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ARTICLE

Australia’s supervising teachers: motivators and challenges to inform professional learning

Wendy Nielsen\textsuperscript{a}, Juanjo Mena\textsuperscript{b}, Anthony Clarke\textsuperscript{c}, Sarah O’Shea\textsuperscript{a}, Garry Hoban\textsuperscript{a} and John Collins\textsuperscript{d}

\textsuperscript{a}School of Education, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia; \textsuperscript{b}Faculty of Education, University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain; \textsuperscript{c}Centre for the Study of Teacher Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; \textsuperscript{d}Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

ABSTRACT

This paper offers an overview of what motivates and challenges Australian supervising teachers to work with preservice teachers in their classrooms. In the contemporary Australian context of new National Professional Standards for Teachers, a new national curriculum and new standards for Initial Teacher Education programs, what motivates and challenges supervising teachers becomes a focus for professional learning through analysis presented in this paper. Data are reported from a national data set that includes 314 responding supervising teachers who took the Mentoring Perspectives Inventory from 2012–2014. The MPI data are aggregated in this paper to suggest that the wider system of teacher education could benefit from attention at various levels of interest to develop the underlying knowledge base of supervising teachers and our understanding of how they are challenged and motivated in their work with preservice teachers.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Supervising teachers; Mentoring Perspectives Inventory; teacher education; professional learning

Introduction

The most influential aspect of a teacher education program for preservice teachers is the quality of their practicum experiences in schools (Clarke, 2001; Murray & Male, 2005; Osula & Irvin, 2009). In New South Wales, classroom-based practicum placements comprise up to 45% of the program hours (New South Wales Institute of Teachers [NSWIT], 2009). The quality of the practicum experience is based on the mentoring skill of the supervising teacher (Bullough & Draper, 2004) and reflection on practice helps to develop these skills (Clarke, 2006). While “supervising” is an official term for what a classroom teacher does while a preservice teacher is on practicum, suggesting a task orientation (Acker, 2011), “mentoring” is a broader category of activity that includes what supervising teachers do to support the preservice teacher. According to medical educators Mellon and Murdoch-Eaton (2015), mentors offer developmental and psychosocial support while supervisors assess performance. The role distinction becomes blurry in NSW where ‘supervising teacher’ is the official

CONTACT Wendy Nielsen wnielsen@uow.edu.au School of Education, Faculty of Social Science, University of Wollongong, Room 23.G07, NSW 2522 Australia © 2017 Australian Teacher Education Association
term for those who serve a mentoring role in creating a range of experiences to promote preservice teachers’ professional growth in the situated context of a working classroom.

The demand for high quality placements in schools continues to grow across Australia. For example, the University of Wollongong arranges approximately 1800 placements annually for its preservice teachers across several teacher education programs. Further, new Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were introduced in 2011, and as of 2016 all teachers must be accredited (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2013). At the same time, a new National Curriculum is being implemented (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012). In this changing context for accreditation and teaching, supervising teachers play a key role in fostering preservice teachers’ development during practicum. However, despite the core nature of this role we know relatively little about how these supervising teachers understand the role. In this study, we seek to develop an understanding of the knowledge base that guides supervising teachers in their work with preservice teachers.

Literature review

Supervising teachers

Teachers who supervise preservice teachers during in-school practicum experiences are known by different names in jurisdictions around the world, including cooperating teachers, sponsor teachers, mentor teachers, school advisors or school associates. In part, the range of terms lends confusion and a lack of specificity to published research (see for example, Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014). In Australia, these teachers are commonly known as supervising teachers and they mediate experience and knowledge for preservice teachers (Orland-Barak, 2010) and help them learn to teach on practicum (Clarke, Collins, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2012). Commonly, supervising teachers draw on their own experiences when they were preservice teachers in their work with preservice teachers (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Knowles & Cole, 1996; Wang & Odell, 2002). This is particularly the case since supervising teachers rarely have formal opportunities for professional learning and thus remain underprepared for the role of supervising preservice teachers (Aitken & Krueger, 2010; Fulwiler, 1996; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hynes-Dusel, 1999; Knowles & Cole, 1996; Koerner, 1992). This is problematic because unarticulated and tacitly held beliefs about one’s own supervisory practices can be detrimental to preservice teacher learning whilst on practicum (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brower, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011; Zeichner, Liston, Mahllos, & Gomez, 1987). Further, the complexity of the supervision role is generally not recognized (Clarke, 2007; Ritter, 2007) and on-going professional development for supervising teachers is minimal, which is a worldwide concern (Clarke, 1997; Cochrans-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Lijie, Fang, Yunpeng, Clarke, & Collins, 2014).

It is thus not surprising that supervising is an under-developed sub-specialty of teacher knowledge that typically reproduces one’s own experience of being a preservice teacher (Knowles & Cole, 1996). In other words, the what of supervision, including subject area content or practical knowledge, and the how, including strategies for fostering preservice teacher development, are typically not explored in any meaningful or systematic way so that individual or collective practices evolve. This is surprising for
such an important area as preservice teacher supervision. Considering one’s tacit beliefs and assumptions is thus a starting point for professional learning in a reform climate.

**Professional learning for preservice teacher supervision**

Fostering a culture of learning, “should be the hallmark of the teaching profession” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007, p. 96). The 2007 Commonwealth Report on the Inquiry into Teacher Education, *Top of the Class*, raised concerns about the practicum and support for career-long professional learning. The *Top of the Class* report suggested a need for reform initiatives to support a culture of learning that begins during initial teacher education programs and continues throughout a teacher’s career, including when the opportunity arises to become a school-based teacher educator and supervise preservice teachers.

Currently, teacher education providers are under increasing scrutiny from both national and state level authorities, and areas to improve the quality of the practicum are coming into focus. In New South Wales in 2012, the State Minister for Education authored a discussion paper called *Great Teaching Inspired Learning* (New South Wales Government, 2012), where he outlined the importance of initial teacher education programs for ensuring the quality of learning for children in classrooms.

More recently, the Teacher Education Minister’s Advisory Group (TEMAG) (2015) described three areas for improving the quality of teaching in Australian schools, all aimed primarily at initial teacher education: (1) pedagogical approaches; (2) subject area content; and, (3) professional experience for preservice teachers. The TEMAG (2014) *issues paper* expressed particular concern about selection and preparation of teachers who supervise preservice teachers on practicum.

A critique of the regulatory context of the work of supervising teachers is beyond the scope of the current paper, however, those who serve the field as supervising teachers are first and foremost, “teachers of children” (Clarke et al., 2014), where participation in teacher education is additional to their core responsibilities (Evans & Abbott, 1997).

But, teaching preservice teachers is different to teaching children (Loughran, 2006), and thus professional learning for supervision should be highlighted. A key focus for teacher professional learning is reflection on practice where teachers have the opportunity to frame and reframe their understandings (Carr, 1986; Elliot, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Schön, 1983). Reflecting on practice is important because supervision of preservice teachers is an inherently creative endeavour (Oberg, 1998), or, at least ought to be, in the dynamic environment of classroom teaching and the changing climate of regulation and curriculum. Further, a reflective disposition must be nurtured and sustained in order to be an effective teacher educator (Crasborn et al., 2011; Loughran, 2006; Senese, 2007). But, this is not to suggest that there is one best way to be a supervising teacher or to supervise preservice teachers.

Sarason (1996) argued that attending to the “why” of teaching is more important than the “what.” Remaining focused on the “what” of classroom teaching “puts blinders on what we look at, choose to change, and evaluate...because our values and assumptions are usually implicit and second nature, we proceed as if the way things are is the way things should be” (Sarason, p. 136). In a policy and curriculum context of reform, teaching practices need to be examined as part of on-going professional learning for teachers, but not in a
strictly reproductive way: we need to find ways to enhance the process and develop teacher knowledge for supervision. Thus, professional learning should lead to changed thinking, understanding and practices, including for preservice teacher supervision.

The Australian context for supervision

In the contemporary context of schooling in Australia, two large-scale reforms are under way. The new National Curriculum (ACARA, 2012) has reconceptualized both content for learning and methods of teaching students, while the new Australian Professional Standards for Teaching (AITSL, 2013) has changed the regulatory climate for classroom teachers and teacher education more generally. Curriculum change typically involves professional learning opportunities for teachers to explore and understand the changes so as to enhance and improve teaching practices. Similarly, the AITSL Standards involve changes to teachers’ professional knowledge, practice and engagement.

Of particular relevance to this research, Standard 6 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching (AITSL, 2013) involves improving teaching practice, including working with preservice teachers. To advance to the “Highly Accomplished” or “Lead” teacher categories, teachers are expected to “offer quality placements for preservice teachers” or “address the professional learning needs of...preservice teachers” (p. 13). By making specific reference to work with preservice teachers, the Standards advocate deep understanding of the work of supervision. While opportunity to examine supervisory practices is rare (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Loucks-Horsley, 2003), some teacher education providers have begun to invest in programs to support classroom teachers to develop as supervisors of preservice teachers (Ambrosetti, 2014; Leshem, 2014; Loughran, 2006; Tillema, 2009), but these are not widespread and the question remains as to what kinds of professional learning may be helpful, effective and actually improve supervising practice. These are long-term goals for a larger research agenda, but for the purposes of this paper, we aim to establish a baseline of what Australia’s supervising teachers understand about their own supervisory practices through a snapshot view of the current state of affairs. More particularly, as teacher educators who work in initial teacher education, we want to know what motivates and challenges supervising teachers in the role. This information is valuable as we collectively aim to develop initial teacher education programs, but also the professional knowledge of school-based teacher educators. An even more basic question is “Who are Australia’s supervising teachers?” To our knowledge, there has been no study in Australia that has gathered such information about the cohort of supervising teachers currently working in Australian schools.

Method

This study involved analysis of an aggregated data set from an Australian sample of respondents to the Mentoring Profile Inventory [MPI] (Clarke & Collins, 2009). The MPI is a freely available online survey instrument developed as a tool for professional learning for supervising teachers. The welcome page for the MPI (www.mentoringprofile.com) explains:
The Mentoring Profile Inventory provides you with feedback about how you conceive of and carry out your work with student teachers as their [supervising teacher]...with a particular focus on what is both motivating and challenging for you.

The survey was developed in Canada and has been used in various mentoring settings (AITSL, 2014; Clarke et al., 2012; Lijie et al., 2014). Items on the survey were developed by a community of supervising teachers who were collectively exploring their supervisory practices and working to develop both themselves as teacher educators and the field of professional knowledge for supervision (Nielsen, Triggs, Clarke, & Collins, 2010).

Clarke et al. (2012) developed the MPI through a significant involvement with cooperating teachers in an on-going professional learning project intended to address “the faulty assumption that pre-service teacher education is the sole responsibility of universities or colleges of education” (p. 168). The researchers aimed to authentically engage cooperating teachers and then, capture and develop a useful rendering of their conversations that would then underpin their own professional development as cooperating teachers. In other words, knowledge about supervision learned through experience as the subject of teacher inquiry was captured in the research. Underpinned by theoretical perspectives in complexity thinking (Davis & Sumara, 2006) and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the professional learning community was positioned as a dynamic system that valued internal diversity, internal redundancy, decentralized control, neighbourhood interactions, and improvisation. From this perspective, the openness of conversations within the community allowed ideas to bump up against each other in generative and often provocative ways that more traditional forms of professional development may not have allowed. An important outcome from the project was the MPI, developed out of the collective knowledge and experiences of practicum supervision. The MPI has now become a professional development resource for others to utilise in similar ways (see for example, Lijie et al., 2014).

Detailed validation data and psychometric properties for the instrument are described in Clarke et al. (2012). The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete and includes 62 items with participants responding to a 5-point Likert type rating scale for each item. The items are clustered into two broad categories: Challenges and Motivators and within each category are sub-scales (6 challenge and 8 motivator). The Challenges category asks the respondent to consider how challenging are various aspects of the role of supervision. Possible responses for each item include: Not, Slight, Moderate, Significant or Critical (examples: Lack of access to university resources for assistance with student teachers who are struggling; Difficulties in outlining what student teachers can expect from me as a supervising teacher). Similarly, items in the Motivator category ask respondents to consider the strength of motivation and use the same Likert responses to items such as: Supervising helps refine my own teaching practices and skills and Working with a student teacher lets me monitor my pupils’ learning needs.

Additional demographic items on the survey include years of teaching experience, educational qualifications and number of preservice teachers (PST) supervised. Upon completion, results are displayed in a series of charts on a single page sent immediately to the participant via email. An example is shown in Figure 1.

This research was reviewed by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (Behavioural) and the New South Wales State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP).
Analysis

A total of 314 respondents make up the data set for the Australian cohort who took the survey from the time it went live in 2011 through May 2014. Consistent with ethics protocols for approaching school personnel to invite participation in research projects, invitation letters were sent to Principals of Public Schools, Catholic Education schools and Independent Schools involved in initial teacher education at the University of Wollongong. The Principal was also asked to post an information sheet to the staff bulletin board where classroom teachers could see it and then voluntarily choose to participate in the research by completing the MPI online. There were also several conference presentations where the MPI was introduced to our colleagues. We are aware that a number of universities include completion of the MPI as a professional learning activity in graduate level courses. In addition, since 2013, a professional learning module for supervising teachers available through the AITSL website includes the MPI as one of its activities (AITSL, 2014), thus there are several pathways by which teachers became part of the data set of Australian supervising teachers.

Aggregate reports can be generated from the data set and are structured in a similar way to the individual teacher report. For a convenient means of reporting, each category of motivator or challenge is normalized to a common range of 0 to 50 in the final report. The
horizontal bars in Figures 2 and 3 represent an aggregation of the cohort values for each of the eight motivator and six challenge categories from the MPI as compared to the mean for the worldwide population of respondents to the MPI (n = 1413) which is represented by the black vertical line in each bar. Thus, slider bars give an indication of how motivating or challenging a category is for Australian teachers in the sample, as well as a relative comparison to supervising teachers internationally. From this data, we can track what makes Australian teachers more (or less) challenged or motivated across the range of motivator and challenge sub-scales. To the left and right of the worldwide sample mean, the inner slider bar indicates
the upper or lower 25% from the worldwide mean. Our analysis of the Australian cohort data includes descriptive statistics and frequency distributions for each of the items within each category of motivator or challenge and these data were used to identify the most (or least) motivating or challenging items.

**Results**

The presentation of the results begins with a brief overview of the cohort of Australian teachers included in this sample. The main part of the results presentation is organized around the categories of motivators and challenges on the MPI with a particular focus in our analysis on what this tells us about supervising teacher knowledge and the implications for professional learning.

**Australia’s supervising teachers**

MPI data offer a recent and fresh look at the population of supervising teachers in Australia. We also offer some comparisons between the data set for this paper, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011), a report for the Australia Council for Educational Research (ACER) entitled *Staff in Australia’s Schools 2010* (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, & Murphy, 2011) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2015). Our sample includes 245 women (78%), 62 men (20%) and six who did not declare gender (2%). In Australia overall, 70% of teachers are women and 30% are men. While the ABS, ACER and AITSL reports indicate that the number of female teachers in the Australian teaching workforce is growing, our sample includes a higher proportion of women, which may indicate that more women take on the role of supervision (or are more willing to take surveys). More than 50% of our participating teachers had been teaching for 6–20 years at the time of taking the MPI. We note that the number of primary teachers in the sample closely approximates ABS data for female-to-male teacher ratios in Australian primary schools (80.7% female/19.3% male). Female secondary school teachers are over-represented in the MPI sample compared to ABS data (58.2% female/41.8% male).

MPI data indicates that most supervising teachers identified the Bachelor of Education as their highest level of tertiary qualification, which is consistent with the *Staff in Australia’s Schools 2010* report (McKenzie et al., 2011). The Graduate Diploma was also a common means of achieving a teaching qualification in Australia, although the MPI data do not provide for this distinction in the choices provided for respondents. About 25% of MPI respondents have earned either Masters or Doctoral level qualifications, which is higher than that reported by ACER for Australian teachers who have earned Masters or Doctorate degrees (9%) or by AITSL (2014) (11%). This is consistent with an earlier study by Clarke (2001) where Canadian supervising teachers were twice as likely to be more highly qualified than their teaching counterparts who did not supervise PST. It is also possible that this cohort of highly qualified teachers is more likely to engage in research opportunities having had experience in conducting research studies themselves. About one-third of the participating supervising teachers in the current study have between 11 and 20 years of experience supervising PST, while another one-third have less than 7 years
of supervision experience. The remaining portion of participants includes one supervising teacher with over 41 years of experience in supervision.

The relatively large number of early career teachers (0–5 years teaching experience, n = 23, 7%) who supervise PST is an interesting result, and while we could hope this reflects interest in supervision as a sub-specialty of classroom work, there are other possible explanations, including burn-out, or heavy teaching or administrative roles among more experienced teachers. It may simply reflect the growing need for more classrooms for preservice placements.

In summary, the MPI data indicates that supervising teachers in the Australian sample are more often women; tend to be more highly qualified in terms of post-baccalaureate qualifications; have a wide range of years of teaching experience, with a substantial number of early career teachers; and the primary level (K-6) teaching sample in this study approximates the gender distribution of the general teaching population in Australia. We turn now to an exploration of what motivates and challenges these teachers as supervisors of PST on practicum.

**Motivators and Challenges**

In this section, we highlight what motivates and challenges Australian supervising teachers. Recall that respondents make a judgment about how motivating or challenging the item is for them (on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 – Not motivating or challenging, 2 – Slight, 3 – Moderate, 4 – Significant, 5 – Critical). For simplicity of display, we gathered responses into three categories: two composite categories of “strong” (for Critical plus Significant responses) and “weak” (for Moderate and Slight) and the original “not” category stands alone as it is represents the absence of any degree of motivation or challenge. These data are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

**Motivators**

To interpret data from the tables, we examined each item in turn, calculating means for each item and percentages for the composite categories of Strong and Weak or Not a Motivator. For example, in the category Renewing the Profession, for the item “Producing teachers is a social responsibility”, 71.9% of respondents identified this as a Critical or Significant motivator for them (e.g. “Strong”), while 21.3% of participants specified this as a Moderate or Slight motivator (e.g. “Weak”). The remainder (6.7%) said it was “Not a Motivator”. If an item has a high percentage as a Strong Motivator, we can infer that this is an important aspect of why they currently supervise preservice teachers and by extension, important for the future of supervision. Conversely, if an item has a large percentage for “Not a motivator” or attribute only weak motivation value, this might represent an opportunity to develop this aspect of supervision to be more meaningful.

The sub-scales representing the strongest motivators for this sample of Australian supervising teachers are: Renewing the Profession, Contributing to Teacher Education, Improving own Teaching Practice, Developing a Professional Community and Mentoring in Classroom Contexts. Participating supervising teachers are less motivated by the sub-
scales: Time-out to Monitor Pupil Learning, Student Teachers Promote Pupil Engagement and Reminders about Career Advancement.

1. Renewing the Profession. All items within this category were strong motivators for a large majority of the participating teachers, making it the most strongly motivating sub-scale across the dataset. Among the items in this sub-scale, the greatest motivator was “Supervising helps develop student teachers into teachers”, which was identified as Critical or Significant by over 90% of the participating teachers, thus supervising teachers see their role in the development of young teachers as an important responsibility. Further, we take this to signify that teachers view the role of supervising as a way to give back to the field suggesting that these teachers feel they have something to offer in terms of supporting the development of the next generation of teachers.

### Table 1. Strength of motivator and item means for motivator items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivator Sub-Scales and Items</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Renewing the professionb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary to renew profession</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to education and society</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supporting student teachersc into teachers</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs keep me on my toes to hone skills</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s the “right thing to do”</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs enhance pupil interest and dynamics</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs help promote pupil engagement</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs are “new blood” for pupil learning</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs help raise diversity issues in classroom</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contributing to teacher education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to refine my own practices</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs help challenge why I teach as I do</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs keeping me current with new practices</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs help me revalue my values and beliefs</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improving my own teaching practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to refine my own practices</td>
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<td>14.0</td>
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<td>3.77</td>
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<td>4. Developing a professional community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>STs promote pupil engagement</td>
<td>90.5</td>
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<td>30.3</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mentoring in classroom contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs promote pupil engagement</td>
<td>90.5</td>
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<td>2.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Reminders about career advancement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminders about career advancement</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs mirror practices through other eyes</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs provide me “time-out” to reflect</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs give me a “breather” to observe/reflect</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs help me revalue my values and beliefs</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a “Strong” = critical or significant motivator; “Weak” = moderate or slight motivator, as a percentage.
b Most strongly motivating sub-scale or item in bold.
c ST = Student Teacher; SA = School Advisor or supervising teacher; FA = Faculty Advisor or University Liaison.
Table 2. Strength of challenge and item means for challenge items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge Sub-Scales and Items</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Concerns about student teacher pre-practicum preparation</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of a standard model for supervising</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity of SA&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; responsibility</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about university coursework&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific pre-practicum preparation</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful Supervision Handbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unclear policies and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of role/responsibility of FA</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback between FA and SA</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA and SA power issues</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to resources for struggling ST</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures to select/prepare FA, SA</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inadequate forms and guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiating ST success/failure</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive evaluation forms</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms for ST own self-evaluation</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>2.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vague feedback procedures</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>2.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidance for interim reports</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uncertain feedback and communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications with SAs at other schools</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications with school administrators</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of school administration feedback</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient feedback on what works</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Concerns about school advising as a sub-specialty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating with other SAs in school</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of common expectations</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving other SAs in decision making</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping SAs resolve their own issues</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality/style differences among SAs</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Challenges to guidance and mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlining expectations</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating evaluation procedures</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing meaningful relationships</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different rates of ST development</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing ST attention on learning</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting ST misconceptions</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>“Strong” = Critical or Significant; “Weak” = Moderate or Slight challenge.

<sup>b</sup>SA = School Advisor or supervising teacher; FA = Faculty Advisor or University Liaison; ST = Student Teacher or Preservice Teacher.

<sup>c</sup>Most strongly challenging sub-scale or item in **bold**.

2. Contributing to Teacher Education. All items within this sub-scale were considered strong motivators by over 70% of participating teachers. Given that this sub-scale includes a range of items about supervising teacher contributions to teacher education, this is a very telling indicator of how the participating teachers view themselves within the field. All item means were in the Significant range (means: 3.84 to 4.35). Of these strongly motivating aspects of contributing to teacher education, 92% of the participating teachers were strongly motivated by the satisfaction of helping PST develop. Supervising teachers are, first and foremost teachers, and thus PST development is a perceived indicator of the effectiveness of their efforts to make a contribution to the field as educators.

3. Improving One’s Own Practice. In this sub-scale, 85.4% of participating teachers identified the item “Supervising helps refine my own teaching practice” as a strong motivator. This
is a very strong endorsement for the importance to one’s own practice in supervising a PST, and perhaps justification for the accreditation authorities to require supervision in order to advance to the senior levels of career progression (AITSL, 2013). How supervising helps to refine one’s practice could come by virtue of the professional conversations that it engenders, the chance to articulate one’s own thinking about practice or by considering how the PST’s practices are similar to or different from one’s own.

4. Developing a Professional Community. All four items in this sub-scale had means in the Significant range in terms of strength of motivator (means 3.81 to 4.25). The strongest of these was “Supervising promotes collaboration, collegiality and community” as indicated by 85% of participants. Clearly, participating supervising teachers are motivated by the opportunity to work collaboratively and collegially with others. Among the items in this sub-scale are three other items that are more locally based on work with the PST as a future colleague: supervision creates reciprocal learning opportunities. It is interesting that among these strongly motivating items the strongest motivator deals with the school-level (or wider) community, suggesting that teachers want to be part of a community of teachers who work together on issues of supervision.

5. Mentoring in Classroom Contexts. Most items in this sub-scale have means in the Significant range (3.45 to 4.35). The strongest motivator item in this sub-scale was: “It’s gratifying to watch student teachers learn and develop”, and this was a strong motivator for 90.6% of participating teachers. The items in this sub-scale position the supervising teacher as someone who can thus take credit for the PST’s developmental progress. Interestingly, the item with the lowest overall mean in this sub-scale was “Confirms there are many ‘right ways’ to teach.” While still in the Moderate to Significant range in terms of strength of motivator (mean: 3.45), recognizing this idea when working with a PST may require the supervising teacher to step out of a hierarchical position as leading teacher and into a more collaborative or facilitative co-teaching role.

6. Time Out to Monitor Pupil Learning. Interestingly, most of the items in this sub-scale deal with pupil issues in terms of having more time to work with pupils or monitor their progress when a PST is in the room. Up to 75% of participating supervising teachers indicated these items as weak or not a motivator. It may be that having a PST could provide “time out” for the supervising teacher to reflect or have a “breather” to observe the classroom. However, the supervising teacher is still in charge of the classroom and thus, the monitoring function of supervising may take precedence over the observe-and-reflect aspect enabled by having another adult in the room. This could explain the Weak motivator, even though the opportunity for doing reflective work could involve their own or the PST’s practices. Thus there is a seeming discrepancy here where the supervising teacher has responsibility for the pupils, but may not take the opportunity provided to focus particularly on pupil learning when the PST is teaching.

7. Student Teachers Promote Pupil Engagement. Within this motivator sub-scale, all four items have means in the Moderate range (means: 2.84 to 3.45). It is interesting to note that the item that is least motivating is “student teachers help raise diversity issues in the classroom”. Over one-third of participating teachers identified this item as Weak or Not in terms of being a motivator. It may be that the teachers feel that their classrooms suitably address issues of diversity already, and thus PST would not be expected to raise them. It could also be that they do not position their PST in such a powerful role within the classroom. The low motivator rating could also reflect that
teachers do not see PST as being responsible for or engaged with such complex issues. However, in light of the focus in teacher education to raise the quality of the teaching workforce, it is interesting that diversity in the classrooms may not be seen as an issue that PST could help to raise.

8. Reminders about Career Advancement. All of the items in this sub-scale had high numbers of teachers consider the items as Not a Motivator, and the means for all items are in the Slight to Moderate range in terms of strength of motivator (means: 2.10 to 3.17), which makes this sub-scale the least motivating of the eight motivator sub-scales. For three of the four items in this sub-scale, about 80% of teachers considered the items as either Weak or Not a motivator. This is interesting given the nature of the category and the work involved in fostering the development of young teachers as well as accreditation standards requiring supervision and mentoring for the advanced levels of career progression (AITSL, 2013). The fourth item, “Supervising student teachers mirrors teaching practices through the eyes of others” was the most motivating item in this sub-scale, with about 40% of participants considering it a Strong motivator.

The means and frequency data indicate that Australian supervising teachers are highly motivated as a group across five of the eight motivator sub-scales. It is, however, unclear what the strength of motivators might mean for supervisory practices. In other words, simply knowing that supervising teachers are motivated for a particular set of reasons does not indicate the quality of supervision that may be enacted as a result. The next section examines the Challenges data.

Challenges

Challenge sub-scales and items are considered similarly to the Motivator sub-scales (e.g. strong, weak, not). For example, the item “Information about university coursework” is in the challenge sub-scale of Concerns about Student Teacher Pre-practicum Preparation and 25.2% of respondents considered this a Critical or Significant challenge (e.g. Strong), while 36.0% considered it Moderate or Slight (e.g. Weak). A total of 18.8% of respondents considered it Not a challenge. Data for each of the challenge sub-scales and items are presented in Table 2.

Australian supervising teachers in the sample for this research are most challenged by the sub-scales of Concerns about Student Teacher Pre-Practicum Preparation and Unclear Policies and Procedures. Participating supervising teachers are less challenged by Inadequate Forms and Guidelines, Uncertain Feedback and Communications, Concerns about School Advising as a Sub-Specialty and Challenges to Guidance and Mentoring.

1. Concerns about Student Teacher Pre-Practicum Preparation. There were two items in this sub-scale that more than 25% of participating supervising teachers considered a strong challenge. Both of the items explicitly refer to university-based pre-practicum preparation for PST. The first item was “Little information about university course work for student teachers prior to practicum”. If supervising teachers do not know what coursework the PST have had, they may unreasonably expect that PST know more than they do. This of course assumes that the preservice teacher maximized the learning opportunity provided in the course work, and that the teacher can recognize developmental progressions for the PST.
The second of these strong challenge items was “Uncertainty about specific practicum preparation for student teachers prior to practicum”. A further 56% of teachers noted this as a weak challenge. The challenge may arise out of the experience the supervising teacher had while on his/her own practicum, and thus, the supervising teacher may hold different or conflicting expectations about how the PST was prepared for the practicum.

The weakest item in this sub-scale was the university’s supervision handbook guidelines, scenarios and examples. While this suggests that there is an adequacy to the provided guidelines, over 65% of the teachers considered this a challenge at some level.

2. **Unclear Policies and Procedures.** All of the items in this sub-scale involve the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor (or University Liaison) and have means in the range of “moderate” challenge. The most challenging item in this sub-scale is “Lack of access to university resources to assist with student teachers who are struggling”. This may be a structural component of the teacher education program, where the university person assigned to a school may be difficult to reach or may lack the knowledge or ability to offer appropriate support for the supervising teacher. Further, university-based personnel are an important link between the teacher education program and school-based experiences on practicum.

The least challenging item in this sub-scale is “Power and authority issues between Faculty Advisors and Supervising Teachers”. Only 9.3% of supervising teachers considered this a strong challenge, while over 55% considered it “Not a Challenge”.

3. **Inadequate Forms and Guidelines.** All item means in this challenge sub-scale were just above Slight in terms of challenge strength (means: 2.10 to 2.27). About 50% of participants noted the weak level of challenge across items in the category, while about one-third of teachers considered the items in this category “Not a Challenge”. The strongest challenge was “Unclear evaluation guidelines to differentiate student teacher successes from failures”. Interpreting evaluation guidelines (that are likely based on graduate teacher competencies and the Professional Standards for Teachers) requires knowledge of developmental steps – an area that remains a gap in the research literature.

4. **Uncertain Feedback and Communications.** This challenge deals with issues among supervising teachers, administrators and preservice teachers. Few teachers felt strongly challenged by the items presented in this sub-scale. However, almost 25% of teachers noted one item as strongly challenging: “Absence of feedback from administrators to tell me how well I am assisting student teachers”. This item also had the highest mean in the sub-scale, suggesting that teachers expect their school-level administrator to provide feedback about their supervisory practices. It may also suggest a possible role for the university in school-university partnerships in supporting or evaluating supervisory practices.

Participating teachers also felt that feedback from the PST was insufficient. While supervising teachers may expect feedback from their PST, it is unclear what mechanisms there are for such or how the supervising teacher might act on the feedback.

5. **Concerns about School Advising as a Sub-specialty.** All items in this sub-scale had means in the Slight challenge range (means: 1.73 to 2.24). The items relate to supervising teacher characteristics, including personality, decision making and communication style. The strongest challenge item was “Absence of a set of common expectations about supervising in our school” but this was indicated as Strong by only 13.5% of respondents. This suggests that teachers perceive differences across supervisors and may feel that in the same school, all teachers should have a similar set of expectations so
that the PST has a similar experience independent of which teacher serves as the supervisor. It also seems to suggest a desire for a level of collegiality and professionalism among the supervisors in the school.

There were two items rated as Not a Challenge by about 50% of teachers: “Difficulties maintaining communications among school advisors at our school” and “Difficulties involving other School Advisors in decision-making about our profession”. It is unclear whether these items reflect teachers’ ease of professional communications with other school advisors or that there is no particular need to engage more. In other words, the weak or non-existent challenge on these two items suggests communications are not a challenge. However, this is inconsistent with the earlier challenge of a lack of common expectations, which could have evolved from poor school-level communications among the school advisors in a particular school.

6. Challenges to Guidance and Mentoring. The items in this sub-scale represent aspects of the work of being a mentor to preservice teachers on practicum, and as a sub-scale on the MPI, is the least challenging. There were four items rated Not a Challenge by at least 40% of the participating teachers. Perhaps this is not surprising given that the participants likely undertook the survey because they have some interest and/or experience in supervision. Hence, the absence of challenge regarding developing a relationship with the PST, understanding the PST’s developmental trajectory and setting procedures and expectations may reflect supervisory competence. However, there was one item that about 75% of teachers found a challenge at some level: “Difficulties in focusing my student teacher’s attention on pupil learning rather than just following a lesson plan”. We note that these difficulties may reflect the dynamic environment of the classroom and as such, may be highly idiosyncratic and changeable over time, but also likely indicative of PST’ developmental trajectories.

Discussion

In the changeable and complex environment of classroom teaching in Australia, what supervising teachers understand about their roles could serve as grounding to develop supervisory practices more generally. Further, capturing what motivates and challenges supervising teachers offers a window into professional knowledge for supervising and their understandings of the role (Kyle, Moore, & Sanders, 1999). Identifying motivators and challenges lends specificity to target a professional learning focus on framing (or reframing) supervision practices.

Taken collectively, what motivates and challenges supervising teachers in this study could be seen from a wider system view of Initial Teacher Education and schooling more generally. With Hoban (2002), we agree that in a system view, it would be inappropriate to isolate particular challenges or motivators. It should be obvious how none of the items actually operate in isolation either for individuals or schools. However, identifying challenges or motivators for individual supervising teachers, a group of supervising teachers in a school or even a group of those associated with a university program could begin a conversation (Gadamer, 1960/1975) where an endpoint is not the goal, but rather, interrogation of practices and understandings thereof. Ideally, this could be work within school-university partnerships. We see this interrogation as facilitated through the use of the MPI as a tool for supervising teachers to begin to understand their practices as groundwork for further development.
The MPI offers insight into indicators that currently motivate or challenge supervising teachers in their work with preservice teachers. The items are dynamic and thus could change over time and over different contexts. This is where the aggregate MPI outcomes offer some direction or indication of what is working and conversely, what aspects might need attention within a particular context. Characterising challenges and motivators for supervising teachers could enable their formal inclusion in practicum guidelines as a starting point to the important professional conversations that will help to develop the field.

While this study reports on a national level data set, tighter analyses are also possible if, for example, groups of supervising teachers wanted to look locally at their collective motivators and challenges, which could then guide localised professional learning for supervision. For example, if a group of supervising teachers report that something is particularly challenging for them, those involved in organising practicum experiences could give specific attention to the challenge. Formal school-university partnerships could provide a mechanism for this sort of alignment. International comparisons are also possible in order to find similarities and differences across multiple cohorts. Further, developing articulations between university-based and school-based teacher educators could thus serve multiple purposes: develop individual supervising teachers; enhance mutual understanding across levels of the initial teacher education system; and enhance the field where preservice teachers need high quality experiences while on practicum (AITSL, 2013).

This specific attention could be directed at mitigating or minimizing the challenge or to explore ways that the challenges impact practice. This is important knowledge and a reasonable direction for professional learning (Crasborn et al., 2011; Zeichner et al., 1987): if supervising teachers perceive the challenge as too great, they may be dissuaded from taking on the role of supervising preservice teachers. For example, if supervising teachers felt the guidelines for doing the work were insufficient, then organizers can address this aspect. Similarly for motivators: the list of motivators represents the sorts of things that the supervising teachers who were responsible for the creation of the MPI saw as potential motivators for working with preservice teachers (Clarke et al., 2012). So, if as a group, something is a particularly weak motivator, then organizers of practica know that it may not be worth expending much energy on that. Conversely, if something is reported by the group as being a strong motivator, then that is something to which organizers should attend, in a way, fine-tuning the partnership while working to enhance practices and supervisory knowledge overall.

However, reporting that an item is a strong motivator does not necessarily signal that everything is fine at the moment with that dimension: all it tells us is that the group sees that as a motivator. Practicum organizers would do well then to examine that aspect to determine if and how their attention is sufficient, in whatever form that examination might take. This is consistent with recommendations offered by Ambrosetti (2014), Loughran (2006) and Tillema (2009), among others, in order to advance supervisory practices.

Further, the challenges are divided into interpersonal and systemic. Those who organize practicum experiences can address both areas. If supervising teachers believe that they are having challenges in communicating with preservice teachers, the organizers can focus professional development efforts in that direction.

It is important to note that not all of the motivators or challenges can be worked on independently or independent of other factors. For example, the university calendar is
the major influence on timing of school-based practica and thus is largely beyond the control of either practicum organizers or supervising teachers.

On balance, the challenges need to be examined through collaborative interpretation, while the motivators can be examined in terms of professional learning and how supervising can be a means to improve one’s own teaching, supervisory practices and career advancement as a school-based teacher educator. In other words, mitigating or minimizing the challenges will not necessarily enhance supervisory practices although it may serve to more effectively bridge the school-based and university-based components of initial teacher education programs because, as Glazerman et al. (2010) demonstrated in a large-scale sample of 1,009 teachers, most of the induction programs in ten school districts had little effect on preservice teachers’ retention or achievement, at least in the first 2 years. Therefore attention to the issues that supervising teachers find challenging could involve collaboration to achieve a level of consistency of interpretation of the guidelines, regulations and expectations among those involved in supervision, both at the school and the university.

Teacher Education perseveres to improve supervising practices in learning to teach by highlighting the role of practitioners and their supervisory skills (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011) and factors (Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochberg, 2015). Thus attending to what is most motivating and most challenging for supervising teachers can serve as a starting point to develop a professional knowledge base. For instance, as Pawan and Ortloff (2011) report, the lack of supervisors’ motivation to collaborate with other colleagues limits the interchange of ideas or the integration of technology.

However, what motivates and challenges supervising teachers does not tell us about where individuals need to develop their professional knowledge or practice. Thus, further interrogation of the motivators and challenges is necessary to understand how these are related to or underpin supervising teacher professional knowledge. Mena, Garcia, Clarke, and Barkatsas (2016) demonstrated that eliciting professional knowledge (both narrative and inferential) in mentoring conversations is crucial to learning in the teaching profession. These professional conversations enable knowledge sharing (Chen, 2012) and learning from one another (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009). Developing this collective knowledge could thus advance the field of supervision as a professional sub-specialty and ensure high quality practicum placements for preservice teachers.

Reports from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (2014, 2015) and national and state-level policies now emphasise provision of high quality practicum placements to develop “classroom ready teachers” (Australian Government, 2015; New South Wales Government, 2012; Queensland Government, 2012; State of Victoria, 2013; Teacher Education Minister’s Advisory Group, 2014, 2015). These documents outline strategies and initiatives including formalised partnership agreements between schools and initial teacher education providers to coordinate and support professional experience, in particular, to bridge the “theory-practice divide” and improve teacher education. The Australian Government (2015) response to the TEMAG report sees highly skilled supervising teachers as key to improving initial teacher education:

Placements must be supported by highly skilled supervising teachers who are able to demonstrate and assess what is needed to be an effective teacher. The Advisory Group
strongly states that better partnerships between universities and schools are needed to deliver high quality practical experience. (p. 7)

Aims to ensure that every preservice teacher is placed with a highly skilled supervising teacher on practicum are admirable. However, the implication in current policy is that this is not the case. Similarly, while partnership agreements between schools and universities serve to formalise supervision as an important part of initial teacher education and career advancement for teachers, there are many schools and teachers who are not involved in such partnerships. Clearly, improving the field will require attention at the level of school-university partnerships and knowledge and skill development of individual teachers. Positioning supervising teachers as a critical part of the wider system of initial teacher education extends the traditional dyadic relationship between supervising teacher and preservice teacher to a more collective enterprise, which is necessary to enhance the profession. Thus, in the post-TEMAG context of initial teacher education, ways and means of supporting supervising teachers to develop knowledge both individually and collectively are important. This is where tools such as the MPI and new professional standards are mechanisms for teachers to reflect on their practices and develop deep understanding of the important work of supervision. When this reflection is part of system-wide reforms, then the field will advance.

Further, the new professional standards recognise the importance of the role of supervision by requiring supervision or leadership of supervision/mentoring to achieve the Highly Accomplished or Lead levels, which will provide the means whereby more teachers are encouraged to develop their supervisory practices. We sound a note of caution, however: supervision as a field of inquiry and sub-speciality of teacher knowledge must move beyond the what and how of supervision in order to advance the field. Research literature remains thin on individual supervising teacher knowledge; it is even more so for university-based teacher educators. Thus, inquiry into supervising teacher knowledge and what motivates and challenges them as teacher educators represents a fruitful research direction for engaging in meaningful professional learning, grounding an ultimate aim to improve the connections between school-based and university-based components and overall quality of teacher education.

Limitations

The data set for this study includes 314 supervising teachers who took the MPI during the period March, 2012 to May, 2014. We acknowledge that those who have taken the MPI are likely the teachers who are most interested in the work of supervision. In other words, these results are likely skewed in favour of the most highly engaged and most knowledgeable supervising teachers in the country. For example, we are aware of course-based Masters of Education cohorts at Australian universities who take the MPI as an in-class activity. Thus, as the number of survey respondents grows over the coming years, changes to descriptive and frequency data may reflect a broader and more inclusive population of supervising teachers in the country, and in the changing context of Standards and regulatory policies, these data may reflect the improving quality of supervision.
Notes

1. Preservice teachers are also known by different terms in different jurisdictions, such as student teacher, teacher candidate, practicum student or intern. Each of these may have local subtleties of meaning, but in this paper, we use the term used in New South Wales: preservice teacher.

2. MPI items and sub-scales refer to preservice teachers as “student teachers”. We maintain this use of the term when referring to MPI items or sub-scales. When interpreting results in the current study, we refer to the preservice teachers as PST.

3. The Graduate Diploma was a post-graduate teaching qualification of duration 1–2 years full-time study. Teacher candidates entered a “GradDip” program after successful completion of an undergraduate degree in a teachable (or related) subject area. Changes to certification requirements in Australia now require a degree be a minimum of 2 years, which in practice means that the GradDip has been replaced by new Masters level courses, such as the Masters of Teaching, at the University of Wollongong.

4. Instructions for setting up a “Project Code” can be found on the MPI website (www.mentoringprofile.com)

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Notes on contributors

Wendy Nielsen Associate Professor Wendy Nielsen is a science educator whose research interests span digital technologies and representations to teach and learn science; metacognition; complexity in education; preservice teacher learning; environmental education; and professional learning.

Juanjo Mena Dr Juanjo Mena is an Associate Professor whose research focuses on teaching practice, mentoring, the practicum, teacher reflection and ICT.

Anthony Clarke Professor Anthony Clarke is Director of the Centre for the Study of Teacher Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia in Canada. His research interests include the practicum, teacher education, mentoring and self-study.

Sarah O’Shea Dr Sarah O’Shea is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong. She coordinates programs in Adult, Vocational and Higher Education, is an Australian National teaching and Learning Fellows and also Chair of WATTLE, the Wollongong Academy of Tertiary Teaching and Learning Excellence. Her research interests include adult learning, university student access, equity in higher education and the First Year Experience.

Garry Hoban Professor Garry Hoban (retired) is a science educator whose teaching and research has focused on student-created digital media for learning and explaining science. He has developed frameworks for long-term professional learning and authored and edited several books on teacher professional learning.

John Collins Dearly departed Dr John Collins was an Adjunct Professor in the Department of
Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. His research focus has been evaluation of educational training and initiatives, including developing and validating surveys, scales and custom-designed indices for large-scale information gathering and analysis.

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