CS helped during times of “compounding pressures” and just “offering support and understanding” at those times was beneficial. Overall, she saw that she was supported during her placements:

I think certain mentor teachers had [been supportive] and others haven’t but I think I've been fairly lucky in terms of university staff...I still feel supported by my clinical specialist and teaching fellow.

Amelia believed in order to have a successful placement you needed to “establish those relationships fairly quickly”.

Amelia was uncertain about the reciprocity in her placement experiences but remained optimistic in thinking that “everybody learns from everyone all the time” and thought that perhaps others might also, so she assumed it might be possible.

Chapter summary

Roles, responsibilities and power relationships

Typically, and historically, there is an expert-novice relationship enacted in the practicum. This often creates unequal ‘unidirectional’ relationships where a dominant role, usually the mentor, is in a position of power. Participants in this study presented a range of views on whether they perceive that holds true in this supervisory construct model.
The mentors (CS, TF and MTs) considered they were in a situation where they could largely position themselves. They exercised autonomy to make decisions but felt there were greater positions of power at both the schools and university. Mentors linked closely to the university revered that power to a greater extent than those mentors only associated with schools, in doing so they not only position themselves but also the institutions.

Participants’ perceptions of power were varied and largely considered as a negative if power was used as a divisive force or means to coerce. Of those participants that addressed the notion of power, it was seen as having degrees of influence or significance – higher levels or lower levels – intimating superior and subordinate positions. Whilst power was present in the minds of some participants, it seemed to be acceptable for an ‘organisation’, particularly in order to provide organisation and structure. However, it was not considered an appealing approach for the practicum experience. The notion of power in positioning was presented as an ‘issue’; something to be ‘dealt’ with creating a notional way of having to ‘identify’ and ‘manage’ power players, implying a burdensome or unappealing approach. In their individual roles mentor and candidate participants alike positioned their roles and selves against their counterparts. The concepts of knowledge, credibility, experience and relationships seemed to influence power and positioning. This process also seemed to subjugate negative notions of power.

**Roles and positioning**

Participants appeared to use power and positioning in a very fluid manner. They used it to inflate or deflate their own position, to build efficacy and confidence and to manage others. They also used it politically to manoeuvre around the practicum space and enact their role. Participants shared experiences and perceptions of accessing the notions of power and positioning to fulfil their own agenda.

Some candidates, in their first placements, felt that they were able to position themselves, even encouraged to do so, but had no idea how to do that. They were heavily reliant on the support from the mentors. Often in the early stages of the
practicum some candidates struggled to comprehend the experience as they largely felt overwhelmed by the new environment.

Other candidates managed to position themselves but perhaps not entirely as they perceived. There were a range of positions candidates believed they placed themselves in; an equal, an expert other, subservient, as having their own agenda, a self-directed learner, friend, visitor and guest. Whilst candidates may have attempted or even succeeded in such positioning, this cannot be confirmed from the current body of data.

**Mentoring, support and development**

Most candidates managed a range of emotions and fears when either comparing or competing for professional growth. Few candidates shared feelings of being settled and belonging in the situation – those candidates relished in the moment ‘knowing’ they were in the right space. Daniel, a first year candidate took on the façade, the ‘fake it till you make it’ approach, demonstrating a lack of skill and ability, yet he had a very strong sense of self-direction for his own learning. Another, Mary, articulated a ‘forced’ or dominant sense of having to “stand still and stare it down”, a process of reflection and personal satisfaction of overcoming the inevitable need to ‘stop, absorb, reflect and respond’.

Some candidates demonstrated insecurity in attempting new skills and working in the practicum. Where possible, they used available opportunities to discern preferred teaching styles but experienced feelings of inadequacy and changing levels of dependency, between various mentors. Many retained feelings of dependency, but that was not necessarily viewed as negative, although perhaps more so when they were heavily dependent on their mentor teacher.

Most mentor teachers viewed the success or failure of their candidate as personal reflection of their ability to teach, or mentor. As such they invested a lot of emotional energy in their candidate’s development. On the odd occasion where they could not buoy the candidate’s development they found themselves feeling like a failure. They found those situations particularly difficult to deal with and often sought the additional support of other mentors (TF and CS) to provide reassurances to them.
The ‘teachers’ and ‘unteachers’

Historically the teaching profession has been viewed in two distinctly different ways, by teachers who teach in classrooms and academics who research best practice. These differing viewpoints have revealed a conceptual gap between how classroom teachers think about teaching and how teacher preparation programs now prepare teachers to teach. This understanding may go some way towards the thinking around some of the personal, pedagogical and professional issues current mentors and candidates deal with during the practicum experience. Participant perceptions of the tasks of teaching varied between the member groups within the study’s construct as well as the individuals in the practicum experience.

Many mentor teachers did view the teaching fellow and clinical specialist as ‘external mentors’, positioning them outside of the school structure. The notion of ‘separation’ of ‘us’ and ‘them’ as mentors was particularly the case for mentor teachers and those who were not located in a base school; the role distinction was present.

Building relationships

Clinical specialists and teaching fellows, in this study, strongly focused on the need to support the development of effective relationships. They believed they created effective relationships between each other, the schools, university and with the teacher candidates. They shared their experiences of how they created intricate and delicate balances between personal, individual, school and university needs. They bore a great responsibility and took their roles very seriously. Clinical specialists and teaching fellows understood the critical need to maintain harmony and effectively manage the relationships that support all members during the practicum.

In enacting their roles they worked tirelessly to build and maintain strong relationships, ensure good open lines of communication, delegate, negotiate, cooperate, deliberate, share learning and understandings and eventually celebrate. Mentors, whilst they worked hard to get it right, recognised that, that does not always happen. They acknowledged they had moments where something went awry. It was in those moments that they called on additional support and worked collegiately to solve problems.
The clinical specialists and teaching fellows openly showed outwards signs of appreciation and respect for nuances they encountered in the numerous and varying contexts, working with diverse candidates, mentor teachers, students and school cultures (e.g., see Carli’s reflections from page 94 and Angela’s from page 98. They were often emotionally or professionally torn by the need to meet the needs of diverse groups and structures, but they actively sought to build and strengthen partnerships (e.g., see Michael’s reflections from page 101).

Clinical specialists and teaching fellows believed they built a culture of support and networking as a ‘way of working’ with each other. They believed they had built such strong connections to each other that they could call on and rely upon each other in times of difficulty. They felt that level of support had been developed over time and had not always been the case but was born out of necessity. They felt they had taken their team practices and used them to work in partnerships with schools and classroom mentors. They believed the successful factors for working in professional and reciprocal relationships included demonstrating strong credibility, openness, reliability, transparency, understanding, diplomacy and discretion. They felt strongly about practices such as mutual respect, working together, openness, reciprocity of learning and development, reflection, flexibility, shared responsibility and role-modelling.

Teaching fellows felt a strong sense of commitment to the program. They saw themselves firstly as members of the teaching profession, and secondly as a university employer. They had built strong relationships with school staff and struggled to divide their loyalties between the school and the university requirements.

Mentor teachers seemed to share many of the same beliefs about ways of working together in the supervisory construct model. They believed the construct members’ roles complemented each other well. They saw a lot of support, not only for the candidates but for them in their mentoring role as well. Mentor teachers appreciated that they could call on the university-based mentors for support and advice, particularly when dealing with difficult situations or candidates.

Candidates used the construct members to build their knowledge, skills and professional agency. Candidates who had a greater level of agency tended to feel better about their
practicum experience and had an increased sense of achievement (e.g., see Lyn’s reflections from page 117). They took advantage of the support and called on ‘expert others’ for a plethora of opportunities and learning experiences. Candidates valued the opportunity to seek advice and engage in conversations with all mentors.

Not all candidates or mentor teachers saw the distinction between the teaching fellow and the clinical specialist and sensed that they seemed to do the same thing. Although, most candidates noted their relationship was stronger with the teaching fellow, as they were there just for them. It was also recognised teaching fellows did not have assessment power; that changed the relationship structure and development for most.

All participants saw the value in working collegiately and expressed particular views about the importance of building strong relationships in the practicum. All participants agreed to varying degrees that there was a culture of reciprocity between the construct members during the practicum experience, but not all could articulate or define the learning that occurred.

Mentoring like teaching is a complex social negotiation between mentor and mentee. This study focused on the mentor-mentee relationships as performativity of professionalism, but cannot escape the connection between teacher-student due to the nature of the work, and place involving the practicum.

In this chapter three different studies have been presented. One of these studies focused on the TF’s and CS’s perceptions of how to build professional reciprocal relationships in the practicum as they are the trained group disseminating the new model. The other two studies highlighted the perceptions of the roles, relationships, and experiences of the construct members (TF, CS, MT and TC), representing a voice across all groups.

These findings highlight some areas for further development and research regarding relational factors in the practicum. The findings presented in this chapter will be addressed more comprehensively in the following discussion chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter provided a rich description of the focus group participants’ epistemological beliefs about professional reciprocal relationships. Further, a series of individual textural-structural descriptions from the reflective journals and individual interviews, indicating the lived experience of the practicum, for each participant in the study were communicated. This chapter provides a summary of the evidence emerging from the studies. In-depth analysis of all three studies produced an analytical framework bounded by the major themes: positioning, power, and professional relationships. The discussion in this chapter is framed by those three major themes. The themes emerged from the findings of the study and literature from the field was drawn upon to discuss the impacts of them on the practicum experience.

Introduction


As noted throughout this report, the practicum is often presented in research literature as being a mutually beneficial relationship, but most partnership models assume that schools benefit, when that may indeed not be the case. As universities usually undertake the research the focus has been on the benefit to universities rather than schools (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Jeffrey & Polleck, 2010). The voice of schools in this area is largely silent (Goodlad, 1993; Jeffery & Polleck, 2010).
Literature on the practicum experience explores a range of issues that highlight positive and negative experiences for teacher candidates and teacher educators (Allsopp et al., 2006; Korthagen, et al., 2001; Wilson, 2006). Issues such as emotion (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Hargreaves, 2001; Hastings, 2004), identity (Brilhart, 2010; Clandinin et al., 2009; Izadinia, 2013), agency (Turnbull, 2005) and impacts of positioning and power on relationships (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Bullough et al., 2004; Cast, 2003; Chaliès et al., 2004; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Keogh, 2006) are addressed in various ways. Further there has emerged an intense focus on the importance of strengthening the partnership between teacher education providers and schools (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Brown & Shipway, 2006; Bullough, Draper, Smith & Birrell, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1994, 2006; Goodlad, 1994; Iceman-Sands & Goodwin, 2005; Kruger et al., 2009; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010).

The attention of this study is on the supervisory construct, made up of a four-member team, within the clinical teaching model of the Master of Teaching (Primary) program developed by The University of Melbourne. The focus of the research is on the relationships developed between the four members: clinical specialist (CS), teaching fellow (TF), mentor teacher (MT) and teacher candidate (TC). This study explored participants’ lived experience of the practicum with a focus on the impact of positioning and power on relationship development. A range of data were collected through a focus group activity involving cognitive mapping to sensitise the researcher to the understandings and beliefs of the university-based mentors supporting the new supervisory construct in schools. Reflective journals, from each member group were analysed and individual interviews were conducted to gain a broader perspective of experiences across multiple classrooms, mentoring practices and school contexts. This study aims to contribute to existing knowledge and research about the practicum experience for the teacher candidate and their mentors, and give rise to future research.

**Quadraciprocal relationship development in a clinical model**

Discussion of how position and power impact relationship development within this study forms the first part of this chapter. Reflection on the study considers how to strengthen mutuality by the four-member team working together to more effectively
strengthen university-school partnerships and enhance the practicum experience. This study design was developed through the following research questions:

a. What is a professional reciprocal relationship and what does that look like in action?
b. How are construct members’ roles viewed by participants in relation to positioning and power?
c. In what ways do the notions of positioning and power impact members when developing and maintaining relationships within the supervisory construct?
d. What is the impact of the newest member, the teaching fellow, in the supervisory construct?
e. How can the study of these relationships, within this construct, contribute to our knowledge of the practicum more generally?

The major findings

Issues of positioning and power within the practicum experience affected individuals’ roles and their ability to build and maintain professional relationships (Ferguson, 2011; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Rainville & Jones, 2009). De Certeau (1984) highlighted that a variety of tactics are used in order to position the self and others, negotiate power, and transform one’s space. Data from this current doctoral study highlights how the construct members used a range of tactics to position themselves and others. It is evident that some tactics, shared by participants of this study, such as the use of specific rhetorical devices or opposition through passive resistance, were calculated and intentional.

Subtler tactics, such as daily discourse, may have impacted individuals but they may not have been fully aware of how the perlocutionary effects discursively negotiated issues of positioning and power (Cast, 2003; Davies & Harré, 1990; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Participants in this study used intergroup relations and a range of linguistic devises, such as pronouns, to affect positioning and power as they discursively guided behaviour (Cast, 2003; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).
What was of particular interest in this study was the way in which the various member groups and individuals viewed the notion of power and how they positioned or resisted positioning of self and others. The participants’ general perceptions ranged from power potentially as having a negative force (Fujita, 2013) to the more positive notions of power having a transformative capacity (Giddens, 1993), or being nurturing and enabling (McNay, 2004; Shrewsbury, 1987). Participants largely believed that their notions of power enabled them to better position themselves and that when they were cognisant of positioning others it was with a nurturing capacity in mind.

It is argued in this study that the relative structural and relationship power of construct members in the quadraciprocal model reduced power as a divisive force (Fujita, 2013) and increased the positive impact of an individual’s ability to control and match meaning in situations, thus increasing salience of identity (Cast, 2003; Stryker & Burke, 2000). The relationships between the four members of the construct in this study had the appearance of a less hierarchical structure. Patterns often evident in the triadic model of shifting power up and across between the supervising teacher and university supervisor, away from the pre-service teacher, was not as apparent in the quadraciprocal model. Nevertheless there still appeared to be shifting alliances based on the needs of the candidate and depending on who was observing and mentoring at any given point in time. Members of the construct involved in this study positioned themselves in various ways and those positions changed depending on the intergroup relations or context.

**Positioning**

**Positions within the quadraciprocal model**

In this study the view of Tan and Moghaddam’s (1999) *intergroup positioning* is relied upon (see Chapter 2). According to Tan and Moghaddam (1999) “one of the most important aspects of intergroup relations concerns power inequalities between groups” and group members (p. 182). Within occupational and social groups, social identity theorists, Tajfel and Turner (1986), amongst others, acknowledged that dominant and sub-ordinate groups negotiate and achieve various positions and come to accept power inequalities as legitimate acts of belonging (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999).
An awareness of the extent of the power or powerlessness inherent in the various roles is critical for construct members involved in the practicum experience (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999). A greater understanding is required of how “actions and language can position and create identities of power or powerlessness” for members within the construct group (Santoro, 1999, p. 41). Further discussion of power structures in identity development and relationships follows in the section below. Recognition of the role power plays in professional identity construction in teacher education supports understandings of the importance of minimising power roles to improve the practicum experience.

**Positioning by role, level of experience and personal beliefs**

Data highlighted that positioning was occurring on a range of levels within and between the construct members and some responses implied that with position comes power as a means of force. There was a keen sense of willingness to reject the notion of anyone exercising power, as a force; “to wield it overtly or to equate it with control over others” (McNay, 2004, p. 74). Whilst participants may not have necessarily positioned any one role or group above any other, to create an overtly hierarchical structure, they did provide evidence of actively engaging in positioning and showed an understanding that power, and the ability to exert control over another, does come with position (or role), level of experience, knowledge or personal beliefs.

This can be seen in how Carli played out her role. Carli, an experienced clinical specialist and academic, positioned herself on a range of accounts. She used her role and level of knowledge as a means of her having the ‘power’ to take knowledge in to the classroom and ‘give’ it to the mentor teacher, thus positioning herself differently, more knowledgeable, theory wise at least, than the mentor teacher:

*I also need to bring [to] the teacher that I am a clinical specialist, not their friend...I can have a personal relationship with them, but it always has to be me as the clinical specialist. I need to hold that position...you can form a personal relationship with people, but you also have to hold the fact that you are there in that purpose as a*
university observer, and therefore you are bringing in theories and knowledge that the mentor teacher may not have. (Carli_CS)

She further positioned the mentor teacher, based on the mentor teacher having sound pedagogical knowledge and a position of power in the classroom. Carli saw this as a way to help build the relationship with the mentor teacher:

*The mentor teacher has been selected because they have teaching pedagogy skills that can be passed on. So I do try and put that kind of a slant to our relationship.* (Carli_CS)

In this way Carli used her level of theoretical knowledge and the mentor teacher’s pedagogical knowledge, as a basis for positioning, exalting the concept of ‘knowledge’ as power and emphasising occupational identities. Drawing on the view “knowledge makes power possible” (Fujita, 2013, p. 133), and shifting the holding of knowledge from one to the other, potentially permitted Carli to tacitly position herself in a more powerful position in one instance and the mentor teacher in a more powerful position in another. Thus creating shifting situations of power between experienced mentors, rendering one or the other powerful or powerless at the same time (Davies & Allen, 1996; Ritchie, Rigano & Lowry, 2000). In doing this Carli began to level the balance of structural power between the mentors (TF, CS and MT) in the construct (Cast, 2003).

Michael, a teaching fellow, in contrast to Carli’s fluid positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) and flexibility in shifting power, held a strongly fixed position on the differences between the clinical specialist and teaching fellow roles. He agreed the roles were complementary, but his language demonstrated he was distinctly engaging in intergroup positioning:

*I’ve got a strong relationship with people in the school and it’s been built up over time and [CS name] has a stronger relationship with people back here at the university - we complement each other there.*

(Michael_TF)

Intergroup positioning is fundamentally achieved through using linguistic devices (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999) such as Michael has done in this instance. Michael’s use of phrases such as “people in the school” and “people back here” imprints distinct
references thus creating an ‘us’ and ‘them’ intergroup positioning, causing a sense of group affiliation and disaffiliation. This perspective can be also likened to using discursive labels that cause division between what Scott (2009) referred to as ‘teachers’ and ‘unteachers’. In her paper she referred to ‘teachers’ as those practitioners who are working in classrooms as part of the teaching service and the ‘unteachers’ as those who have “defected” from teaching (Scott, 2009, p. 276), thus creating a chasm between classroom teachers and university-based mentors.

Daniel, a first year candidate, experienced this type of positioning and differential valuing of the ‘teacher’ and ‘unteacher’ notion in his first placement. He reported his difficulty in trying to work with his first placement mentor teacher. His mentor teacher did not want to have anything to do with any theoretical readings at all. When Daniel tried to address theory, his mentor teacher questioned him on, “Who wrote it? Are they in a classroom? If they're not in a classroom I don't want to know about it, they don't know what they're talking about”, implying those not currently teaching hold less credibility. Akin to the notion of those who are not in a classroom are “out-of-touch inhabitants of ivory towers” (Scott, 2009, p. 275). In Daniel’s case that level of positioning caused him to feel like an “outsider coming in” and he found that to be “really awkward”.

The idea of needing to be in the ‘teaching service’ / a current practitioner / the ‘teacher’ in order to have some sort of credibility was not the sole domain of the classroom or mentor teacher in this study. Michael (TF) positioned himself within a close and direct relationship with his clinical specialist by believing or at the very least supporting the belief, that the clinical specialist had less ‘credibility’ than himself:

*The clinical specialist has come from a different angle and because the teaching fellows actually still are considered to be in the teaching service sometimes there’s more credibility that way from the people in the schools and that helps to break down any barriers of credibility with the rest of the partnership team.* (Michael_TF)

This level of positioning by Michael between the ‘credibility’ of the roles aligned with his strong belief that he is the ‘communicator’ conceivably had the potential to increase the divide between ‘teacher’ and ‘unteacher’; causing a widening of the chasm.
For a short period of time, Michael (TF) took liberties to work outside of the construct support group. He came to realise that by positioning himself as the more ‘credible’ other, taking on responsibilities beyond his role, working on his own, outside the partnership model, really did not work well in the end. He began to struggle and suffered difficulties. Michael learnt that working within the construct and relying on those strong and supportive relationships were critical within the quadraciprocal model:

*It was just probably more me than anything, actually to be honest, maybe trying to solve a problem without drawing [on] others who I needed to draw on into the situation. That’s dangerous at times because if you try and solve it on your own perhaps sometimes not thinking about the fact that it does have an affect across the board with the whole program.* (Michael_TF)

The way in which Michael positioned himself in that instance had the potential to form a ‘vicious circle’ (see Chapter 4, Study 1), and that began to create difficulties. He recognised the need to work within the support structures of the construct model. As such he shifted his position and used the strengths of the construct to achieve goals and complete required tasks. He found that working more collegiately was better for him and the program.

In this instance it is conceivable to presume that Carli (CS), much like Michael, enacted positioning based on their self-categorisation (Turner, 1985) and occupational identity (Scott, 2009). In the context of performance of their professional roles it is also conceivable that acts of positioning in this form could generate differential value with the potential to dissolve or create professional chasms.

Structures of role and positioning were viewed in varying ways by participants in this study as they drew on or developed personal schemata. It has been discussed that some mentors positioned themselves and others by means of knowledge and experience and others positioned, or were positioned, by role and personal beliefs.

**Positioning the cultural and political landscape**

The practicum is a delicate and intricate network of university and school partnerships and personal relationship constructs. All members expend energy working to build and
maintain strong and productive relationships, navigating their way around the demands of university requirements, constraints of school timetables, the political and cultural nuances of schools and classrooms, while constantly allowing for personal needs and individual personalities. In the middle of all of this activity is the teacher candidate learning how to ‘manage mentors’ (Maynard, 2000), in this case multiple mentors. It is during the practicum that teachers learn how to relate to members of their profession, they learn how to talk “as teachers, to teachers and about teaching” (Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006, p. 6). Through social acts of conversation and observation they develop professional discourse and begin to understand the political and cultural landscape of schooling (Keogh, Dole & Hudson, 2006).

**Candidate-mentor positioning**

Data from this study indicate how construct members navigated the cultural aspects of the practicum. Mary, a first year candidate in her first placement, was conscious of her approach towards working with her MT and knowing her enthusiasm had the potential to cause problems, she continued regardless:

_I'm very enthusiastic and there are very few people who are irritated by that and I just figure, you know. I'm going to just squeeze the life out of it._ (Mary_TC1)

Nevertheless, Mary, in her enthusiasm was still very sensitive to her mentors and the need to build a positive relationship with them:

_I try to be really sensitive. I'm always aware that I'm a visitor and a guest._ (Mary_TC1)

Mary realised whilst she was working in a complex and sensitive situation she still needed to navigate the relationships. Although she was enthusiastic and confident she positioned herself as the ‘guest’ to ensure movement and growth within and between the unknown power differentials when building her relationships (Martin et al., 2011), particularly with her mentor teacher.

Kerrie, a first year candidate, less sensitive to the cultural landscape, attempted to forge her own power when building a relationship with her mentor teacher. Kerrie felt she
needed to get as much out of the practicum as possible and tried to balance that with developing relationships:

     So that’s what I’m working on, just without offending her and without creating any conflict, to just keep gently pushing my own agenda I guess. (Kerrie_TCI)

She realised some of her actions could irritate others but pushed on regardless:

     ...that could be irritating but I’m not going to let it bother me. (Kerrie_TCI)

This approach did not work well as Kerrie found that her relationships with mentor teachers, across both of her placements, were not terribly strong or supportive. She turned to her teaching fellow and clinical specialist for support instead. Like Jacqui, Kerrie struggled to maintain and balance conflicting demands which in turn affected the quality of her relationships (Bullough & Draper, 2004).

Amelia, a second year teacher candidate, did not appear to have the most positive of experiences during a number of her placements requesting to be moved from one of them at one stage. However, she did make efforts to ensure that the relationships worked where she could. She believed diplomacy, flexibility and respect were key considerations for her:

     ...diplomacy, flexibility and I suppose respect...and understanding that while you might not agree with everything that's going on in the classroom; they [MTs] have a wealth of experience...so having a bit of perspective on your current experience and their current experience. (Amelia_TCI)

Amelia found that her personal and philosophical perspectives differed greatly from several of the mentor teachers she worked with. She learnt that she needed to play the ‘political game’ when on placement, often holding her tongue when she observed practices she did not agree with (Martin et al., 2011).

Elaine (TC) was emotionally and professionally struck by the cultural aspects of working with students who she perceived to be disadvantaged at school. She found that
the students’ life-issues really hit her hard. She went through times of self-doubt and sought support from her MT, TF and CS to help her manage the personal emotional and professional political aspects of teaching. (cf., Elaine’s reflections from page 118).

Candidates typically located in a single partnership school group (PSG) for the duration of their course built positive relationships with their clinical specialists but noted they generally had the strongest bonds with their teaching fellow. Teacher candidates reported they believed the reason for this was the teaching fellows were specifically there just for them, for their development as the TFs did not evaluate or assess them, they just provided feedback and support to help them reach their goals. This perception was critical to the teaching fellow persona and to teacher candidate’s beliefs as it situated the teaching fellow squarely in the centre of the learning process (Wenger 1999), where they remained committed to supporting candidates to reflect on practice (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008).

**Mentor-candidate positioning**

Candidates were also positioned by their mentors. Clinical specialists, teaching fellows and mentor teachers all presumed to position candidates. The difficulty for candidates was to manage the positioning of these mentors when their view of where and how they should be positioned differed.

One clinical specialist, Carli, positioned teacher candidates in her group on the basis of her perceived notions around maturity and commitment levels she presumed them to have:

\[
I \text{ also think they're that little bit older, so the maturity level is there, and they have selected teaching as a profession they want to be in...when you have people changing their lifestyle, and changing their careers, and their commitment to the new pathway...} \text{ (Carli_CS)}
\]

In this way Carli supposed that because these more ‘mature’ people had entered the course they were more committed and therefore she positioned them in such a way. Carli also told the candidates how to position themselves in the classroom:
We always say to the teacher candidate that they've got to realise that they've got to be a teacher, and not a friend. (Carli_CS)

Tania (MT), like Carli, made statements about how she believed the candidates were ‘equal’ but her sharing of her practices, of how she worked in the construct, showed a vastly different picture. Her words indicated she enjoyed a sense of equality:

I don’t like to differentiate - treat the student as a person of equal position - giving them the responsibility and confidence to make decisions. (Tania_MT)

Yet Tania felt strongly about how she managed and mentored candidates in her classroom:

...I’m teaching them [TCs] constantly my methodology. I always talk to them about my philosophy of education, I always say to them it’s very important to know where, what you think, what you believe in...

(Tania_MT)

Tania spoke about positioning candidates as if she were working in a triadic model. She chose when a candidate was ready to have “freedom” and until that time they were expected to follow her role modelling and emulate her pedagogy, potentially impeding their development (Bullough & Draper, 2004).

Cherrie, another MT, initially talked about being the ‘collaborative team member’, positioning her candidates as colleagues, but then further clarified that depending on the skill level of the candidate she was working with at the time, she adjusted her approach to meet their needs. Cherrie thought that approach supported her building collaborative relationships with her candidates.

Mentors in this study, regardless of their role, often claimed their approach was guided by the needs of the candidate. Their perceptions differed between being the ‘teacher – as the giver of knowledge’, to the ‘facilitator – just offering bits and pieces’ as needed, to the ‘collaborative team member’ offering a vast array of mentoring styles and ways in which candidates were positioned from one context to the next. A major aspect of the work of the clinical specialist and teaching fellow was to orchestrate changes from, and
within, individual dyads. They mediated between teacher candidate and mentor teacher, trying to shift dyads to a collective, including all construct members, engaged in coordinated activity (Martin et al., 2011). In doing such they had the potential to shift power differentials and work to level structural and relationship power.

**Mentor-mentor positioning**

To develop collaborative relationships construct members tackled a range of issues working within a web of relationships across a range of cultural contexts (Martin et al., 2011). Carli (CS) was conscious of her presence when she observed candidates in someone else’s classroom:

> You can sometimes see people very unhappy about you being there [in their classroom], or don't want you being there, so you have to within yourself acknowledge that and then understand that's the parameters of what you can form your relationship with people. (Carli_CS)

She worked hard to try and reassure the classroom mentors. Carli realised she was “on their turf” (Martin et al., 2011, p. 304) as she continued to build and maintain positive relationships with them:

> I realise I am the visitor; I am a person coming in...so I always make sure that I stress that I am here to see how the student teacher is working. (Carli_CS)

Linda (TF), like Carli, developed explicit strategies and processes for observing in another teacher’s classroom.

> Working with the mentor teachers, I always touch base with them before I come in and observe, so I'll go over and find the mentor teacher, say, "Hi! Is it alright if I just sit? Where can I sit? (Linda_TF)

Communication and showing respect became important tools in developing relationships with mentor teachers (Martin et al., 2011). Linda and Carli, like other clinical specialists and teaching fellows, found the establishment of trusting relationships began with them fitting into various contexts and working collegiately in
the school setting; building trust overtime was fundamental to their work (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007).

Clinical specialists and teaching fellows spoke much about building relationships of trust. A climate of openness and trust was key for these participants, as evidenced via interviews and the cognitive mapping activity outcomes. Clinical specialists and teaching fellows viewed a climate of trust as enabling various partners to work through difficulties and address issues of quality and commitment (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007). Many mentor teachers agreed that open lines of communication, respect and trust were imperative factors in working with others in the construct.

Navigating the political and cultural landscape during the practicum is a difficult and demanding task for all construct members. All four groups of participants in this study repeatedly articulated enormous efforts were taken to build and maintain strong and productive professional relationships. They seemed to understand that personal characteristics and individual biographies had the potential to profoundly affect quality relationships and the success of the placement (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002), and most participants went to great lengths to ensure those relationships were effective.

**Power**

**Comparing the models: triadic model versus quadraciprocal model**

*Power in a triadic model*

Triadic models structurally lead to hierarchical power roles within the practicum. Triadic theory (Caplow, 1968) indicates that when a third person is introduced into the dyad relationship relational disturbances occur. The newly formed triad by necessity becomes hierarchical creating a change in power distribution (Veal & Rickard, 1998; Bullough & Draper, 2004), thus, shifting the power dynamics of mentor-mentee relationships (Colley, 2002) (see Chapter 2). A similar phenomenon was revealed in this doctoral study when a fourth person was introduced to move beyond a triadic model to the quadraciprocal model.
**Power in a quadraciprocal model**

Typically, positioning in intergroup relations concerns power inequalities in and between group members provisioning more or less power to influence (Tan & Moghaddam, 1999). Findings in this study identified trends in power which presented as powerful mentors supporting and empowering teacher candidates (Loizou, 2011). In most cases teacher candidates felt empowered in their clinical specialist and teaching fellow relationships, but not as much, or as many, in their mentor teacher relationships.

As highlighted in McNay’s (2004) study, and supported by evidence here, teacher candidates recognised and accepted that there was power in the relationships within the practicum, mostly between them and their mentor teacher. Candidates were acutely aware that their mentor teacher held power, especially in relation to their assessment (McNay, 2004). Daniel believed his practicum report result was linked to his relationship with his mentor teacher more than his teaching performance:

> So from the practicum report I think a big factor is that rapport you build with your mentor teacher, I think they're almost more inclined to be more favourable of you if they do have that better relationship with you. (Daniel_TC1)

The risk of authority being negatively expressed by mentor teachers, and the development of perceptions such as Daniel’s, may only serve to encourage teacher candidates to simply ‘play the game’ (McNay, 2004), to passively participate in the practicum, rather than actively take risks to develop and practise their own pedagogy.

Clinical specialists, teaching fellows and mentor teachers, agreed there was potential for power, but were reluctant to discuss power and in many cases were uncomfortable with the notion of power, particularly as a means to coerce or achieve results. McNay’s (2004) study expressed similar findings in relation to how power was perceived. Indeed the view of power as a means of force was frowned upon by most participants in both studies; rather the participants desired to diminish the power differential.

As an example, Carli (CS) proposed conflicting beliefs about power and positioning. She spoke hesitantly of the notion of power. She found it “intimidating and frightening” and denied the place of power in her thinking as she declared she “holds no
notion of power as a means of achieving results”. She asserted candidates “are teachers, and therefore colleagues” hence did “not see that this increased knowledge [she holds] brings any sense of power”. Yet she proceeded to position herself and others and used knowledge as a means of power for both her and the mentor teacher.

This study showed that construct members, whilst holding varying views on the presence of positioning and power, indeed did position by different ways and means, thus affording levels of power by knowledge, roles, and experience to the construct members. Participant perceptions, beliefs and attitudes around power and positioning varied greatly. It is not so much a stance of denial of these notions, by construct members, but more so an awareness of the inherent dangers in the notion of power, as a force, and a deliberate attempt to reduce and bring a balance of power to the construct members. Whilst, as noted earlier, the construct members may not have necessarily positioned any one role over or above any other they did provide evidence of actively engaging in positioning and showed an understanding that power does come with position.

It is believed that the participants in this study felt that there was less of a hierarchical structure in the four-member group than there appeared to be in the more triadic model. That is not to suggest that power and position are not significant and highly active in this construct, but there is a new, broader level of support that provided a type of control over the potential negative effects of a hierarchical structure. There may simply be an increased open approach to communication and greater range of options for support. By opening up lines of communication and providing increased options for support the problems of typically hierarchical structures may be lessened (Beck & Kosnik, 2002).

These findings highlight the notions that dependent relationships rely on valued outcomes for one another and the benefits obtained are contingent on the benefits received in exchange (Emerson, 1972; Molm & Cook, 1995). This further highlights the notion that the increased dependency individuals have in relationships impacts power differentials (Cast, 2003). Thus having the teaching fellow in the construct is likely to have reduced the structural, or ‘knowledge-base’, power and potentially relationship power as dependency was more widely spread across all mentors (Cast, 2003; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999).
Moving beyond triadic understandings

Using Emerson’s (1972) power-dependence theory as a framework the exchange of power in the quadraciprocal model is further explored. It is proposed here that the distinction of the four-member team and their reciprocal exchanges affected the hierarchical structure of power in relationships (Cast, 2003; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999) and that in turn presented the quadraciprocal model as a reducing ‘power-dependent’ construct. Important differences emerged from the data around how construct members used and responded to power and how they functioned within a reducing power-dependent construct.

As documented in the literature the triadic model is hierarchical where teacher candidates are often seen to be the least powerful in the structure (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Ritchie, Rigano & Lowry, 2000; Veal & Rickard, 1998). Evidence from this study suggests a quadraciprocal model shifts and changes the power structure to one where power is reduced by the inclusion of the fourth member. This can be best described by reviewing the construct models in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Comparative practicum model constructs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model A: Triadic Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervising Teacher (ST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Supervisor (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service Teacher (PST)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model B: Quadraciprocal Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher (MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Candidate (TC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Fellow (TF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Specialist (CS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the triadic model (Figure 2, Model A) there are typically one or two more powerful members in the supervisory construct. Power (flowing in the direction of the arrows) is commonly more prevalent in those holding stronger positions of structural or
relationship power (Cast, 2003; Cook & Emerson, 1978; Molm, 1987; Veal & Rickard, 1998). Relative power one has over another is a function of their relative dependence (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999). This according to Cast (2003), and Molm and colleagues (1999), varies with the value and availability of alternatives, limited in a triadic model.

In the triadic model (Figure 2, Model A) a pre-service teacher (PST) has predominantly the supervising teacher (ST) from whom to seek advice and support, with occasional visits from the university supervisor (US). This serves to support hierarchical power structures (Caplow, 1968; McNay, 2004; Veal & Rickard, 1998; Zeichner, 2010). Within a triadic model university supervisors typically infrequently visit pre-service teachers, and often have little knowledge of the PST or the program of instruction (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Dobbins, 1995; McNay, 2004; Peters, 2008; Tang, 2003; Wilson, 2006). This model provides minimal alternatives for support creating a high level of dependency of the pre-service teacher (PST) on the supervising teacher (ST); potentially creating a source of power for the supervising teacher (ST) and the university supervisor (US). Hence much of the power flows to either the supervising teacher (ST) or university supervisor (US) (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Rothman, 1981; Veal & Rickard, 1998). Further, the exchange value, depending on the relationships, has the potential to vary greatly between the PST-US, PST-ST and possibly the ST-US.

Typically relationship liaison in the triadic model provides three available alternatives for the PST working in high power-dependent relationships; the one-to-one approach (ST-PST$_1$) or (ST-US) or (US-PST$_2$); and the many-to-one (ST-US-PST$_3$). Minimal available alternatives lead to the increased power-dependence (Cast, 2003; Cook & Emerson, 1978; Molm, 1987; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999; Veal & Rickard, 1998) and in turn increase a power based hierarchy.

Evidence from this study shows that when the fourth member, the teaching fellow, enters the game the power dynamics shift and relational ripples create a levelling effect to the power balance. Relational structures are shifted because there is no longer only the one or two, but three members to offer support and perspectives to ensure a voice for both mentor teacher and candidate possibly augmenting the learning experience. What this study aimed to address was how relationships, and power dynamics, were
managed with the addition of one new member in the mentoring structure, a fourth member; the teaching fellow.

**Power exchange in a quadraciprocal model**

Understanding triadic theory has little to do with the interactions of those in a quadraciprocal model. The quadraciprocal model (Figure 2, Model B) offers four members instead of three, thus increasing the availability of alternatives for exchange. There are seven available alternatives for the TC and many more opportunities for exchanges can occur in the quadraciprocal model when all members are considered; the one-to-one approach (MT-TC₁), (CS-TC₂), (TF-TC₃), (MT-CS) or (MT-TF) or (CS-TF); and many-to-one approach (MT-TF-CS), (MT-TF-TC₄), (MT-CS-TC₅), (TF-CS-TC₆) or (MT-CS-TF-TC₇). As such one additional member in the construct more than doubles the available alternatives to reduce power-dependency. These increases in available alternatives decreases power-dependency (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999) between construct members. Further, by increasing the availability of alternatives for exchange there is also the potential to increase or decrease the value of the exchange between members, which may also impact members’ relative power.

Drawing on Daniel’s (TC) experience illustrates an example of multiple one-to-one exchanges. His first placement experience, where the mentor teacher (MT) was not interested in theoretical readings, Daniel’s poor relationship between himself and his MT caused a decrease in the value of the exchange as they held differing points of views on theory. When that value of the (MT-TC₁) exchange decreased Daniel turned to support from his clinical specialist (CS-TC₂). In gaining the theoretical support he needed from his CS he reduced the dependency of his relationship with his MT and increased it with his CS at the same time increasing the value of their exchanges. As Daniel continued to turn away from his MT, he further decreased the value of the exchanges. He felt less and less part of the school community and sought out communication skills from his teaching fellow (TF-TC₃). He relied upon his TF to share knowledge and skills in how to navigate the culture of the school as he attempted to build other relationships. In this way Daniel accessed the directly available alternatives to him and, as such, reduced in his relative dependency on his MT, while
increasing his relative power (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999) to control his self-learning and remain connected with at least two of his three mentors.

Regardless of the combination of exchange alternatives the addition of a fourth member increases the number and degree of alternatives thus minimising the value of the predominant mentor, increasing relative power and decreasing power-dependency (Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999) within relationships. In doing so, power advantages shift in the situation to empower the less powerful. This finding supports observations (Cast, 2003; Molm, Peterson & Takahashi, 1999; Stryker & Burke, 2000) that the increased available alternatives, in this case the role of the teaching fellow, in particular, had a levelling effect on the power relationships within the practicum.

**Professional relationships**

Researchers recognise that learning how to build positive interpersonal relationships (Rajuan, Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004), and resilience (Johnson et al., 2010) is essential in pre-service teacher education (Fairbanks, Freedman & Khan, 2000; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Keogh, 2005; Le Cornu, 2009). However, impacts of the hierarchical structure with substantial power plays (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Veal & Rickard, 1998) are possibly the most damaging to induction and professional development if not carefully constructed and nurtured. It is therefore imperative that relationships developed in the practicum are carefully developed, supported and nurtured so that teacher candidates can enjoy improved experiences.

If teachers are seen to be the strongest school-related influence on student learning (Goldrick, 2009; Hattie, 2009) then this study reasons the mentors in pre-service teaching are likely the strongest influencers on learning to become a teacher. As such the relationships developed between teacher candidates and their mentors demand cultures of collaboration (Hargreaves, 1994). This study also argues that the triadic structure for supervision, largely by one supervising teacher and infrequent visits by a university supervisor, whilst laden with good intentions (Haigh & Ward, 2004), may not provide sufficient approach for a collaborative, mutually respectful, supportive reciprocal relationship to develop (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Sachs, 1997; Veal & Rickard, 1998). It is proposed here that the quadraciprocal model, with its four-member
team, provides a much more fruitful model for the development of collaborative and reciprocal relationships.

**Development of professional relationships**

Relationships developed within the complex environment of the practicum have held the attention of much educational research (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Keogh, 2005; Le Cornu, 2009). The field of education is laden with research literature espousing perspectives on the relationships developed between mentors and their pre-service teachers in a triadic model. However, to date there has been little research undertaken into a four-member supervisory construct and none, to the knowledge of the researcher, of the relationships developed within a four-member team in mentoring and teacher candidate development within the practicum. This could potentially be one of the first studies where the mentor teacher (MT); clinical specialist (CS); teaching fellow (TF); and teacher candidate (TC) intra- and interpersonal relationships are explored. As noted earlier, this study has focused on the impact of positioning and power dynamics that occur between the four-members of the construct when developing a professional relationship. However, what is of particular interest here is how the four-member construct work together in new ways developing relationships that provide information beyond our current understandings of practicum relationships which are rooted in notions of the triadic model (Martin et al., 2011).

**Clinical specialist and teaching fellow practices in relationship development**

By virtue of their non-evaluative role and time spent in the schools teaching fellows generally developed the strongest ties to schools and candidates, and as such typically built closer relationships, enhancing the opportunities for cultivating communities of practice (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Le Cornu, 2009). In many cases, as perceived by themselves and by school staff, teaching fellows were the main point of communication. They typically established additional relationships with the student teacher coordinators, principals and other school staff (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Martin et al., 2011). Often taking extra time, teaching fellows saw establishing those school-based relationships ensured increased placement numbers, augmented familiarity and feelings of belonging, assisting them in becoming more comfortable within the settings. Angela (TF), Michael (TF) and Preston (CS) all had their own ways of accomplishing that level
of connectedness but felt in their own ways they made inroads into the school contexts and supported the way for teacher candidates, and clinical specialists, to establish relationships as well.

Moving through the day, in, around, and between schools, the mentors (TFs and CSs in particular) met with and observed a plethora of activity and teaching often grappling with competing discourses. As they moved around the various spaces and contexts they interacted with multiple personalities, and took on various roles and identities adjusting for power differentials and emotional states (Haigh & Ward, 2004; Martin et al., 2011). In many instances navigating issues of power within and between individuals or roles there was a tendency for many construct members, especially teacher candidates, to take a ‘tread-lightly’ approach to building productive relationships (Martin et al., 2011). Clinical specialists and teaching fellows reported that spending time building relationships and navigating conflict between the mentor teachers and teacher candidates were the most difficult spaces to negotiate, particularly if the teacher candidate was performing poorly. Additional time was spent supporting the mentor teacher as much as it was supporting the candidate. In these situations, the consistent and regular actions of the CSs and TFs may have enabled construction of meaning within differing socio-cultural and political frameworks and potentially helped to build creative and collaborative communities of practice (Haigh & Ward, 2004).

Clinical specialists and teaching fellows had a sense of power from their roles, being either the university educator, or as some school staff perceived of the teaching fellow, as possibly having ‘more credibility’. However, given they were on someone else’s ‘turf’, power in those situations was probably the most tenuous. As such, clinical specialist and teaching fellows were also conscious of taking a gentle approach (Martin et al., 2011) as they worked with mentor teachers. Working in these relationships, dealing with power issues, negotiating conflicts and supporting transitions (Haigh & Ward, 2004) required a delicate balancing act. Supporting mentor teachers to understand their roles was possibly the least difficult as the construct members often met, or communicated via email, to support each other’s understanding of the university requirements and school constraints or needs. Open, and regular, lines of communication were critical to working effectively. Moving in and between
practitioners, practices and cultural environments were critical to fostering a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Haigh & Ward, 2004) and building quadraciprocal relationships.

Most mentor teachers were very keen to seek support from clinical specialists and teaching fellows in their endeavours to support teacher candidates. Linda (TF), Preston (CS) and Carli (CS), all university-based mentors, noted that for some mentor teachers there were vast differences between their theoretical knowledge and mentoring skills (Bullough & Draper, 2004) causing additional challenges as mentoring styles contributed markedly to the quality of the practicum and development of professional relationships (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Clinical specialists and teaching fellows did not feel comfortable, or see it as part of their role, to provide unsolicited feedback to mentor teachers who were perceived as being less skilled at, or committed to, mentoring. Linda, Preston and Carli each encountered difficult to navigate situations related to mentor teacher mentoring skills, but found ways to work around their concerns and abstained from making negative comments and halted similar commentary from candidates (Martin et al., 2011), another factor demonstrating the demanding and complex nature of working within the supervisory construct (Haigh & Ward, 2004). Linda (TF), Carli (CS) and Angela (TF) made specific mention of developing a respectful process of entering and observing in classrooms. They developed processes for gaining permission to observe each time they entered a mentor teacher’s space. They, like others, knew that developing strong and respectful relationships with mentor teachers depended on how they were perceived in the schools. They were focused on building trust (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007; Martin et al., 2011) to enhance and strengthen quadraciprocal relationships.

**Mentor teacher practices in relationship development**

Mentor teachers, who had long standing relationships with clinical specialists and teaching fellows, talked about how they had come to know each other over time, and how that had supported them feeling comfortable to seek advice, ask for support and clarify any queries. They felt they could call upon the clinical specialist or teaching fellow or both whenever they needed support or guidance. Mentor teachers reported they felt the support was particularly useful when there were difficulties to manage,
School constraints, conflicting requirements, or poor teacher candidate performance. It was acknowledged by participants that building professional relationships could not be ‘fast-tracked’ and developing knowledge and understandings about each other personally and professionally was an important contributor to establishing successful relationships (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Developing relationships over time supported knowledge around the program, but more importantly understandings about how each other worked to support candidates’ development. These understandings supported the development and strengthening of quadraciprocal relationships. For all participants it was important to take time in getting to know each other which was central to building trust (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Martin et al., 2011).

Whole school professional development sessions run by clinical specialists were additional sites for mentor teachers to seek opportunities for support, advice and feedback, and encouraged building trust. Tania (MT) for example, knew when her clinical specialist would be in the school for the whole staff professional development sessions and used those, as well as the classroom observation times, as opportunities to strengthen their connections and exchange observations of teacher candidate performance. Those moments of connection provided additional opportunities for establishing and strengthening professional relationships.

Teacher candidate practices in relationship development

Teacher candidates, within their partnership school groups (PSGs), were either in their first or second year of working with their clinical specialist and teaching fellow. Candidates’ skills, understandings about teaching, ability to accept and respond to feedback and commitment varied leaving way for emotionally laden interactions as various and unique relationships were formed. As in other studies (Keogh, 2005; Le Cornu, 2009; Rawling, 2012) relationships with teacher candidates were complicated and shifted as candidates developed, time passed and reciprocal relationships began to form.

A number of teacher candidates were aware that in order to get the best possible experience they needed to carefully navigate the sensibilities of the personalities of those they were working with. They worked hard to build relationships and ‘give-back’ (Rawlings, 2012) to the mentors, students in the classroom, or school. Jacqui (TC) and
Belinda (TC) had opposing experiences and both adopted very different approaches to the practicum and developing relationships with their mentor teachers, as did Daniel (TC) and Maree (TC) with their very different entitlement perspectives. Belinda appeared to have one of the most positive experiences with her mentor teachers throughout the two years. She worked towards developing trust, giving back and forming relationships through an ‘ethics of care’ emerging in a reciprocal manner (Noddings, 2002; Rawlings, 2012). Belinda, like many other candidates, took the time to invest in developing positive interpersonal relationships in each of the practicum experiences (Caires & Almeida, 2007). In this way they were building and strengthening the model of quadraciprocal relationships within their practicum.

**Beyond ‘professional reciprocal relationships’ to ‘quadraciprocal relationships’**

Regular weekly classroom observations allowed opportunity for clinical specialists and teaching fellows to become familiar with each school setting and form bonds with the staff (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Wenger, 2000). The seminar sessions were used by candidates to seek additional guidance and support offering and receiving feedback and building deeper understandings around individual, emotional and collective needs (Zembylas, 2003; Le Cornu, 2009) strengthening a community of practice environment (Wenger, 1998). The seminar program allowed teacher candidates to build and strengthen relationships with their teaching fellow and clinical specialist.

This study supports Zeichner’s (2010) view that by bridging boundaries in their work construct members provided potential opportunities to overcome the traditional divide between field-based education and the university component. By discovering ‘ways of working’ participants created an initial framework for the development of quadraciprocal relationships in the practicum. Evidence indicates innovative and shared understandings and practices evolved through carefully coordinated and highly supported activity (Gutiérrez, 2008) within and between the construct members and their multiple contexts. Preston (CS) talked about his experiences of working in what he called the “three-way-mentoring” approach as he developed processes to support and coordinate open lines communication and feedback to all members in given situations in his PSG. As construct members navigated various contexts, collective conversations served to support understandings and challenges of learning to teach, mentor and build
reciprocal relationships. In this way, construct members were able to reconcile academic and practitioner knowledge, overcome seemingly oppositional points of view, and induct teacher candidates into the field, whilst generating fresh understandings and practices. In essence, incorporating structural collaboration (Williams, Prestage & Bedward, 2001) into a community of practice through discursive and social processes (Wenger, 1998; Bullough et al., 2004; Martin et al., 2011) demonstrated the possibility of a successful shift from the development of professional reciprocal relationships (MT-TC), (TF-TC), (CS-TC), (MT-CS), (TF-CS) or (MT-TF) towards quadraciprocal relationships (MT-TF-CS-TC).

**Building quadraciprocal relationships: accessing the ‘third space’**

To explore how members of the construct develop quadraciprocal relationships this study draws on third space theory (Bhabha, 1994; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejeda, 1999; Martin et al., 2010; Zeichner, 2010). Third space theory was selected to support discussion of the findings of this study because, within their multimodal roles, all members of the construct work as hybrid educators and learners (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejeda, 1999; Martin et al., 2011). Clinical specialists work and learn in the space between the teacher educator in schools and the university academic; teaching fellows work and learn in the space between being a teaching-service member and a university mentor; mentor teachers work and learn in the space between teacher educator and classroom practitioner; and the teacher candidate works and learns in the space between pre-service teacher and student. The hybrid work undertaken by participants within this study has transformative potential for teacher candidates and teacher educators (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejeda, 1999; Zeichner, 2010).

By accessing the theoretical construct of the third space, where supervisory construct members’ knowledge exists, communities come together to create new, “less hierarchical, ways of working in the service of teacher education” (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89). Zeichner argued that the supportive and collaborative conditions in which educative and enduring “learning in and from” practice are established occurs in the third space (Zeichner, 2010, p. 91). The use of third space theory illuminates how participants describe the nature of their relationships in the quadraciprocal model. This study investigated how construct members worked through complexities of their roles
and negotiated tensions to foster reciprocity that move beyond notions of oppositional triadic relationships (Martin et al., 2011).

**Complexities and ways of working in the third space**

In the third space the teaching fellows and clinical specialists grappled with complex issues daily as they straddled the university and school contexts to collectively support teacher candidate development. Mentor teachers, clinical specialists and teaching fellows formed consultative groups, at times including the teacher candidate, to support candidates’ developmental goals, evaluate performance and overcome issues of theory-practice understandings and expectations; time and power; and organisational and cultural variances (Martin et al., 2011). Mentor teachers such as Cherrie found great comfort in working with other mentors, such as her assigned clinical specialist and teaching fellow, particularly when needing to deal with difficulties around candidate performance and assessment. Drawing on the knowledge, skill and support from the clinical specialist and teaching fellow provided mentor teachers with opportunities for engaging in effective mentoring conversations (Keogh, 2005) whilst accessing mentoring for themselves. Within that space mentor teachers were mentored as they sought support and guidance on how to best deal with a range of situations, thus developing quadraciprocal relationships.

**Quadraciprocal relationships in multimodal roles in the third space**

Discourse with the participants from all member groups highlighted that the work of the clinical specialists and teaching fellows was much more than just bridging the boundaries between the university and partnership school sites. Whilst they do provide a ‘link’ or ‘conduit’ in a rudimentary sense, and they do continually transmit expectations, their work is much more concentrated in fostering relationships that support a highly coordinated activity (Martin et al., 2011) and have an active role in building communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Evidence throughout this study shows that all mentors (CS, TF and MT) conduct their multiple functions together, sharing between each other and with candidates, in various formations assisting negotiations, forming bridges, and navigating an array of complexities and transforming learning within the practicum experiences. This could potentially be perceived as
boundary-crossing; being transformative in terms of learning and practice (Tsui & Law, 2007).

This chapter has provided an in-depth discussion of the findings, of the three studies, and related them to national and international literature. Discussion of these findings, about the importance of the practicum and a number of impacting factors affecting relationship development, leads to the next chapter which concludes this study by addressing implications for practice and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Implications and further research

Several implications for teacher education arose from this study. Most importantly there is a need for the development of further understandings around the complex nature of the work of the clinical specialist and, even more so, the teaching fellow. Whilst many elements of a traditional supervisory model remain the methodology and philosophy have changed. As such, the work of the university-based mentors in the quadraciprocal model has moved a long way from that of the traditional university supervisor. Within the context of this study and the model under investigation, long gone are the days of a practicum, where pre-service teachers were parachuted into unknown spaces with an often disconnected lone university supervisor who engaged in short observations and brief discussions within a triadic structure (Martin et al., 2011). As highlighted by this doctoral study, the nature of the work undertaken in the clinical specialist and teaching fellow roles, as they cross boundaries, is indeed more sophisticated, delicate and transformative. Exploring and analysing the lived experience of these construct members has provided insights into the current complexities of their roles, but also provided glimpses in to what may be possible in further developing the quadraciprocal model more fully.

Beyond understanding the complexities of the roles of university-based mentors is the need to further explore who it is that should be working in the role of mentor to support emerging teacher candidates, from both the school and university perspectives. As this study shows continued support and sustained practices for collaboration of coordinated activity are paramount to building strong partnerships, increasing the building of quadraciprocal relationships and enriching teacher education. In agreement with Martin and her colleagues (2011), what is needed is more than just an academically-based clinical model. Strong relationships with reducing hierarchical structures and committed teacher educator partners in effective and innovative field-based learning sites are also required.
Findings from this study show a quadraciprocal model is founded on four grounds: 1) carefully structured and committed processes for communication and support; 2) strong committed partners with common goals; 3) a transformative philosophy as key to establishing third space contexts for collective thinking; and 4) recruiting and developing knowledgeable and committed mentors who are skilled in mentoring.

This study suggests a quadraciprocal model is a relationship-based model not specifically a teacher education model and as such it can reside within an array of other broader learning and organisational models. Indeed the model under investigation here is in itself a clinical based model for teacher education and within the specific focus of the practicum rests the quadraciprocal model.

This study proposes accessing the third space as a site for unifying professional reciprocal relationships further bridging the gap to quadraciprocal relationships. Gutiérrez, Lopez and Tejeda (1999) argued that the third space is where learning expands. Through developing a culture of adaptive expertise (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) points for disruption in improving the practicum need to be actively recognised and accepted so that learning can be expanded. That being the case, a realignment of the third space may be productive in helping understand the complexity of relationships in the practicum and its transformative potential (Gutiérrez, Lopez & Tejeda, 1999) for learning opportunities.

Beyond working on this internal approach, to strengthen the connections between the four-member team requires a bigger picture perspective; a more sustainable approach needs to be considered. An extension of further strengthening, and sustaining the four-member team, and improving the practicum more broadly is to build stronger partnerships between the university and schools. The practical core of the effective partnerships is the professional relationships which the partnership activates (Kruger et al., 2009); this is where a quadraciprocal model begins.

**Strong evidence of a resource model**

The quadraciprocal model under investigation in this study demonstrated pronounced and increased levels of support and access for teacher candidates in their personal and professional development. This quadraciprocal model has arguably changed the
structure, nature, and power differential of relationships during the practicum. Teacher candidates commended the levels of support they received acknowledging appreciation and value for explicit and targeted feedback provided by the mentor teachers, clinical specialists and teaching fellows. Teacher candidates acknowledged regular visits by clinical specialists and teaching fellows, mutual setting of learning goals, opportunities for pedagogical dialogue during seminars, increased access to all their mentors via the extended placement, face-to-face conferences, and regular meetings or phone and email conversations were all highly supportive of their development and paramount in building quadraciprocal relationships.

High levels of communication, support and regularity of visits were also of considerable importance to mentor teachers in this study. Mentor teachers commented favourably on the frequency of visits by the clinical specialists and teaching fellows, their ability to regularly communicate with the university-based mentors, and the level of support they and their candidates received during the practicum. In some cases mentor teachers felt they could access the knowledge of the clinical specialist and teaching fellow to improve their mentoring skills. Hastings (2010) noted that the practicum can be emotionally-demanding when a mentor teacher feels they are under the “public gaze” of the teacher candidate and university based mentors, often causing relationships to be “strained and stretched” (p. 208); a finding in contrast to the participants of this study. Whilst some mentor teachers noted they felt their pedagogy might be on display through a candidate’s interpretation of that practice none felt that the regular classroom observation visits detracted from relationship development. Indeed, they found the relationships were largely enhanced by these visits, feedback sessions and opportunities to debrief about a candidates’ progress or set common goals for their learning needs (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Martin et al., 2011).

Clinical specialists and teaching fellows in this study saw themselves as a critical resource for supporting the professional development of teacher candidates and being available to support mentor teachers in understanding the program and offering pastoral care during emotional or difficult times. Whilst all mentors believed they offered supportive activities and dialogue they noted MTs they were not as constrained to the
post lesson observation feedback session and spoke of pointing candidates in particular directions.

This research shows increased, sustained and focused resources provided an important source of professional, personal and emotional support. Through the extended practicum experience emerging relationships were evident within and between all mentors and candidates to varying degrees.

**Strengthening university-school partnerships**

Strengthening the quadraciprocal model of relationship development in teacher preparation is desirable for a greater level of commitment from schools, mentors and teacher educators to train new mentors. This study highlights the need to focus on increased cohesion of the relationships in the supervisory construct as this could further strengthen the quadraciprocal model. Negotiating new ways of sharing learning with school leadership teams to build teaching schools where mentor teachers undertake ongoing professional development within the university and where academics can spend time in schools may strengthen the quadraciprocal relationships. A strengthened quadraciprocal model may lead to improvement of core understandings, mentor teacher and school needs and potentially build capacity through improved communication and collaboration.

One way of increasing the effectiveness of the quadraciprocal model is through the establishment of teaching school sites which have the potential to support a clinical teaching approach for prospective teachers, supporting them to take control of their own learning. It is proposed that such clinical teaching sites using the quadraciprocal model may have the potential to enable balance between efficient use of knowledge and opportunities to develop innovation, skills, and generate new ideas and new knowledge, as communications, collaborations and relationships strengthen. Thus developing clinical teaching sites where the third space can activate creativity to build adaptive expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2005; McKenna, 2007; Schwartz, Bransford & Sears, 2005) and further move the practicum experience away from historical approaches and concerns around replicating the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975).
Strengthened mutuality between the ‘four-member’ team

Strengthening the mutuality between the four-member team in this supervisory construct is more than organising or coordinating opportunities to better or more frequently communicate in relation to candidate performance. It is about “enabling a rich fabric of connectivity” among people (Wenger, 2000, p. 232) with common goals and aspirations. Participants in this study demonstrated they were working in ways consistent with what this study considers to be building quadraciprocal relationships. That is to say they were working within open lines of communication; focusing on their roles; had a good understanding of the roles of others; they were taking advantage of professional and personal growth opportunities; and responding to feedback.

Effective partnerships and reciprocal relationships require deep mutual commitment where members take responsibility for the learning agenda that pushes the boundaries and capabilities beyond routine expertise to a culture of adaptive expertise (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The four-member construct in this study demonstrated a commitment to improving knowledge, communications, understanding and relationship development in order to better support the professional learning of teacher candidates. What needs to be sought here are elaborations and collaborations on how these relationships can be strengthened to move from a single classroom site to a whole school site or partnership (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010).

Most teacher candidates claimed they built cooperative and collaborative relationships where they were encouraged to demonstrate their developing professional agency. For most, the practicum experience led to a higher degree of shared understandings and expectations between the four-members (Haigh & Ward, 2004), and in turn supported the development of cooperative and collaborative relationships, essential to communities of practice (Wenger 1999) and the development of quadraciprocal relationships. Collaborative relationships provided a supportive space for detailed constructive and targeted feedback from clinical specialists and teaching fellows, in particular, which acted to dissuade teacher candidates from simply replicating current practice. Clinical specialists and teaching fellows engaged in regular moderation sessions to scaffold and guide teacher candidate development and mentor teacher
understandings toward informing and supporting clinical practice. This is a major paradigm shift in the area of teacher education in Australia.

**Recommendations for further research**

Throughout this study, current national and global attention on the need to improve the quality of teachers, the importance of improving the practicum and strengthening of university-school partnerships has been emphasised. The in-depth exploration of the construct members’ views of working within the quadraciprocral model and their efforts to build relationships that more effectively support the development of teacher candidates and cross the boundaries of the university and school sites provides insight to the need for further research. Therefore, based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are presented for further research that:

1. Explores an intensive and broader study of the power-dependency in relationships between construct members with a focus on the direct benefits of the inclusion of the teaching fellow.

2. Examines ways in which construct members develop knowledge and skills by crossing boundaries and working within the third space to create new and more productive ways of working and sharing knowledge in a broader systemic manner.

3. Investigates ways in which the university develops and strengthens relationships to forge partnerships that develop communities of practice for clinical teaching sites.

**Summation**

This is the first study into the new four-member supervisory construct of the Master of Teaching (Primary) education course at The University of Melbourne. Whilst there is limited research on a small number of four-member teacher education models (Grudnoff & Williams, 2010; Haigh & Ward, 2004; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008), these studies predominately have an emphasis on the structural factors of the models. As far as can be ascertained, this is the first study with a focus on investigating the positioning and power impacts on the intra- and interpersonal relationships within a four-member
model. Therefore, this study provides a unique contribution to the body of knowledge on supervision in the practicum; how relationships are developed and maintained in the quadraciprocal model.

Using a transcendental phenomenological approach the aim has been to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of the experiences of the members within the four-member supervisory construct. Participants shared their experiences of working with other supervisory members in the construct and relayed how their roles and experiences impacted relationship development. Participants’ sharing of how they developed professional reciprocal relationships revealed new insights about roles, power and positioning during the practicum. The role of the teaching fellow was examined and carefully explored through the data to learn how this new entrant in the supervisory construct conceivably changed the dynamics of the triadic model; shifting positions and power dynamics in the new quadraciprocal model. This study provides an opportunity for teacher educators to understand the practicum environment from a range of key stakeholder roles.

The aim of this study was to examine issues of positioning and power, and the combined impact of these on the relationships within the practicum. This study has achieved its aim through the identification and discussion of three essential themes within the relationships in a quadraciprocal model:

1. With the introduction of additional mentors (the TF in particular) relationship dependency is reduced and relative relationship power can increase for teacher candidates;

2. When there are additional mentors available to teacher candidates there is greater potential for a shift in exchange values to provide a more balanced power potential; and

3. When more knowledgeable others (other experts) enter the construct the structural power is decreased, or levelled, as available alternatives are increased for teacher candidates.
These themes were identified from the participants’ descriptions of their experiences in relationship development in the practicum. The implications arising from the study are:

- Many current mentors are practising mentoring in the way they were mentored, but much has changed in the field of teacher education. New clinical teaching approaches in teacher education and mentoring, along with clear negotiated understandings of the supervision model, have superseded traditional mentoring knowledge and skill levels. As such, fresh learning about mentoring is needed to meet current teacher candidate learning needs;

- Mentors working in teacher education require greater understandings of, and professional development in, the nurturing aspects of mentoring. Structural and relationship power need to be openly addressed and effectively managed;
  - By maintaining and enhancing the quadraciprocal model it may be possible to support reduction in the power of roles thus supporting increased positive experiences for construct members;

- Mutual benefits of the practicum need to be more carefully considered to account for the university-school reciprocity, as well as considering the broader systemic value, whilst taking into account the university’s needs;
  - Inclusion of the fourth member, the teaching fellow, allows various issues to be raised at a school level including the school and university perspectives, and to manage these in a problem solving manner;
  - Supervisory construct members can work collaboratively strengthening the team of four to further support teacher candidate professional development and success through increased clarity;

- Sustained practices for collaboration of coordinated activity is required to develop and maintain strengthened university-school university partnerships;
  - Strengthening of the partnerships between schools and the university need to continue if a focused quadraciprocal approach with systemic reciprocity is to prevail.
This study explored the phenomenon of how relationships were built and maintained, and as such questioned the rhetoric of reciprocity between schools and universities within the quadraciprocal model. Evidence provided by this study shows strong levels of reciprocity supporting individual personal and professional development to various degrees. It provides evidence of an emerging and developing quadraciprocal model. This study demonstrated the need for deeper and strengthened levels of university-school partnerships and systemic reciprocity for schools, school communities, universities and teacher education more generally. Whilst the university had strengthened its alliance with schools and there was clear evidence of reciprocity – moving towards a quadraciprocal model – deep systemic reciprocal partnerships were not as evident in this study.

A surprising finding however was the effect of the additional construct member, the teaching fellow. This role had the ability to level the power structure in the relationships as the model moved from one of a triadic structure to the quadraciprocal model.

Across the study and regardless of role of the participant, all roles were deemed important in the practicum. Teacher candidates provided the nexus of the relationships and supervisory construct itself, for they are the purpose of the relationship in the practicum. This study revealed that in a clinical model, in the vein of pure ‘clinical’ supervision (Goldhammer, 1969), teacher candidates have an opportunity to set goals in the spirit of informative assessment. They are given “close supervision, detailed observational data, face-to-face interaction” (p.54) between the mentors and the candidate on a regular basis, thus supporting their professional growth.

The regularity and continuity of the mentoring specifically by the clinical specialist and teaching fellow provided unprecedented levels of support in the practicum. The clinical specialist and teaching fellow roles, whilst largely deemed as important roles were not as easily definable by some mentor teachers and teacher candidates, some findings suggesting a greater clarity and delineation of those roles is needed. However, others saw distinct differences and believed the teaching fellow role, in particular, was one purely of nurturing and support and provided a sanctuary of sorts for pastoral care.
Overall participants’ views of mentor teachers and mentoring skills and knowledge varied suggesting a need for formalised training for the mentor teacher role.

This study is complementary to and further supports national and international research by prominent researchers investigating a continued cycle of improvement in teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 1994, 2012; Goodlad, 1994; Kruger et al., 2009; Ramsey 2000) with a focus on strengthening university-school partnerships.

With Australia being one of a number of countries working towards improved teacher education, international clinical teaching schools in countries such as Finland and USA have shown that the development of common knowledge and shared beliefs amongst school and university faculty can allow teacher candidates to learn in professional communities (Darling Hammond, 1994, 2012; Sahlberg, 2012; Wenger, 1998, 2000). The findings of this project contribute to Australian research within an existing international evidence base with a focus on strengthening university-school partnerships, professional mentoring and building professional reciprocal relationships in the field of teacher education, specifically providing research on one of the first quadraciprocal models.
REFERENCES


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REFERENCES


APPENDICES

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C. Informed Consent Current Teacher Candidates
D. Informed Consent Clinical Specialists
E. Informed Consent Teaching Fellows
F. Informed Consent Mentor Teachers
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H. Plain Language Statement (PLS) Current Teacher Candidates
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L. Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS
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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter (University of Melbourne)

5 March 2012
Prof. John Hattie
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
The University of Melbourne

Dear Prof. Hattie,

I am pleased to advise that the Melbourne Graduate School of Education Human Ethics Advisory Group (MGSE HEAG) has approved the following Minimal Risk application:

Project title: Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationships.

Researchers: John Hattie, Rannah Scamporlino and Marnee Watkins.

Ethics ID: 1137273
MGSE HEAG ID: 13/12

The project has been approved for the period: 5 March 2012 to 31 December 2012.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all people associated with the Project are made aware of what has actually been approved.

Research projects are normally approved to 31 December of the year of approval. Projects may be renewed yearly for up to a total of five years upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report. If a project is to continue beyond five years a new application will normally need to be submitted.

Please note that the following conditions apply to your approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval and/or disciplinary action.

(a) **Limit of Approval**: Approval is limited strictly to the research as submitted in your Project application.

(b) **Amendments to Project**: Any subsequent variations or modifications you might wish to make to the Project must be notified formally to the Human Ethics Advisory Group for further consideration and approval before the revised Project can commence. If the Human Ethics Advisory Group considers that the proposed amendments are significant, you may be required to submit a new application for approval of the revised Project.

(c) **Incidents or adverse affects**: Researchers must report immediately to the Advisory Group and the relevant Sub-Committee anything which might affect the ethical acceptance of the protocol including adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the Project. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of approval.

(d) **Monitoring**: All projects are subject to monitoring at any time by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

(e) **Annual Report**: Please be aware that the Human Research Ethics Committee requires that researchers submit an annual report on each of their projects at the end of the year, or at the conclusion of a project if it continues for less than this time. Failure to submit an annual report will mean that ethics approval will lapse.

(f) **Auditing**: All projects may be subject to audit by members of the Sub-Committee.

Please quote the ethics registration number and the name of the Project in any future correspondence.

On behalf of the Ethics Committee I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Leo Goedegebuure
Chairperson, Melbourne Graduate School of Education Human Ethics Advisory Group
Phone: 83448619, Email: leo.g@unimelb.edu.au

cc: Rannah Scamporlino, Marnee Watkins and Human Research Ethics Committee, Melbourne Research Office.
Appendix B: Informed Consent Commencing Teacher Candidates

Informed Consent Form: Commencing Teacher Candidates

Project Title: “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationship”

Participant: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I have read the attached plain language statement about this doctoral research project which outlines its aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained. I understand that I am giving permission and agree to participate by:

- taking part in audio and video taped interview and/or focus group interview related to my practicum experience and relationship development in that context;
- sharing my thoughts and opinions in written journals, video and audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews and thinking activities about relationship development;
- sharing reflections through email and discussion forum submissions;
- allowing my personal and professional reflections and reports to be used in the research project.

I am also aware that the researcher will provide me with a copy of the research report upon request after December, 2014.

I acknowledge that I will be sent electronic copies of interview transcripts and will be able to delete any sections that I do not want to be included in publications.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, including any unprocessed material that I have supplied. I understand the legal limitations of confidentiality, as explained in the Plain Language Statement. I understand that because of the small number of participants it is possible that in publications about the project, there is a risk that I may be identified despite the pseudonyms.

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Name: ______________________________________________________________

Email: ___________________________________________ Mobile: __________________

Signed: ___________________________ Date_____________________

Responsible Researcher:
Professor John Hattie
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
9035 3482
jhattie@unimelb.edu.au

Student Researcher:
Mrs Rannah Scamporlino
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
8344 6294 0433 124 418
rannahms@unimelb.edu.au

Participants will be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed. The original will be held by the researchers. If participants have any concerns about the conduct of this research project they should contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, Ph: 8344 2073; fax 347 6739.
Appendix C: Informed Consent Current Teacher Candidates

Informed Consent Form: Teacher Candidates

Project Title: “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationship”

Participant:………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Appendix D: Informed Consent Clinical Specialists

Informed Consent Form: Clinical Specialist

Project Title: “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationship”

Participant: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I have read the attached Plain Language Statement about this doctoral research project which outlines its aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained. I understand that I am giving permission and agree to participate by:

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Appendix E: Informed Consent Teaching Fellows

Informed Consent Form: Teaching Fellow

Project Title: “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationship”

Participant: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I have read the attached Plain Language Statement about this doctoral research project which outlines its aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained. I understand that I am giving permission and agree to participate by:

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Appendix F: Informed Consent Mentor Teachers

Informed Consent Form: Mentor Teacher

**Project Title:** “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around quadraciprocal relationship”

Participant: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I have read the attached Plain Language Statement about this doctoral research project which outlines its aims and the ways in which data will be kept and confidentiality maintained. I understand that I am giving permission and agree to participate by:

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Appendix G: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Commencing Teacher Candidates

Plain Language Statement. Commencing Teacher Candidates

Dear Teacher Candidate,

Project Title: "Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing the Pre-service Teacher: AWOCAS (Australian Women's Own Cultural Awareness Statement)"

As a candidate for the Doctor of Education with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, I invite you to participate in my doctoral research.

I am interested in the experiences of pre-service teachers in the pre-service teacher education in the areas of the pre-service teachers' professional development and how they develop professional identities. The purpose of the research is to develop professional identity in the classroom and to support professional growth. This study is conducted through interviews with teacher candidates and student teachers in Australia at the University of Melbourne as the major site of the study. This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the context of this study?

International research shows that the teaching profession is facing significant changes. In particular, Teacher Education is undergoing significant change in response to the changing needs of the profession. It is predicted that the personal stories shared in this study will provide additional perspectives and contribute to an evolving knowledge base about the nature of pre-service teachers' taught in this context, their professional experiences, and related literature. The research involved a study of pre-service teachers, who were interviewed in a range of professional development activities, and the interviewers' experiences and related literature. The research was designed to provide a deeper understanding of pre-service teacher development and how they develop professional identities.

What will I be asked to do?

At the beginning of the research project, you will be asked to complete a set of data collection tools, most of which are divided into regular questions in the course requirements:

1. You will be asked to complete a data collection tool that includes a data collection tool designed for the study and a set of questions about your expectations of the experience.
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3. You will be asked to complete a data collection tool that includes a data collection tool designed for your experience and a set of questions about your expectations of the experience.

At the end of the project, you will be asked to complete a data collection tool that includes a data collection tool designed for your experience and a set of questions about your expectations of the experience.

A shared journal will be provided to you to keep track of your thoughts and feelings about the experiences you have had during the pre-service teacher education. You will be asked to update your journal on a weekly basis.

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A shared journal will be provided to you to keep track of your thoughts and feelings about the experiences you have had during the pre-service teacher education. You will be asked to update your journal on a weekly basis.
Appendix H: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Current Teacher Candidates

Plain Language Statement: Current Teacher Candidates

1. Dear Teacher Candidates,

Project Title: "Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around power and agency relationship"

As a candidate for the Master of Education with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education I invite you to participate in my doctoral research. I am interested in the experiences of pre-service teachers and how the development of relationships in the pre-service teacher education program impact on the development of professional knowledge and support professional growth. The aim of this study is to develop an understanding of how, under this new supervisory model, the main people involved in the supervisory relationship: pre-service teacher and supervisor, how they perceive the power and agency relationship during pre-service teacher education and how these factors influence the professional learning of pre-service teachers.

Why am I asking you to participate?

As a current teacher candidate you are ideally placed to recall and relate your pre-practicum experiences and how these impact your current experiences in the practicum in the areas of the practicum expectations and relationships development and how they affect your professional identity and professional growth. The study is seeking to provide rich data and gives pre-service teachers an opportunity to share detailed information rather than responding to surveys. The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the nature of this study?

International research shows that the teaching profession is facing significant changes in particular teacher education is undergoing significant global changes and the pre-service teacher is recognized as being the most significant area of professional development for pre-service teachers. In particular, studies suggest the need for this is viewed by student teachers and teaching staff as well as academic as the most significant aspect it is the area fraught with the most difficulties.

The experiences during the practicum are important factors for the personal and professional growth and success of pre-service teachers and overall improvement in the profession. It is anticipated that the personal stories shared in this study will provide additional perspectives and contribute to an existing international tale about the experiences of pre-service teachers, their practicum experiences and associated issues. The research is a study of the pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, clinical specialist, and teaching relationship. It examines issues around pedagogical knowledge, professional identity, agency, anxiety, power, positioning and in the novice-expert relationship and the complex of these elements on pre-service teacher education.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute to discussions about your experiences in the practicum component throughout the course.

1. You will be asked to take part in a range of data collection, most of which can be drawn from your experiences in the practicum component throughout the course.
   a. You will have an online survey (approx. 30 minutes) and possible follow-up individual interview (approx. 20 minutes) in height will be audio recorded.
   b. You will be asked to keep a personal journal recording thoughts and feelings and a shared journal on classroom and lesson feedback sessions. You may also be asked to record group feedback sessions following classroom observations.
   c. You may be invited to participate in a group interview which will be between 60-90 minutes in length.
   d. You may be invited to participate in some thinking activities around how people develop professional relationships.

2. The interviews will be conducted in February, March and April 2015 during (or just after) your first 2015 practicum experience. You will need to attend one of these interviews.

3. A section of regular classroom learning will be facilitated from your practicum can be recorded for later. This feedback can be provided by any member of the supervisory team. This will be conducted at the end of the practicum.

4. A framework will be provided for you to use regular journal notes of your experiences during the practicum. You will be asked to update your journal on a weekly basis.

5. A shared journal will be provided to you to be kept in the practicum school for shared notes to be compiled by the mentor teacher, clinical specialist and teaching fellow. You do not need to write notes unless you wish to contribute your reflections.

6. The researcher may visit your site to make observations during your classroom teaching practice and mentor teacher, clinical specialist or teaching fellow feedback sessions. These sessions may be audio recorded.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

In order to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest extent possible, within the limits of the law, interviews will be recorded, but then transcribed with pseudonyms, and room after the responsible researcher, the co-researcher and the student researcher will not see the tapes. Participants will be offered electronic copies of the transcribed interviews. All related material will be kept on a password-protected computer and in locked filing cabinets. All data will be destroyed after 5 years. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity. However, it should be noted that as the number of people involved in the study is relatively small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you.

There are also certain legal limits on confidentiality. For example, if someone discloses abuse, there are mandatory reporting requirements. Research data is sometimes subject to subpoena or freedom of information requests. Hence, as this project is not addressing sensitive issues, this is unlikely to occur.

How will I receive feedback?

Once this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be made available to you on an application through the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. This material will also be available to those in the field in the form of articles, presentations, workshops, etc.

Are there any potential benefits to participating in the study?

There may be some risk in participating in the study. Participants will be provided with a list of possible counselling services should they feel that support is required to address issues that are related to their professional lives.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the project is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time in participating. Participants may also withdraw any unclassified data may have previously supplied.

Has there been approval to conduct the research?

The project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Catholic Education Office.

How do I sign up to participate?

If you wish to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood the information that is obtained from the accompanying consent form and contact the person named in the envelope provided in the researcher. You will then contact the researcher to arrange a mutually convenient time for your interview. All information in this project will be kept confidential and handled appropriately. The researcher and the participant will not have access to the other's name or identification.

Where can I get further information?

Should you require any further information or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either the researcher or the researcher at the number given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Office, The University of Melbourne, on ph. 03 8341 2975 or fax: 03 8341 7739.

Regenerative Researcher:
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Appendix 1: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Clinical Specialists

Dear Clinical Specialist,

Project Title: “Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing theories around situated knowledge.”

As a candidate for the Doctor of Education with the Queensland Graduate School of Education, I invite your participation in my doctoral research.

I am interested in the experiences of pre-service teachers and how the development of relationships in the classroom impact on the development of professional identity and professional growth. The aim of the study is to develop understanding about how, under the new supervision model, the pre-service teacher in the supervisory component is supported to develop relations with student teachers and pre-service teachers as well as the supervisory process and its impact on the professional learning of pre-service teachers.

Why am I being asked to participate?

As a clinical specialist with a supervisory role, you are ideally placed to share your experiences of the supervisory model and the professional development that occurs during the practicum experience. This study is looking for rich data and gives participants an opportunity to share relevant information rather than surveys. This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the context of this study?

International research shows that the learning process is facing significant changes in particular teacher education programs. This study is a key step to changing the current context of pre-service teachers and their professional growth and the focus on the supervisory component. It is anticipated that the experiences shared from this study will provide additional perspectives and contribute to existing knowledge. Related research has indicated that the supervisory processes and experiences regarding the support from pre-service teachers. The study is essentially a study of the pre-service teacher, mentor teacher, clinical specialist, and teaching team relationship. It advances issues around pedagogical knowledge, professional identity, power, gender, and the novice-expert relationship and the combined impact of these issues on pre-service teacher growth.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a three-page online survey – around 20 minutes.

You will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion – around 60 minutes.

You will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview – around 60 minutes.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the focus group discussion.

How will I be reimbursed?

The study has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Australian Education Office.

How do I agree to participate?

If you wish to participate, please contact me and provide your cell number and address for mailing purposes. You will receive a contact sheet, which will be sent by email. You will be asked to participate in the online survey. If you agree to participate, I will send you an email with attached consent forms for your first interview. Any interviews in this study will not affect your relationship, regardless of your affiliation with the University of Melbourne or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Further Information:

If you have any further questions or require any additional information, please contact the Research Office at the University of Melbourne. You can also visit the University of Melbourne’s website for more details.
Appendix J: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Teaching Fellows

Plan Language Statement: Teaching Fellow

Dear Teaching Fellow

Project Title: "Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Preservice Teacher Education: Developing theories around educational relationships"

As a candidate for the Doctor of Education with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, I invite your participation in my doctoral research.

I am interested in the experiences of preservice teachers and how the development of relationships in the practicum impact the development of professional identity and support professional growth. The aim of the study is to develop understandings about how, under the supervision model, the initial staff involved in the supervisory component interacts to support relationships development during the practicum and how that translates into supporting the professional learning of the preservice teacher.

Why am I asking you to participate?

As a teaching fellow with a supervisory role you are ideally placed to make your experiences of the supervisory model and the relationships that occur during the practicum experience and beyond. This study is seeking to provide rich data and gives participants an opportunity to share detailed information rather than responding to surveys. This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

What is the context of this study?

The purpose of the study is to ask Preservice Teachers about their experiences of supervising, and some of the experiences that were shared with your Supervising Teacher are presented here. This study is seeking to understand the experiences of preservice teachers in this context and is being conducted in the human rights research area of education.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts about your experiences in the role of mentor teacher and the context and development of the current four-year model.

You will be asked to take part in data collection, which can be drawn from regular practices in your current role.

Optional Participation

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts about your experiences in the role of mentor teacher and the context and development of the current four-year model.

You will be asked to take part in data collection, which can be drawn from regular practices in your current role.

Minimum Participation

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts about your experiences in the role of mentor teacher and the context and development of the current four-year model.

You will be asked to take part in data collection, which can be drawn from regular practices in your current role.

How will the confidentiality be protected?

We intend to protect your anonymity, and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest extent possible. Within the limits of your knowledge, you will be advised of any other respondents, and their relationship to you. All personal identifiers will be kept in a password-protected database.

How will I be asked to participate?

You will be asked to indicate your willingness to be contacted and to provide your contact details. You will be asked to share your thoughts about your experiences in the role of mentor teacher and the context and development of the current four-year model.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.

Can I withdraw from the study at any time?

Participation in the study is voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation or indication of why they wish to withdraw.

Was there any potential bias in participating in the study?

It is possible that there was some bias in participating in the study. However, the study was conducted in a fair and unbiased manner.
Appendix K: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Mentor Teachers

Plain Language Statement: Mentor Teacher

DEAR MENTOR TEACHER,

Project Title: Professional Identity, Power and Agency in Pre-service Teacher Education: Developing Teacher Internship Place Descriptions

As a准F candidate for the Doctor of Education with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education I invite your participation in this research.

I am interested in the experiences of pre-service teachers and how the development of competence, in particular, and professional growth. This study is being to provide new insights into the professional and personal development of pre-service teachers. The research is currently being observed by student teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is a study of the relationships between pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is being observed by student teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is a study of the relationships between pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts.

What are the key concepts of this study?

International research shows that the teaching profession is facing significant changes. In particular, the professional development of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is a study of the relationships between pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is being observed by student teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts. The research is a study of the relationships between pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and professional development experts.

What will be done with the data?

Your participation will be kept confidential, and your comments will be shared with the research team and the Department of Education.

You will be asked to complete a consent form, and this will be kept for use in future research.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participants in this project will be asked to complete a consent form, and this will be kept for use in future research.

Appendix K: Plain Language Statement (PLS) Mentor Teachers

Plain Language Statement: Mentor Teacher

If you agree to the use of oral interviews, it will be provided to the ECD to be used at the discretion of the mentor teacher, other researchers, and the research team. You will be asked to provide a copy of your final written consent notes for inclusion in the research report.

If you agree to the use of these notes, it will be provided to the ECD to be used at the discretion of the mentor teacher, other researchers, and the research team. You will be asked to provide a copy of your final written consent notes for inclusion in the research report.

If you agree to the use of these notes, it will be provided to the ECD to be used at the discretion of the mentor teacher, other researchers, and the research team. You will be asked to provide a copy of your final written consent notes for inclusion in the research report.

If you agree to the use of these notes, it will be provided to the ECD to be used at the discretion of the mentor teacher, other researchers, and the research team. You will be asked to provide a copy of your final written consent notes for inclusion in the research report.
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS

1. **Outline of today’s activity**
   - Why are we doing this? For what purpose?
   - Brief description – What is Cognitive Mapping
   - Illustration – What are we actually doing
   - Process today... – Step by step (Step 1)
   - Mapping ... – Step by step (Step 2)
   - Some final words and sharing – groups develop a summary of the exercise/ideas
   - Adjustments
   - 30 mins – Morning Tea – Level 3 Staff Lounge

2. **Why? For what purpose?**
   - In our case the information out of this activity will be used twofold:
     1. Provide information to inform future improvements in the Miech
     2. Provide data that will support my Doctoral Study
   - So at this point I say a personal and professional thank you

3. **Brief description**
   - Cognitive Mapping displays a person’s representation of concepts about a particular domain, showing the relationships among them
     - Similar – let’s explain to Concept Mapping
   - A descriptive will be written out this concept development activity – this will be available to everyone for review and comment.
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS (page 2 of 6)

**ILLUSTRATION**

- This activity has been designed to help understand how individuals in the supervisory member set view:
  - what a “relationship” is...
  - what a “professional relationship” is...
  - what a “professional reciprocal relationship” is...
  - what that looks like and what factors are required to develop and maintain such a relationship.

**PROCESS TODAY...**

- **Step1 – Pre-Mapping**
  - Working in small groups if 3-4 develop key concepts around the notion of the “professional reciprocal relationship”
    - Relationship [Professional] concept development
    - Adjective [Reciprocal] concept development

- **Step2 – Mapping, building the display and entering the data**
  - Combining the concepts
  - Lines drawn & named to distinguish relational connections
  - Key concepts and divided into the following groups:
    - Concepts vs processes, then
    - Institutional vs personal benefits

**... AND BEYOND**

- **Step3 – Drawing Conclusions**
  - Preliminary analysis and writing the descriptive text
  - Feedback and opportunity for additional comments

  That’s me… At a later date....

**LET’S GET STARTED**

**Part A - Professional**

- **Step1 – Pre-Mapping**
  - Working in small groups if 3-4 develop key concepts around the notion of:
    - Relationship [Professional]
      - concept development

  What does this terms mean to you? Start your map!
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS (page 3 of 6)

**How to Get Started**

- What is a relationship? What cannot be called a relationship?
- How do you conceptualise/define the notion of relationships?
- What is professional? What is not professional?
- How do you conceptualise/define the notion of professional?

**Putting These Together**

- What is a professional relationship? What cannot be called a professional relationship?
- What are examples of professional relationships?
- Do you consider these good or poor models of professional relationships?
- Give reasons

**How so...**

- How are relationships formed?
  - What is the right way to go about forming professional relationships?
  - What is the wrong way to go about forming professional relationships?

**Impacting Factors**

- What decisions (models, processes, policies, protocols, laws, guidelines, regulations, codes of conduct) exist in the environment (school and university) about professional relationships?
- Which of these factors could be considered outside of one's control?
- Which of these factors can be controlled and added to by members of the relationship?
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS (page 4 of 6)

**ROUNDING IT UP**
- How are relationships nurtured and sustained?
  - What actions/behaviours need to be undertaken to nurture professional relationships?
  - What actions/behaviours put professional relationships at risk?

**LET'S MOVE FORWARD**
**PART B - RECIPROCITY**
- Step 1: Pre-Mapping
  - Working in small groups of 3-4 to develop key concepts around the notion of:
    - Adjectival (Reciprocal)
      - Concept development

What does this term mean to you?
Add to your map!
(start a new sheet)

**SORTING IT OUT**
- What is a reciprocal relationship?
- What cannot be called a reciprocal relationship?
- How do you conceptualise/define the notion of reciprocal in this context?
- What are examples of reciprocal relationships?
  - Do you consider these good or poor models of reciprocal relationships?
  - Give reasons!

**How so...**
- How are reciprocal relationships formed?
  - What is the right way to go about forming reciprocal relationships?
  - What is the wrong way to go about forming reciprocal relationships?
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS (page 5 of 6)

**WHY?**
- What aspirations, directions, beliefs exist in the environment (school and university) about reciprocal relationships?
  - Which of these factors could be considered outside of one’s control?
  - Which of these factors can be controlled and added to by members of the relationship?

**ROUNDING IT UP**
- How are reciprocal relationships nurtured and sustained?
  - What actions/behaviours need to be undertaken to nurture reciprocal relationships?
  - What actions/behaviours put reciprocal relationships at risk?

**THE PERSONAL...**
- What are personal benefits of reciprocal relationships?
  - How do people benefit from engaging/participating in reciprocal relationships?
  - How are people constrained by engaging/participating in reciprocal relationships?

**THE ORGANISATIONAL...**
- What are organisational (institutional) benefits of reciprocal relationships?
  - How do organisations benefit from engaging/participating in reciprocal relationships?
  - How are organisations constrained by engaging/participating in reciprocal relationships?
Appendix L: Study 1 - Cognitive Mapping Focus Group Activity Outline for TF-CS (page 6 of 6)

**STEP 2: MAPPING**

**BUILDING THE DISPLAY**

- **Function & Form**
  - Divide the ideas - **Concepts** vs **Processes**
    - Concepts = Blue Texta
    - Process = Red Texta

- **Benefits**
  - Divide the ideas – **Personal** vs **Institutional**
    - Personal = Blue Texta
    - Institutional = Red Texta

**LASTLY**

- Put your two maps together in one display
- Using the green fine liner texta

- **Draw & name** the links between the concepts (or groups)

**SOME FINAL WORDS AND SHARING**

Groups – some up with a **brief summary** of the outcomes of the exercise

**SHARE TIME**

Any final adjustments?
Appendix M: Study 1 - Stages of cognitive mapping data analysis
Appendix M: Study 1 - Stages of cognitive mapping data analysis (page 2 of 2)
Appendix N: Study 2 - Reflective Journal Master Sample

Quadrangular Research Project - Reflective Journal

Name: ________________________ Date: ________________________

This journal is designed for you to record your reflections of inter-personal and intra-personal interactions in the most recent practicum.

*Please note* "members" refers to the TP, CS, MT, and TC.

We are interested in your thoughts and feelings about the personal interactions observed and relationships developed during your most recent practicum experience.

This is not about the tasks given to you by the university or the mechanics of teaching as such – we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about the inter-personal professional relationship that occurs in the practicum.

Our focus is on the issues of the practicum as a whole.

Please take the time completing this reflective journal – we will ask for it to be returned in around 2-3 weeks. Please only write about your most recent practicum experience. You may find it helpful to reflect on it in 3-6 months with some time in between.

- We would like you to share your experiences of trying to connect your responses to beliefs (thoughts) and emotions.
- TP & CS may record more broadly about the overall experience, not necessarily one particular event.
- MT & TC may record more locally.

This reflective journal has 4 sections to it:

1. Thoughts & Beliefs
2. Emotional Factors
3. Power & Positioning - Building Professional Relationships
4. Personal - Personal traits (personality, habits & characteristics)

You can write as much or as little as you feel comfortable doing.

Each concept area has some guiding questions to help guide your reflections – it is not intended that you answer these questions directly.

Thoughts & Beliefs

This section is about the ideas and beliefs you bring to the role.

Identity - During the placement how did you see yourself in your role as a teacher? Write about your professional identity - you could include a mentor you like.

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Self-positioning - During the placement how do you think you positioned yourself? How did your experiences impact it? Did you have positioned by others - if so did you position yourself?

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Power & Positioning - During the placement how did you position yourself in position of power? How did you feel about that? What are your thoughts/feelings on the notion of power in this situation?

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Emotional Factors

This section is about emotional factors impacting on professional development from the broad perspectives outline below.

Emotions - During the placement what were some of the emotions you experienced? How did you think the "members" managed their emotions and in what others - if any? What parts of things helped you emotionally - anything? What were some of the emotions you experienced? How did you feel about that?

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Pedagogy - Pedagogical Knowledge, Skills, Beliefs & Understandings - During the placement how did you feel about others and their pedagogy? Did people bring the skills and knowledge you were expecting? How did you feel about that?

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Professional - Professionalism (practical application) - During the placement how did you feel about others and their professionalism? Did people behave in the way you expected them to or think they should? How did you feel about that?

*PARTICIPANT RESPONSE:*

Thank you for undertaking and sharing your thoughts and feelings about relationships and emotional factors in the practicum experience.

Your input is critical to the development of understandings around the practicum and is very much appreciated.

Warm regards,
The Quadrangular Research Team
Appendix O: Study 2 - Stages of Reflective Journal Analysis
Appendix O: Study 2 - Stages of Reflective Journal Analysis (page 2 of 2)
Individual Interview Guide (TF/MT/CS)

Interview guide is to be used with individual face-to-face interviews. All interviews will be preceded by the following statement:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about your relationship development and the practicum experience in the role of [TF/MT/CS] in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education's Master of Teaching program. This interview is subject to ethical guidelines – it is confidential and any reporting will be anonymous.

This interview is being audio recorded – do you agree to my recording this session? YES / NO

Handwritten notes will also be taken.

This interview will take around 60 mins.

The interview is designed to gather your perceptions (thoughts, beliefs, opinions, feelings etc.) about the relationship, agency and positioning of those involved in the practicum experiences in preservice teacher education – within the case study model of the supervisory construct of the Master of Teaching (MT) University of Melbourne.

I will ask you a series of questions specifically on developing relationships, your personal experiences and reflections.

There are no right or wrong answers – no judgements are being made about any of your responses – we are simply collecting personal perceptions.

Relationships

1. Can you tell me a little about how you work with other members of the supervisory set, for example MT/TF/CS?
2. How do you see yourself in the supervisory set?
3. How do your roles complement each other? Are there any uncertainties about roles and responsibilities? Any problems?
4. What are some of the difficulties you experience when working with the others in the supervisory set?
5. Do the attitudes or positions of the others in the supervisory set affect you?
6. How does your attitude or position affect others?
7. From your perspective, what are some of the factors that impact on professional relationships?
8. Have any of these factors impacted on you within your work in this role?
9. If so, how did/do you deal with the situation?

¿Do you think the relationship(s) between members of the supervisory team impact on the assessment?

Appendix Q: Study 3 - Individual Interview schedule TCs

Focus Group Interview Guide (TC)
Interview guides are to be used with individual face-to-face interviews. All interviews will be
preceded by the following statement:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about your relationship, development, and the practicum
experience in the role of TC, in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education’s Master of Teaching
program. This interview is subject to ethics guidelines – it is confidential and any repeating will be
anonymous.

This interview is being audio recorded – do you agree to my recording this session? YES / NO
Handwritten notes will also be taken.

This interview will take around 30 mins.

The interview is designed to gather your perceptions (thoughts, beliefs, opinions, feelings etc.)
about the relationships, agency and positioning of those involved in the practicum experience in pre-
service teacher education – within the Case Study model of the supervisory construct of the Master
of Teacher – the University of Melbourne.

I will ask you a series of questions specifically on developing relationships, your personal
experiences and reflections.

There are no right or wrong answers – no judgements are being made about any of your
responses – we are simply collecting personal perceptions.

Relational Epistemology - Observations and experiences of relationships development - personal
experiences and reflections

Examples:
1. You have come from another field (work or study), how did you see yourself in that role?
2. What are some of the difficulties/challenges you have faced/need to overcome in this new
   role? (What do you think about who you are now – your identity?)
3. What benefits do you get from working with others in the supervisory set?
4. Do you think they (TP/CS/MT) learn from you whilst you are in the practicum?

Relationships:
5. Can you tell me a little about how you work with other members of the supervisory set, for
   example: MT/TP/CS?
   a. Are there any tensions/difficulties?
   b. How does your attitude/position affect your relationships in the practicum?
6. How do the attitudes/positions of the others supervising affect you?
7. From your perspective, what are some of the factors that have impacted on your professional
   relationships when in the practicum?

9. With whom have you built the strongest and most supportive relationships within the
   supervisory set? (MT/TP/CS) - Can you elaborate?

Emotions & Identity
10. Have you thought much about your identity?
11. What are the emotional impacts of working in the practicum, within this supervisory
    model?
12. How do you think your emotions impact identity or professional identity?
13. Do you feel supported in the practicum? What are the most supportive actions you have
    encountered? By whom?
14. When you have been provided with feedback what emotions have been stirred in you?
15. Tell me a bit about your professional experiences? Positive and negative?
16. How do you think this experience impacts on your professional identity?
17. What actions on your part do you think, or might have, improved any negative
    experiences?
18. What factors impact on your assessment in the practicum?

In general terms – not specifically related to the MyEch model:
19. What were the best aspects of your journey so far (practicum only)?
   a. What could be improved?
20. How well supported do you feel by the MT, TP, CS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Very Highly Supported</th>
<th>Highly Supported</th>
<th>Somewhat Supported</th>
<th>Poorly Supported</th>
<th>Not at All Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anything else you would like to add?
Appendix R: Roles and Responsibility Statements

### Roles and Responsibilities

**Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Candidate</td>
<td>Pre-service student teacher enrolled in the Master of Teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher</td>
<td>School staff member responsible for guiding and supporting Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates during practicum, assessing teaching practice and providing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feedback on a day to day basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Fellow</td>
<td>Coordinates the school-based program for the partnership school group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for monitoring the practice experience of Teacher Candidates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief Mentor Teachers on placement requirements, maintain regular contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and provide provisional support to Teacher Candidates throughout the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>supervision period, observe Teacher Candidates teaching and provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feedback and assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Specialist</td>
<td>Academic staff member involved in the teaching or the Master of Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching program, delivery of the seminar program with Teaching Fellows and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>observation, feedback and assessment of Teacher Candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Responsibilities

**Teacher Candidates (TC)**

Teacher Candidates are enrolled students in the primary, secondary or early childhood stream of the Master of Teaching. Teacher Candidates are placed as part of a cohort in a group of local partnership schools. The placement experience for each Teacher Candidate is usually coordinated within schools in one Partnership School Group (PSG). During the two day school program, Teacher Candidates will attend fortnightly Practicum Seminar sessions at the Base School or one of the partnership schools as designated by the Teaching Fellow and Clinical Specialist.

Within this study are enrolled students in the primary stream of the Master of Teaching.

**Mentor Teacher (MT)**

The Mentor Teacher in each placement setting has a designated role for Teacher Candidates' assessment in conjunction with the Clinical Specialist and Teaching Fellow.

Mentor Teachers will work in consultation with the Teaching Fellow to devise a program that meets the needs of the Teacher Candidate during the 2 days Schools Program and Block Placement.

Mentor Teachers will:

- Support, guide and monitor the Teacher Candidate's transition to the role of professional teacher.
- Observe Teacher Candidates teaching and provide verbal/written feedback with priorities for future action.
- Negotiate the 'Shared Time Allocation' and facilitate conditions for Teacher Candidates to fulfill University task requirements.
- Provide mandatory assessment points during the placement and discuss these with the Teaching Fellow/Clinical Specialist and Teacher Candidate to assist in developing goals for future learning.
- Complete a summary report at the end of the block placement and submit this report with the Teaching Fellow/Clinical Specialist.

**Teaching Fellow (TF)**

One Teaching Fellow is appointed for each Partnership School Group (PSG). As the central school based team member the Teaching Fellow will:

- Coordinate the in-school experience for Teacher Candidates within the partnership school group;
- Assist the Placement Officer to identify exemplary Mentor Teachers and excellent programs to facilitate the best match of Teacher Candidate to Mentor Teacher;
- Brief Mentor Teachers on the placement requirements and maintain regular liaison throughout the supervision period;
- Design and provide a program for Teacher Candidates to involve them with all aspects of the school, beginning with orientation and taking advantage of special school events;
- Provide a pastoral and enabling role to assist Teacher Candidates to maximise opportunities to engage in the professional activities of the partnership school group;
- Mentor submission of fortnightly reports to University, assisting and mediating with Mentor Teachers to progressively monitor the professional development of Teacher Candidates against teaching standards;
- Regularly observe Teacher Candidate teaching and meet with the Mentor Teacher and Teacher Candidate, setting goals for teaching improvement in the next period;
- Alert the Clinical Specialist if there are concerns with progress at any time during the placement;
- Assist the Clinical Specialist to write up Progress Review Reports, and meet with Teacher Candidates to support their understanding of areas for improvement;
- Work with the Clinical Specialist to deliver the practicum seminar program;
- Monitor Teacher Candidates' development of the Professional Practice Portfolio at regular intervals and provide feedback on artifacts in moderation with the Clinical Specialist;
- Assist the Clinical Specialist in scheduling, conduct and moderate to assess the Clinical Practise Exam and Clinical Teaching Inquiry;
- Assist Practicum and Partnership Coordinator when called upon by participating in research and evaluation of the Master of Teaching program.

**Clinical Specialist (CS)**

Clinical Specialists are members of academic staff at the university who are actively involved in teaching subjects in the Master of Teaching. Clinical Specialists provide an important link between theory and practice from the University perspective. In their role as Clinical Specialists, they are attached to a group of partnership schools and work with Teaching Fellows to support professional development of their cohort of Teacher Candidates.

Clinical Specialists are responsible for promoting the partnership between the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) and the partnership school groups.

In promoting the partnership between the University and the school(s) the Clinical Specialist:

- Brings together the strengths of the MGSE and the capabilities of schools in meeting professional development needs of Teacher Candidates and their Mentor Teachers;
- Conducts the practicum seminar program assisted by the Teaching Fellow;
- Support the work of Mentor Teachers with assistance from the Teaching Fellow;
- Assist the Teaching Fellow by mediating and providing feedback on the development of the Professional Portfolio;
- Monitor submission of online reports to the University;
- Moderates observations to progressively monitor the professional development of Teacher Candidates against national teaching standards;
- Finalises the submission of the assessment report;
- Contributes to and assesses the Clinical Practise Exam and Clinical Teaching Inquiry assisted by the Teaching Fellow;
- Submits finalised reports to the Practicum and Partnership Coordinator.

This document provides a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities of the members within the quadripartite supervisory contract.
Appendix S: ITSD Analytical Framework

Example: Michael - Teaching Fellows (highly experienced)

Individual Textual Description for the Reflective Journal - Michael (TH)

[Description of text content]

1. Personal - Personal traits (personality, habits & characteristics)

2. The impact of self-identity on professional identity

3. Generality: Impact - Difference between personal traits, values and ways of working and being

4. Positioning the roles

5. Perceptions of positions of power

6. Managing others through the construct of power and positioning

7. Knowledge - Pedagogical Knowledge, Skills, Beliefs & Understandings

8. Action - Teaching Fellows in practice

9. Reflection & improvement - Practice in action

10. Emotionally impacting factors - Positive & Negative

Appendices: ITSD Analytical Framework

- Emotional impact on them
- Leadership impact on them
- Personal impact on them
- Professional impact on them (practical implications)

- Observation and research
- Practice and experience
- Reflections and feedback
- Professional and personal knowledge
- Knowledge and understanding
- Practice and improvement
- Emotional impact on them
- Leadership impact on them
- Personal impact on them
- Professional impact on them (practical implications)

- Observation and research
- Practice and experience
- Reflections and feedback
- Professional and personal knowledge
- Knowledge and understanding
- Practice and improvement
- Emotional impact on them
- Leadership impact on them
- Personal impact on them
- Professional impact on them (practical implications)

- Observation and research
- Practice and experience
- Reflections and feedback
- Professional and personal knowledge
- Knowledge and understanding
- Practice and improvement
- Emotional impact on them
- Leadership impact on them
- Personal impact on them
- Professional impact on them (practical implications)