

Mentoring pre-service teachers' reflective practices towards producing teaching outcomes

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Abstract

Reflective practice appears crucial for professional growth; making connections between mentoring practices and mentees' reflections may assist mentors to guide reflective processes. This interpretive study initially explores common processes of reflective thinking in the literature. It then uses a mentoring feedback framework with six practices to collect and analyse video, audio and observational data around two mentor-mentee case studies with experienced primary teachers as the mentors and pre-service teachers as the mentees. The findings showed that these mentors articulated expectations for teaching, modelled reflective practices to their mentees, and facilitated time and opportunities for advancing teaching practices, which influenced the mentees' reflective practices and their pedagogical development. This study demonstrated that the mentors' personal attributes influenced the mentoring relationship and the mentees' abilities to critically reflect on their practices.

Key Words: Mentoring, pre-service teacher, mentor, feedback, reflective practice

Introduction

Effective mentoring is pivotal to the development of pre-service teachers; however the quality and quantity of mentoring varies significantly. Although Australian states have established standards for teaching, there are no formal standards for mentoring even though mentoring by experienced teachers in schools comprises as much as 20% of a pre-service teacher's university four-year degree. Standards for mentoring need to be based on the literature and empirical evidence on effective mentoring practices. Theoretical models have been proposed but few studies conduct investigations of practice within these models. For example, a five-factor mentoring model has gathered evidence on effective mentoring practices through the literature and quantitative studies but requires qualitative understandings. In addition, reflective practice appears crucial for professional growth, thus connecting mentoring models with reflective practices may help mentors to understand how to guide mentees' reflections. This small-scale case study aims to investigate mentoring practices using Hudson's (2010) mentoring model as the theoretical framework for collecting qualitative data from two mentors (supervising classroom teachers) and their mentees (primary pre-service teachers). It further explores how the mentors' feedback can act as a catalyst for developing the mentees' reflective practices leading to positive changes in teaching practice.

Literature review

Educational reviews such as the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Educational and Vocational Training [HRSCEVT] (2007), departments (e.g., Queensland Government, 2009) and research literature have highlighted reflective thinking as a process for

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advancing teaching practices and attaining pedagogical growth. Reflective practices are presented with such importance that it constitutes one of the standards advocated by most teacher appraisal systems such as the Australian National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching (MCEETYA, 2008) and the Queensland College of Teaching standards (2006). Dewey (1933) explains that teaching experience is required as a catalyst for reflective thinking, which necessitates identifying problems or issues for possible explanations that can be embedded in future teaching practices. Many educators (Brandt, 2008; Davis, 2006; van Manen, 1977) since have claimed that there is a connection between reflection and learning, which is a fundamental outcome behind reflective practices. Schön (1983, 1987) re-phrased Dewey's model and included reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, locating reflective thinking at a time (i.e., either while teaching or after teaching).

Both Dewey and Schön explain that a key part of the reflective process is experimentation of a reflected solution to perceived problems. Lee (2005) outlines a table indicating educators and their proposed processes of reflective thinking. This table attempts to connect educators' reflective thinking models and further demonstrates that there are many who consider Dewey's work in their own representations. For instance, Rodgers (2002) re-organises Dewey's original ideas; however Lee's attempt to framework reflective processes illustrates that some educators processes can be contested. To illustrate, it would be hard to delineate between making a judgement and considering strategies as two separate reflective processes as suggested by Eby and Kujawa (1994); also whether considering moral principles is at the forefront of reflection (e.g., Eby & Kujawa's work) or Lee's own last-step proposal of acceptance/rejection of an evaluation process would be a final reflective decision. It would seem reasonable to suggest that teachers may trial many times the solutions from a reflected process and yet not come to an acceptance or rejection of a proposed solution, particularly as circumstances can change within the teaching content and context.

Educators concentrate on teaching when considering reflective practices with an emphasis on developing explicit teaching strategies (e.g., van Manen, 1977; Davis, 2006). To date, there is insufficient evidence to present levels of reflection with complete confidence. Frick, Carl, and Beets (2010) outline three levels of reflective practices, namely where a pre-service teacher develops: (1) professional identity, (2) a sense of mission, and (3) meta-cognition to become a self-regulated teacher. These proposed levels are not well defined and, as concluded by the authors, present no data that these exist as levels. Lee's (2005) summary table presents 10 different educators' articulations of levels/content of reflecting thinking (p. 702). Analysing Lee's work shows that there are commonalities and agreement between some educators. For example, there can be a progression of rationality such as technical, deliberative and critical; yet most authors lack agreement on what may constitute levels of reflective thinking. Surprisingly, Lee includes "non-reflective action" as a level of reflection (e.g., Mezirow, 1991; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991), which appears as an oxymoron. Lee's (2000) own model shows recall, rationalisation, and reflectivity as separate levels; although reason may indicate that these three proposed levels could occur simultaneously.

This current study seeks to understand how a mentor can provide feedback to assist the mentee (pre-service teacher) to reflect-in-action and on-action in order to advance teaching practices.

Study Framework

This study uses a re-conceptualisation of Dewey's (1933) process of reflective thinking and includes concepts from Schön (1987) about reflecting on what works and what does not work in practice. Drawing upon the literature as a theoretical framework, data will be analysed as a response to the mentor's feedback following Hudson's (2007, 2010) mentoring model with particular reference to the *Feedback* factor and the six related mentoring practices, viz: (1) articulating expectations and

providing advice to the mentee before planning and teaching (Ganser, 2002; Klug & Salzman, 1990), (2) reviewing lesson plans (e.g., Monk & Dillon, 1995), (3) observing the mentee teach in order to be informed on the mentee's practices (Davis, 2006; Jonson, 2002), (4) providing oral feedback (Ganser, 1995), (5) providing written feedback (Rosaen & Lindquist, 1992), and (6) facilitating the mentee's evaluation of teaching and learning, that is, the mentee's reflection on practice (Schön, 1987). Figure 1 presents the six mentoring practices associated with feedback. The mentees' reflective tools used in this study include the mentees' written and verbal communication of pedagogical practices (Davis, 2006; Jonson, 2002; Schön, 1987).

Figure 1 - Mentoring practices associated with feedback



Context

This study is located at a satellite campus of a large Australian university. The campus is situated in a low socio-economic area and as a result, the campus strategic plan promotes community engagement such as practicum and internship for those commencing their journey as early-career teachers. The campus was successful in a grant application titled *Teacher Education Done Differently* (TEDD), which in part aimed to enhance mentoring practices for pre-service teachers. Thirty-nine pre-service teachers, enrolled in a field experience program, were placed in their schools in week 4 of semester one, and completed four one-day weekly visits to learn about the students in their classrooms, and the school culture and infrastructure. These weekly visits were part of the TEDD project for creating school-based experiences for pre-service teachers to assist them in making links between theory and practice. These pre-service teachers then completed a four-week block practicum from which this qualitative study investigates two mentor-mentee cases during this period.

Case study 1, focused on a mentee, 19, (pseudonym: Amy) who was completing the second year of her Bachelor of Education Primary degree and her first field experience in a Year 2 class. An elite athlete, Amy routinely trained (3 hours per day) outside of school hours and worked part-time (10 hours per week). Amy's mentor (pseudonym: Gina), had 20 years teaching experience, had mentored 8 pre-service teachers and taught in 7 different primary schools (Years 2, 3 and 4 as well as multi-level classes in Years 3/4 and 4/5).

Case study 2 focused on a mentee in her final year of university study (pseudonym: Sharon) and her mentor (pseudonym: Lisa). Sharon, a mature age student, commenced her Bachelor of Education Primary degree in another Australian state. She transferred interstate to complete her degree. This was her third field experience and was conducted in a Year 1 class. A single mother with no internet access at home during the placement, it was difficult for her to work at home outside of school hours and respond to email communications. Sharon's mentor, Lisa, had 14 years teaching

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experience, had mentored 6 pre-service teachers and taught in 2 different primary schools (preschool, preparatory, Year 1 and Year 2).

Data collection methods and analysis

An initial meeting was conducted in the week prior to the field experience with the mentors and mentees to negotiate the process for data collection and gain consent for this study. This multiple case study (Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Yin, 2009) used a number of data collection methods and instruments over the four-week field experience and sought to strengthen this study's findings while offering contrasts (Yin, 2009, p. 61) between the two cases. The study reflected individual differences as a result of the different backgrounds and experiences of the participants.

Formal mentor-mentee dialogues were video-recorded and annotated observations were made on the *Feedback* practices (Figure 1) as a framework for collecting and analysing the data. Informal mentor-mentee dialogues were audio-recorded by the mentors during morning tea and lunch breaks or while "walking and talking" on playground duty, using an audio digital recorder. These dialogues generally occurred immediately prior to or following a lesson taught by the mentees or the day following, for the purposes of forward planning and reflecting on lessons. Samples of the mentees' teaching episodes were also audio-recorded. Case study 1 included: two short conversations between Amy and her class (27-31 seconds), four class activities (20-30 minutes) and one complete lesson (57 minutes). Case study 2 included: two short conversations between Sharon and her class (1-3 minutes), five class activities (16-24 minutes) and one complete lesson (50 minutes).

A school requirement was for the mentees to design formal lesson plans prior to teaching a group or class of students. The mentees were guided by university coursework on how to write lesson plans. Amy provided six complete lesson plans and Sharon provided three. Mentees were also required to provide written reflections after teaching their lessons. Amy completed and provided all reflections in a timely fashion after each teaching episode. Sharon explained that she kept a running commentary of "relevant observations"; however these were not made available to the mentor or the researcher during the course of the practicum. Instead, Sharon submitted four written reflections on four lessons to the researcher five weeks after the practicum concluded.

The mentees were formally observed by the mentors and given written feedback using the "Feedback on Teaching" documentation provided by the university. The form gave the mentors a choice of providing feedback using ticks (checks) against competencies listed under three headings: planning and preparation, teaching and reflective practice. It also provided for more detailed written feedback under five headings, namely: planning and preparation, lesson implementation, communication, classroom management, and general feedback. In case study 1, Gina completed the provided form on 3 occasions. However, in case study 2, Lisa chose to write her own reflective notes, by using the form as a guide only. An additional four formal lesson observations were completed by the researcher (first author) and feedback provided using the same "Feedback on Teaching" form.

The final interview conducted individually with each mentee and mentor was guided by 13 semi-structured questions that aided the mentor and mentee reflections on practice. For example: What system requirements (e.g., policies, aims, curriculum/teaching program) did your mentor share with you? How has this impacted on your knowledge and understanding for teaching? What mentoring feedback assisted your development as a teacher during this field studies period? The interviews were audio-recorded to provide accurate accounts of all responses.

The Final Field Studies Report focused on Standards One, Two, Seven and Ten (Commit to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal) of the professional standards for teachers

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(Queensland College of Teachers, 2006), which were deemed appropriate by the university for pre-service teachers. Evidence of reflective practices will involve the information provided by the mentees through the mentees' reflective tools. Finally, teaching outcomes will be identified through the mentors' and the first-named researcher's diary and observations of the mentees' teaching in relation to the mentees' reflections.

Data sources in this study were cross-checked and triangulated to gain a rich description of the mentor and mentee interactions during the field experience (e.g., see Hittleman & Simon, 2006). Observations, archival documents, transcriptions of audio/video data and interviews were analysed against the *Feedback* practices (Figure 1). The focus, however, was to investigate how a mentor's feedback can facilitate the mentee's reflection-in-action and/or reflection-on-action and how this can be translated into teaching practices.

Findings and discussion

Findings indicated that both mentors used particular mentoring practices to facilitate the mentees' reflective practices towards teaching in the classroom. Case study 1 data showed that the mentor's personal attributes, articulation of pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of education system requirements, as well as her ability to model a process for reflection, influenced the mentee's ability to effectively "reflect on" her teaching and on students' learning. Case study 2 data showed that the mentor modelled specific processes for "reflecting-in-action", for example, through continuous note-taking and collection of data to identify learning needs and to provide solutions for future planning and pedagogical practices. The mentees' willingness to accept and utilise their mentors' feedback significantly influenced their abilities to critically reflect on their own practices.

Case Study 1 – Amy (mentee)

Articulate expectations and review lesson plans

In the first video-recorded session (day 2 of the practicum) the mentor outlined her expectations regarding the mentee's timely preparation of lesson plans, a process for collaborating on lessons prior to teaching, and the mentor's commitment to observing lessons taught by the mentee and providing oral and written feedback. In addition, a process was negotiated for reflecting on teaching. In this initial meeting, the mentor discussed her plan to scaffold the mentee's teaching experience (working with individuals, small groups then whole class), while providing opportunities to repeat activities with different groups of students to enable ongoing reflection-on-action and continuous improvement. Gina, the mentor, suggested that the final two days be allocated primarily to reflecting back over the whole four-week experience, including the effectiveness of her planning, pedagogy, implementation and evaluation of lessons.

Evidence showed (researcher observations, audio and video-recorded dialogue, lesson plans, mentee's written reflections) that Gina's early and clear articulation of expectations impacted on Amy's timely completion of lesson plans, her insightful written reflections and her amendments to subsequent lessons and changes to pedagogy (e.g., lesson aims, language usage, classroom management strategies, mathematics concepts, repetition and guided practice). It should be noted that Amy's willingness to meet Gina's expectations as well as her level of commitment and self-motivation appeared to assist her development. The mentor's ability to articulate expectations early and review lesson plans in a timely fashion was deemed by the mentee to develop confidence in pedagogical practices. Amy stated in the interview: "it made me feel more comfortable running the lesson and having an idea that I was on the right track".

Observe teaching practice; provide oral and written feedback

During the audio and video-recorded dialogue sessions, the mentor provided oral feedback when she reviewed the mentee's lesson plans prior to teaching. She used questioning to check her own understanding of the lesson plan and clarify the mentee's thinking, such as "What do you want the kids to learn this afternoon?" She provided encouragement (e.g., "that's good"), non-verbal cues (smile, laugh) and offered suggestions regarding content and pedagogy, including levels of questioning. Gina discussed links to future lessons and suggested that Amy "go home and reflect" between lessons by asking herself questions, such as: "What's working? What would I do differently next time?" The mentee's lesson plans, written reflections and mentor's final report all noted how she readily followed her mentor's advice by embedding strategies into her future lessons.

After each lesson was reviewed and modified accordingly, the mentee's teaching was supervised and supported by the mentor's presence in the classroom, particularly when delivering a whole lesson. The researcher's observation journal noted that the mentor stayed "in the background, unobtrusively observing the mentee". On other occasions, the mentor observed from a distance (e.g., in an adjoining space). It was through these observation strategies that the mentor was able to allow the mentee autonomous management of her class or group, offer support if required, and note areas for improvement and later reflection. In the interview, Amy described Gina as "helpful" in that her observations and feedback assisted her to reflect and improve her classroom practice, particularly with classroom organisation (e.g., management of transition activities and resources) and behaviour management (e.g., language use, proximity, and settling strategies).

Following each activity or lesson observed, Gina provided brief, immediate oral feedback and established a later time (e.g., the next day) for a longer debriefing dialogue to take place. This approach facilitated "think time" (deep reflection) for Amy, allowed strengths and weaknesses to be identified and analysed, and alternative practices to be discussed. This was evidenced by meaningful two-way dialogue (observed, recorded) and amendments made to Amy's subsequent lessons.

While the advantages of oral feedback (immediacy, efficiency) made it the preferred and regular method of giving feedback, Gina also provided Amy with some written feedback in the form of three formal lesson observations using the "Feedback on Teaching" form provided by the university. Amy was given time to digest the written comments, to self-reflect and prepare for dialogue with the mentor the next day. The mentee wrote 15 written reflections in total, following her teaching episodes. These demonstrated her ability to integrate her own thoughts about her teaching with both the oral and written feedback provided by her mentor, which in turn informed her future planning and pedagogy.

Facilitate evaluation

It was evident in both the recorded dialogues and the mentee's written reflections that the mentor established a structure for reflection and feedback through questioning. Following the dialogue sessions, Amy wrote up her reflections incorporating both her own thoughts and Gina's feedback. Despite being her first field experience, it was evident in her written reflections that by mid-point (day 11) she understood and utilised the process for reflecting-on-action established by the mentor. As the practicum progressed, it became apparent that the mentee was developing her own ability to critically self-reflect with minimal input from her mentor. During the interview, Gina described how well Amy responded to her advice and incorporated pedagogic improvements into subsequent lessons (e.g., movement about the class, proximity, checking for understanding). Gina identified one of Amy's strengths as her "willingness to listen, to implement, then to reflect" and to make the desired changes for future lessons. She added "she has a very, very good reflective ability". These accounts suggested the positive influence that the mentor had on the mentee's ability to critically self-reflect on her practice and to act on her mentor's advice. This was confirmed in both the

interim and final evaluation process. In the Final Report, Gina stated: “Amy was able to critically reflect on her professional practice. She always provided these observations daily. They were in line with my observations.”

Hudson’s (2010) mentoring model provided a framework for gathering data, specifically around the mentor’s feedback for enhancing the mentee’s reflective practices. Case study 1 highlighted the benefits that come from clear expectations for lesson planning and for reviewing and offering advice on lessons before and after teaching, both orally and in written form. The mentor’s ability to scaffold and facilitate the mentee’s reflective practice with a commitment to observing and providing constructive feedback on teaching lead to more informed evaluation of teaching and learning by the mentee for continuous pedagogical improvement.

Case Study 2 – Sharon (mentee)

Articulate expectations and review lesson plans

Articulating expectations was not a straightforward process in this mentoring relationship, mainly because of the mentee context. A confident, mature-age pre-service teacher, in her final year of training, Sharon saw her experience as “different” from other students. She explained in the interview that her confidence had grown significantly over her three practicum periods and that others often see her as “very confident”. At times, this confidence provided some challenges in the developing mentor-mentee relationship. Her mentor, Lisa, stated in the interview:

I think it’s been a bit challenging at times, defining the fact that we’re not peers ... Letting Sharon know that I do have a lot more experience in some areaswhen she listens she’s very good at taking (advice) on board and using it. It’s getting her to slow down and stop and actually listen instead of defending why she made a particular choice. I think take up time works with her ... because after a weekend particularly when she starts fresh, it seems she has taken on board and thought about it, but as the week goes on it gets a bit harder.

The data revealed that specific expectations were articulated by the mentor regarding outcomes for the practicum period, reflecting process and reviewing of lesson plans. For example, during the first video-recorded dialogue Lisa highlighted the need to develop a list of “big picture” issues for discussion during the practicum (e.g., location/access to resources; planning using a systemic program, “One School”, a state education access program). She said, “I’ll make a list ... as you think of anything that you need to know more about, add it to it”. Sharon interjected, “What specific lessons do you want me to teach?” It was apparent from this discussion that early priorities and expectations were not well aligned. In the first audio-recorded dialogue session, the mentor stated: “your reflection is the most important (part) in a day”. She explained a process for reflecting “in-action”, by observing students and checking for understanding, modifying teaching plans during the lesson to cater for individual needs and keeping anecdotal notes to assist with future planning. The mentor shared her own vulnerability by reflecting on her lessons that she’d delivered, being quick to point out that even experienced teachers’ plans can sometimes go awry.

In week one of the practicum, Lisa stated in an audio dialogue, her expectations for detailed lesson plans. During the fourth audio-dialogue (week 2), (after viewing Sharon’s early lesson plans) Lisa re-stated her expectations for more detailed lesson plans and nightly written reflections “so we’ll get in the habit of going through it in the morning”.

Despite expectations being set by mentors in both case studies, the implications were different in case study two. The “busyness” of school life impacted on opportunities to meet and plan. Scheduling time to meet and clarify expectations for planning, review and reflection on practice was

somewhat ad hoc. For instance, in the first video-recorded dialogue (week 1 of the practicum), the mentor stated: “We can probably talk for two more hours now, but we have to go. So that will get us through tomorrow and we’ll review that again at lunch tomorrow”. Other limitations (e.g., meeting curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements), necessarily reduced the degree of flexibility and autonomy in the mentee’s lesson design in the first half of the practicum. Additionally, the mentee appeared to find the management of time an issue, claiming, “Yeah, it’s just all the meetings we’ve had, morning and afternoon”. During the sixth dialogue (week 2) the mentor made several requests for written reflections, with particular reference to keeping anecdotal notes on individual student’s progress. However, these were not produced. During the tenth audio-recorded session (week 3), the mentee expressed her frustration at the lack of a computer at home, making completing certain elements of her work difficult. She made comments such as “I can’t do this anymore... I have to have a computer”. Many students who attend the university campus come from low socio-economic backgrounds, consequently, needed teaching resources required at home may be lacking.

According to both the mentor and mentee in the final interview, a turning point came following week two after essential assessment and reporting processes were complete. The mentor determined that it was timely and necessary for the mentee to plan and experience teaching a whole day herself in order to fully appreciate what that entailed. The autonomy provided to the mentee appeared to assist her to develop pedagogically and relate on a more professional level with her mentor and students. Sharon reflected in the interview:

I think the relationship changed because I wasn’t just absorbing from her, I was participating... she was out of the picture a little bit, so I think that actually really helped me because then the kids started interacting more with me.

From this point forward, Sharon appeared to be more willing to receive and act on feedback, admitting to her deficiencies of particular pedagogical knowledge. For example, when discussing positive reinforcement strategies, the mentee stated, “that’s what I need to do”. When talking about giving students choices and “take-up time” to correct inappropriate behaviour, she said “I’ve never heard of that”. At one point she wanted to learn more about keeping anecdotal records on student learning and said “...you know I’ve only been doing this for a few days so obviously there’s a lot of things that you know that I don’t know ...”. Following her first whole-day teaching experience, the mentee identified some of the many ad hoc activities (beyond the lesson plan) that teachers need to manage during the course of a day (e.g., handing out book club sheets, collecting notes, giving out “gotcha” awards, students leaving the room for various activities). It was then that the mentor once again impressed upon her the need for written reflections on and throughout her day. The mentor elaborated on the importance of reflection to inform “needs-based” planning. Lisa added:

And that’s why we have that reflective planning book. So it was week to week, so I would have all the photos and all these notes scribbled out because it was my next week’s planning. That’s why you do it, to inform your planning.

Observe teaching practice; provide oral and written feedback

Reviewing of lesson plans prior to teaching allowed the mentee the opportunity to share her ideas, ask questions and make informed adjustments. It gave the mentor an opportunity to guide the mentee by offering alternate suggestions and confirming effective elements of the lesson plan. Oral feedback prior to teaching took the form of a two-way dialogue on a range of topics and concepts for which examples included: literacy levels and differentiation, shared and guided reading strategies, extending on prior knowledge, modelling maths concepts, group dynamics, time management, classroom management especially settling and attention-getting activities, managing noise levels,

positive reinforcement strategies such as reward systems. When asked in the interview: “What mentoring feedback has assisted you to teach your students better in the classroom?” the mentee responded, “I think actually the most effective feedback happened before a lot of lessons” during which time the mentor often modelled how a strategy or activity would “look” or “sound” in the classroom. It was evident that advanced planning and discussion of teaching strategies prior to teaching enhanced Sharon’s confidence and ability to successfully implement lessons.

Oral feedback on lessons following the observation of each teaching episode provided the mentor an opportunity to “unpack” specific aspects of the lesson (e.g., classroom management, time management, group work), make helpful suggestions for improvement and model strategies for the mentee to try in future lessons. Positive feedback also built Sharon’s confidence and provided encouragement on several occasions. One example (video-recorded dialogue, week 3), showed the mentee expressing her frustration at the need to constantly re-focus her students’ attention. Sharon stated: “They’re very restless today. I’m just trying to bring them back on task all the time”. The mentor was able to reassure her that she had “done better today with the settling strategies than ever”, then offered very specific suggestions to assist with future lessons (i.e., targeting specific behaviours, parallel acknowledgement, ignoring, redirecting behaviour through questioning). Timely post-lesson oral feedback and reflective dialogue between the mentor and mentee assisted the mentee to develop specific skills to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies. This may in turn build the mentee’s confidence and competence over the course of the practicum.

Regular and ongoing feedback was given orally in this case. Written feedback was used to reinforce oral feedback as the mentor used her written notes to direct the reflective dialogue the next day. Written feedback was then given to the mentee. Lisa used the university’s formal feedback sheet as a guide to developing her own comments and format. Lisa provided Sharon with written feedback on nine sessions of teaching across the practicum period. These consisted of individual lessons as well as part/half-day teaching episodes.

Written feedback and audio-recorded dialogue (week one) identified the need for greater detail in lesson planning, including teaching and positive behaviour management strategies. On day 16 (week 4) Lisa gave further written feedback on the mentee’s reflective practice:

Make sure to make your written reflections more detailed and specific. If something didn’t work, why didn’t it? What could you have done differently? Reflect on language used, time management, modelling techniques, etc. At this stage your reflections are just as important as your curriculum planning and will help you more than anything else. Try not to get defensive or worried when an alternative is suggested. Take the time to let the feedback soak in. You’re doing great. It’s about fine tuning and experience now.

By day 18 (week 4) the mentor gave positive written feedback to Sharon, which indicated the mentee was taking note (though not writing reflections) of the feedback she provided about behaviour management strategies with this younger age group. Lisa stated: “Settling techniques, good again. This is working well as feedback is being used. You don’t ‘shhhhh’ anymore at all, because you have a range of strategies now that you are beginning to use as second nature”.

Facilitate evaluation

By week three of the practicum, the mentor’s expectations were clear, having repeatedly requested detailed lesson plans and written reflections. This was evidenced in a further nine audio and five video-recorded dialogues, and five mentor feedback sheets. In spite of this, however, in the 11th audio dialogue the mentee explained that she had been “trying to figure out how to do it (reflections)

... I did a reflection on Thursday, when I sort of didn't do it (the lesson) too well. ... I thought that was where I really started to do teaching". This comment could be interpreted that until she felt ownership over the planning and implementation of her lessons the mentee did not feel the need to complete written reflections. The reflection was not presented to her mentor and only four written reflections were received by the researcher five weeks after the practicum concluded. Each reflection was brief, dated by month only rather than lesson date/time. General comments about the class as a whole were made, for example, under "Student Learning" she wrote: "Students gained further understanding of the importance of using the road rules ... The students were engaged in the lesson ... the class requires frequent changing of activities Students were restless on the carpet..." These reflections, written well after the teaching occurred, suggested a vague recollection of events rather than critical reflection on lessons. They did not identify areas for differentiation for particular students (as requested by the mentor), nor did they inform future planning.

In the absence of timely written reflections, Lisa's evaluation of Sharon's progress was based on lesson observations, regular oral and written feedback and mentee's documentation (lesson outlines only). Day 10 (week 2) written feedback re-stated the mentor's expectations: "For tomorrow ... get folder all up to date and organised so that we can look at the interim report. Lesson plans and reflections need to be there". These were not forthcoming in the required detail and reflections were not provided for perusal. The interim report was not provided for review by the mentee. The mentor's Final Report comment could be interpreted as the mentee demonstrating her ability to act on pedagogical advice however more detail in her written planning was required. The Final Report stated that Sharon was "developing adequately" and that she:

...has been working to develop a personal system of monitoring children's development that works for her. She is able to use this information to plan for individuals and groups and is developing a better understanding of an inclusive curriculum. The next step is for this information to be used more thoroughly in written plans.

Case study 2 highlighted some possible challenges in the mentor-mentee relationship in spite of early articulation of expectations for lesson planning and reflective practice, which may require additional monitoring and supervision. For example, the mentor may need to establish specific timelines and be more explicit about the process expected for reflection on practice. In this study, the mentee's willingness to accept the mentor's feedback was crucial for the mentee's development and success but it also showed that access to facilities and resources out of school hours may be a further consideration for some pre-service teachers.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored mentoring practices aligned with the *Feedback* practices (Figure 1) for mentoring. Specifically, it focused on the development of two mentees' reflective practices as a result of the processes implemented by their mentors. This study showed that the mentors articulated expectations for teaching, modelled reflective practices to their mentees, and facilitated time and opportunities for this to occur, which was likely to influence the mentees' reflective practices and their pedagogical development. This could include a flow-on effect for student learning in the classroom when a mentee's "reflection-on-action" and/or "reflection-in-action" (Schön, 1987) combined with specific and timely oral/written feedback from the mentor to guide their future planning and practice. An unexpected outcome of this study was the significant impact that the personal attributes of each participant had on the mentoring relationship that impinged on the effectiveness of the mentors' feedback and the mentees' abilities to critically reflect on their practices.

Mentors can sharpen their focus by scheduling time to provide feedback to their mentees (Huling & Resta, 2001) for which mentors in this study demonstrated effective use of their time, formally and informally. Effective mentoring aided the mentees' reflective processes (see also Brandt, 2008) and, in this current study, early negotiation of processes for reviewing lesson plans, observing teaching and providing feedback assisted the mentees to develop their reflective practices and improve teaching and learning outcomes. Scaffolding the mentees' teaching experiences (e.g., individuals, small groups, whole-class lessons, repeating lessons/activities) presented opportunities for the mentees to reflect and improve on their practices. Although these mentors provided strategies aligned with the *Feedback*, purposeful professional development can refine and extend their mentoring practices (Murray, Hudson, & Hudson, 2011).

Evidence strongly suggested that expectations about lesson planning and reflective practices, although clearly and repeatedly articulated by the mentor, may not always be acted upon by the mentee. The mentee's willingness to accept and respond to the expectations, feedback and guidance of the mentor was integral for ensuring successful outcomes. Monitoring processes need to be considered and implemented by the mentor to meet required teaching standards. Workload, time management, family responsibilities and resource deficiencies outside of school hours can impact on the mentee's ability to meet these expectations. In addition, more consideration needs to be given to pre-service teachers of lower socio-economic status who undertake practicum, as easy access to computers and other technologies may not be readily available during these periods.

Hudson's (2010) mentoring model provided a framework for gathering data about the mentor's feedback practices within a specific field of investigation (i.e., mentoring practices that enhance the mentee's reflective practices). This case study highlighted how mentors' articulation of expectations and reviewing of lesson plans before teaching can build on Schön's (1987) model, which commences with the teaching experience. The small-scale study indicated mentor and mentee roles for developing the mentee's reflective thinking (see Figure 1) that may be useful for guiding both key stakeholders' practices. Reflective-thinking frameworks are being explored by various researchers and educators (e.g., Frick et al., 2010; Lee, 2005); consequently more studies are required to gather rich qualitative case studies that provide deeper insights into how a mentor's practice can develop a mentee's reflective practices. Limitations to this small-case study include its interpretive nature, the limited number of participants, and the use of secondary data sources (i.e., interviews) when first-hand data sources such as observations of mentor-mentee interactions would assist to understand further the impact of mentoring on reflective process. Nevertheless, a key implication for theory and practice from this study includes the use of mentoring models to guide mentees' reflections. Indeed, research is needed to investigate other pedagogical knowledge practices such as planning, preparation, teaching strategies, questioning skills, assessment and so forth and how these practices influence the mentee's reflective practice. Gathering empirical evidence on how mentors specifically use their knowledge and skills to gain professional growth for mentees can aid the development of more effective mentoring programs.

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