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"Fitting into the Teaching Profession": Supervising Teachers' Judgements During the Practicum

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Abstract: This study explores supervising teachers' judgements about pre-service teachers during a practicum experience. Making judgements is a complex, subjective process with judgements being conscious and intuitive, influenced by individual beliefs, contextual expectations and personal learning biographies. This research draws on Social Judgement Theory to guide the analysis of data collected from interviews with experienced supervising teachers. Analysis indicated that the supervisors placed most emphasis on 'personal qualities' of pre-service teachers. This has implications for the selection of candidates for teaching, the importance of non-academic capabilities in teaching and the development of pre-service teachers' personal qualities within initial teacher education programs.

Keywords: supervising teacher, judgement making, personal qualities, subjective, practicum

Introduction

There is consensus that teacher quality is a critical determinant of a student's success at school (Hayes, Mills, Christie, & Lingard, 2006; Lingard, 2005; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2005). Accordingly, governments are increasingly focused on the quality of initial teacher education (ITE) programs and the graduation of quality teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2015b; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2015). As a result, governments in many different countries have implemented a range of accountability measures, including accreditation of (ITE) providers and the implementation of national teaching standards. The use of teaching standards to assess teaching practices and the accreditation of ITE programs has been enacted in United Kingdom (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2017; Department of Education, 2011), United States of America (CAEP, 2015) and New Zealand (Education Council New Zealand, 2016). In Australia, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011) and National Program Standards for Teacher Education (AITSL, 2015a) aim to ensure that all pre-service teachers have the knowledge, skills and experiences to positively impact student learning (AITSL, 2015).

Central to the preparation of pre-service teachers is a quality practicum experience (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Smith, 2010; White, Bloomfield, & Le Cornu, 2010). It is during practicum supervision that teachers make judgements on pre-service teachers' teaching (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005). Judgements about pre-service teachers are often ad hoc (Lourdusamy, 2005) raising questions about the fairness and impartiality of supervising teachers' judgements (Ortlipp, 2006). Despite there being standards, criteria and descriptors

to support the judgement-making processes, it is still debated about how best to judge pre-service teachers' capabilities (Rorrison, 2010). Additionally, a supervising teachers' mindset on judgements may have implications for the impartiality of judgements (Dweck, 2006; Vandewalle, 2012). The challenges associated with judgement on pre-service teachers' capabilities on practicum is compounded by the limited professional learning provided to supervising teachers on mentoring and/or judging pre-service teachers' teaching capabilities (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008).

Judging Pre-service Teachers' Capabilities in Teaching

Supervising teachers' judgement of pre-service teachers' capabilities has been acknowledged in previous research as complex (Biesta, 2009; Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, Silins, Banfield, & Russell, 2000). Judgements often fail to allow for individual and contextual differences (Connell, 2009; Tuinamuana, 2010, Alland, Mayer, & Moss, 2014), may lack consistency (Rorrison, 2010; Tillema, Smith, & Lesham, 2011) and may not be based on the true "nature of the teachers' work" (Alland et al., 2014, p. 427). Boyle and Charles (2010) argue that the introduction of teaching standards and the increasing reliance on policy-driven specifications for teaching and teacher education to assess teacher capabilities, may lead to a greater technical focus on teaching at the expense of teachers' professional judgments. This reframing of teaching and teacher education may lead to "a disempowerment of teachers" (Biesta, p. 120, 2013), creating limitations in the scope of supervising teachers' professional agency when making judgements. Highly prescriptive teacher education standards may restrict professional judgements, leading to an increasingly formulaic approach to pre-service teacher assessment and result in a technical view of teaching and teacher education (Atkinson & Claxton, 2004; Biesta, 2009; Burn, Hagger, & Mutton, 2003; Loughran, 2007, 2010).

Despite the current move towards this technical view of teaching, Bahr and Mellor (2016) claim that teaching standards are limited and do not sufficiently capture personal qualities like flexibility, fairness, kindness and a sense of humour, qualities that are seen as central to quality teaching. Lanas and Kelchtermans (2015) suggest that future teachers' understanding of quality teaching should encompass personal values, responsibility, empathy and sociability. Other research argues for greater attention to the personal and professional attributes of teaching when judging pre-service teachers' teaching capabilities (Meijer, Korthagen, & Vasalos, 2009).

While making judgements on teaching capabilities, it is the practical knowledge that supervising teachers possess that often becomes the basis to knowing and understanding teaching (Phelan, 2005). According to Smith and Lev-Ari (2005) "knowledge of teaching differs from knowledge about teaching" (p. 291). This suggests that teaching knowledge is complex, includes both practical and contextual wisdom, both of which are influential in making judgements about teacher capabilities. For example, the dual role of judgement maker and mentor/helper involves both forms of knowledge, often with competing demands, as the supervising teacher becomes both a gatekeeper and nurturer of the pre-service teacher (Tillema et al., 2011). Accordingly, judgements by mentor supervisors are often intuitive and are often not made explicit during a practicum (Atkin, Black, & Coffey (2001). This may result in a pre-service teacher being unsure of a supervising teacher's expectations, which can result in feelings of vulnerability (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

The Subjective Nature of Judgements

It has been claimed that judgements are conceptually elusive and often socially and contextually situated (Klenowski, 2013). Biesta (2009) states that judgement making, "is not simple, technical or instrumental" (p. 186), rather, judgements involve value-laden decision-making. Accordingly, supervising teachers' judgements often appear as subjective, intuitive and are influenced by the context of the particular practicum (Biesta, 2009; Courneya, Pratt, & Collins 2008; Dottin, 2009; Ell & Haigh, 2015; Southgate, Reynolds, & Howley, 2013). Essentially, a teacher's pedagogy reflects who they are as a person, with judgements made through the lens of their own experiences, supporting the argument of subjectivity in making judgements (Courneya et al., 2008).

The subjectivity of judgements can be understood through Dweck's (2006) research on fixed or growth mindsets. A supervising teacher's pre-existing beliefs may influence the subjectivity of judgements (Pitttaway, 2017). Fundamental traits like flexibility and organisational skills may be viewed as either developmental or fixed, with developmental suggesting a capacity for change (Mercer & Rayan, 2009). It is suggested that teaching can be characterised by a culture of 'sameness', with teachers sharing common ideas of good teaching, viewing their own performance as normative, while being unaware of their subjective position (Phelan, 2005). Under these conditions, pre-service teachers may be judged relative to this sameness.

Research on first impressions supports the notion of the subjectivity of judgement making (Willis & Todorov, 2014). Supervising teachers' initial information and interactions with a pre-service teacher may influence their first impression on important capabilities such as: competency, trustworthiness and likeability (Cafaro, Vilhjálmsson, Bickmore, Heylen, Jóhannsdóttir, & Valgar, 2012; Tetlock, 1983). First impressions have a tendency to sustain existing judgements (Tetlock, 1983), and can be shaped by both static individual characteristics and stereotypes (e.g., clothing & visual appearance), as well as dynamic characteristics, verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Cafaro et al., 2012).

Recent research found that judgements of pre-service teachers' capabilities are often based on the supervising teachers' frames of reference acquired over their own career; consequently, judgements will always have a measure of subjectivity (Ell & Haigh, 2015). Subjectivity can appear as the supervising teachers' 'gut' feelings with teachers having an internalised understanding of 'fit' that influences judgements of pre-service teachers' capabilities. It is implied that being able to fit into the teaching profession, requires both cognitive and non-academic capabilities, with the non-academic often referred to as inherent personal traits needed for teaching (Sharplin, Peden, & Marais, 2015).

With an increasing focus in Australia on the importance of non-academic capabilities required for teaching, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2015a) identified key capabilities such as: motivation to teach, strong interpersonal and communication skills, willingness to learn, resilience, self-efficacy, conscientiousness, organisational and planning skills associated with successful teaching. Current research recommends that further understanding of non-academic capabilities is needed to fully understand the judgements made about pre-service teachers (Krebs & Torrez, 2011).

Collaboration and Judgements

Teacher collaboration may support judgement making by teachers about other teachers (Biesta, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2015; Dinham, 2013). Therefore, supervising teachers' judgements of pre-service teachers' capabilities may not be a solo endeavour, with

education fundamentally a form of social interaction (Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2006). Research suggests that working collaboratively during the practicum is important, especially when working with pre-service teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Hume & Berry, 2013). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) found that teachers value and appreciate collegial support but tend to avoid disagreement and conflict when making judgements, possibly due to teachers having close working relationships. Other professions, such as medicine, see judgements of future colleagues as a shared collegial role. Judgements in medicine, it is suggested, are founded on 'professional wisdom', often acquired informally with colleagues through experience and interactions, viewed as the "critical reconstruction of practice" (Coles, 2002, p. 3).

Judgements about pre-service teachers' capabilities, are becoming increasingly significant in education in determining who will teach, with supervising teachers often being the gatekeepers into the teaching profession. Research suggests there is a large variability in judgements, which are often "carefully but idiosyncratically" made by supervisors (Ell & Haigh, 2015, p. 152). Yet, the complexities of judgement making cannot be easily defined and assessed in a valid and reliable way (Ingvason & Rowe, 2008). The area of supervising teachers' judgements on practicum is therefore an important research focus in teacher education, which requires a theoretical framework to guide and interpret research. In this study Social Judgement Theory (Brunswik, 1955) was the framework used to consider the personal and contextual issues that informed supervising teachers' judgements.

Theoretical Background

Social Judgement Theory (Brunswik, 1955) refers to the importance of the person and their environment in logical reasoning including the underlying ambiguity in the judgement environment (Cooksey, Freebody, & Davidson, 1986). This theory identifies professional judgements as individual cognitive acts that are socially and contextually situated (Hammond, Rohrbaugh, Mumpower, & Adelman, 1977). Social Judgement Theory has been successfully used in business and medicine to understand the basis and process of judgement made by professionals. For example, in education Social Judgement Theory has been used to understand judgements made by teachers on children's reading (Cooksey et al., 1986) and pre-service teachers' readiness to teach during the practicum (Haigh, Ell, & Mackisack, 2013). While other research explored the decisions made by supervisors on pre-service teachers' teaching performance (Haigh & Ell, 2014).

This paper reports on the findings from a group of Australian supervising teachers who had been responsible for judging a pre-service teacher's capabilities during a practicum. The idiosyncratic nature of supervising teachers' judgements is often based on their beliefs, values and attitudes and tends to be ethically embedded (Kagan, 1992). Consequently, it is the individual nature of judgement making that creates ethical issues for stakeholders, with practices and standards of judgements neither unanimously shared nor understood (Grudnoff, Hawe, & Tuck, 2005). Social Judgement Theory helped in understanding what supervising teachers made judgements on and which were seen as most important. The theory helped the researchers to recognise the cues (beliefs, values, expectations and understandings) and constructs (policy and practices) that informed the teachers' judgements. This study explored the judgements made by supervising teachers in regard to pre-service teachers' ability to be judged as fit for the profession. The two questions that guided this exploratory research are:

1. What did the supervising teachers believe were the most important pre-service teacher capabilities when making judgements during the practicum?
2. What informed the supervising teachers' judgements during the practicum?

Research Methods

The study used a qualitative design involving a semi-structured narrative interview approach informed by Wood and Kroger (2000). This approach enabled the researchers to gain deeper insights into the synergies and tensions in the teachers' judgements. The use of follow-up questions as probes and conversational pauses during the interview were useful in eliciting further information from the participants, ensuring that the teachers' narratives were spontaneous and authentic. This methodology is supported by Wood & Kroger (2000) who articulated the importance of conversational interviews. All interviews were conducted at the supervising teacher's school, recorded and transcribed verbatim with participants assigned a pseudonym. Ethics approval was sought and obtained for this study.

Participants

The supervising teachers comprised of one secondary (#4) and six primary (#1–#3 and #5–#7) teachers, located in schools in NSW, Australia. They were experienced supervisors (males n=2; female n=5), having 8–35 years teaching experience. For this study the researchers recruited teachers who had recently completed supervision of pre-service teachers. Seven teachers expressed interest and were interviewed post-practicum. The supervisors were comfortable talking to the researchers about their practicum experiences, which allowed for an open and frank dialogue. Table 1 provides context on the background and experiences of the participants.

Participant	Years of Experience	School Context
#1 Dan	31 Years Principal 25 years' experience as a supervising teacher	Regional Pop. 302 students Primary 35% from non-English speaking
#2 Gayle	30 years Classroom teacher 22 years' experience as a supervising teacher	Regional Primary Demonstration School* Pop. 190 students Primary 32% from non-English speaking 4 % Aboriginal
#3 Glen	14 years Assistant Principal 8 years' experience as a supervising teacher	City Primary School Pop. 602 students 70% from non-English speaking 40% Greek heritage
#4 Joanne	33 years Head of Department 26 years' experience as a supervising teacher	Regional Catholic High School – Secondary Co-educational Pop. 985 20 % non-English speaking background 20% Aboriginal
#5 Kerrie	9 years Acting Assistant principal 8 years' experience as a supervising teacher	Regional Primary School Pop. 720 8 % non-English speaking 3% Aboriginal
# 6 Mary	35 years Assistant Principal 32 years' experience as a supervising teacher	City Primary School Pop. 870 2 % non English speaking 1% Aboriginal
# 7 Suzie	19 Years	Primary Demonstration School * Pop. 308 students

	Assistant Principal Mentored 40+ pre-service teachers	Primary 32% from non English speaking 4 % Aboriginal

* Demonstration Schools are schools that are in partnership with a university to foster and support quality teaching within the school and within teacher education

Table 1: Supervising Teachers and school context.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data consisted of seven individual semi-structured interviews. The researchers were sensitive to value-laden issues when conducting interviews on judgement making. Due to this they assumed a guiding role only in the discussions, providing an opportunity for the participants to provide opinions, experiences and views on supervising pre-service teachers during a practicum. The interview questions focused on the participants' experiences of mentoring, supervising and making judgements of pre-service teachers they had supervised on practicum. Supervising teachers were encouraged to recall specific examples of judgements they had made, with an emphasis on the basis and what informed their judgements.

Social Judgement Theory was the analytical framework used to identify and interpret the cues and constructs that formed the basis of the participants' cognitive judgements. For example, statements that focused on appearance, dress and how the pre-service teachers related to students, clearly illustrate the social and contextual nature of judgements. The analysis approach was informed by the "principles of representative design" (Cooksey, 1996, p. 141). This method identified factors that were being used to form judgements, such as the judgement problem, the specific context and the cues and constructs within the supervising teacher's context.

Data were analysed using a process of thematic coding involving a two-step process informed by Saldaña (2013). The first step involved readings by the researchers of two transcripts to detect recurring ideas in the data and allocation of initial codes (Gibbs, 2007). The second step involved the researchers collaboratively reviewing the initial allocated codes, then with agreement, clustering codes under specific themes. The researchers then separately analysed further transcripts with the analyses, then compared to ensure consistency and agreement.

Significant quotes were extracted to represent examples of the major themes using the critical incidences technique process (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005). The critical incidences provided examples of the cues and constructs that formed the basis of judgement making (see Table 2). This process was used for determining the significance participants attach to events, analysing the emerging patterns and laying out tentative conclusions (Kain, 2004). High/low importance was based on emotive language, repetition, metaphors, analogies and transitions; an approach informed by Bernard and Ryan's (2009) coding method. To check for level of importance on the specific themes, the two researchers ranked data segments individually then together until agreement was reached. In resolving the differences, the two researchers revisited the transcripts to discuss and clarify how codes were interpreted to reach agreement. An 85% inter-rating comparison agreement was reached between the researchers; this was useful in strengthening reliability (Silverman, 2006).

Results

In the initial data analysis, it was clear that the teachers' judgements about pre-service teachers on practicum fell into two broad categories — personal qualities and professional practices. Furthermore, the personal qualities category could be separated into three themes and the professional qualities category into four themes. For this reason, the working definitions for the seven themes within the two categories are as follows:

Personal Qualities:

(1) Dispositions – inherent traits/characteristics e.g., enthusiasm, trustworthiness and likeability
(2) Professional attributes – tacit knowledge in terms of the expected behaviour/role of the teacher e.g., dress, speech, demeanour
(3) Interpersonal qualities – developing positive relationships with students and teaching colleagues e.g., positive social interaction.

Professional Practices:

(1) Learn and develop as a teacher – encompasses learning from practice through a reflective cyclic process that demonstrates growth
(2) Willingness and ability to plan for teaching and learning – encompasses a preparedness and capacity to plan for student learning
(3) Self-awareness in the use of evidence to inform teaching practice – an overall vision for teaching and learning and the use of evidence to inform this vision
(4) Professional Teaching Standards – prescribed broad statements of expectations for professional teaching practice.

Supervising Teachers' most Important Judgements

The data from this study suggested that the personal qualities of pre-service teachers were rated as the most important and viewed as the basis of a successful practicum. This is because all the supervising teachers made specific reference to pre-service teachers' personal qualities, which they viewed as foundational for teaching success. Being able to form positive interpersonal relationships with other teachers and students is one example. As one supervising teacher stated:

> *"Having a passion about what you're teaching, wanting to be there … the most important thing is for pre-service teacher to listen to what their supervising teacher is doing and saying and to respond, get on with others, the nature of our profession is that everybody has to grow, everybody has to learn and you have to get on with colleagues, kids, parents" (#6).*

For this supervising teacher, showing passion and engaging positively with different school stakeholders was basis for practicum success. For another participant the interpersonal involved showing confidence and flexibility in the classroom. She identified certain personal qualities necessary to support this, including: "intuitive, personable and empathetic" (#4). Participants in this study viewed being passionate, confident and flexible as qualities that enabled a pre-service teacher to support student learning. Developing good interpersonal relationships helped the pre-service teacher to: "connect to and know their students and where they wanted their kids to go" (#2). Having the right personal qualities was viewed as key to being able to establish positive relationships and engage students. One participant described that she looked for: "their body language … whether they are engaged with children, are they connecting with children … are they physically moving towards the children … making eye contact … trying to make relationships with the children" (#5).

Whilst interpersonal relationships were viewed as important, all seven supervising teachers also had clear expectations in terms of the professional requirements of pre-service teachers on practicum, particularly in reference to dress, communication and manner. One participant commented on the importance of the pre-service teacher having the: "correct body language and the ability to positively communicate with students and colleagues in a professional way" (#5). For the supervising teachers being able to professionally engage with colleagues and students was important in their schools. This involved observing how the pre-service teacher presented to others: "the way they talk, the way they dress and the way they enter the classroom" (#4). Professional appearance and demeanour were prioritised above teaching requirements, as noted in this comment:

> *First of all, their appearance … straight away I would be judging them on this … then how they're relating to the students and I think students don't realise how easily they're judged on their appearance. Like some of the tattoos students have turned up in … straight away judgements are made and they mightn't be correct. (#6)*

The supervising teachers' responses indicated that they had views on how a teacher should look, what they should wear and how they should act in order to fit in with the supervising teachers' image of a professional teacher.

All of the participants believed that pre-service teachers should show desirable dispositional traits, such as enthusiasm, leadership, intuition, empathy and flexibility. One participant described the desirable disposition needed for success on practicum as: "interesting voice, not being standoffish, show[ing] commitment and dedication, with a bit of a personality" (#3). For another participant it was important that the pre-service teacher could eventually be part of her school team, she describes this as: "a person I can work with, who is personable and professional, a quality teacher" (#2). Being collaborative, personable and professional were viewed as very important dispositional and professional capabilities, when judging a pre-service teacher. The participants believed that possessing the right dispositional traits would ensure that a pre-service teacher was able to deal with and adapt to challenging classrooms and would be willing and able to respond to feedback. Overall, the supervising teachers were making conscious and intuitive decisions about their pre-service teacher's capabilities as a teacher. The supervising teachers acknowledged that recent experiences with pre-service teachers had led them to realise that a pre-service teachers disposition, how they related to others in the school and the professionalism they displayed, were judged early in the practicum and were continually assessed before any judgements were established on teaching performance. As one teacher stated:

> *We had one not even that long ago, and she had a speech issue and was quite stand-offish and we were thinking you need to be very clear and you need to be careful how you're speaking and you have to get to know the kids; is this the right profession for you …. that was a conversation that had to happen pretty quickly… I guess it depends on the pre-service teacher if you are seeing some [teaching] improvement over that period of time. (#5)*

The participants indicated through their commentary that they were willing to scaffold and guide pre-service teachers' professional practices (lesson planning and behaviour management) yet were less tolerant of a pre-service teacher who they perceived did not have the desired dispositional traits (passion, personable) or met expected teacher professionalism (dress, speech, demeanour). This highlights the importance they placed on personal, non-academic capabilities for teaching success and the subjective nature of supervising teacher judgements. It should be noted that pre-service teachers' professional practices of planning, reflecting, responding to feedback and managing a classroom were all viewed as important

but with the caveat that they were often based on desired personal qualities for them to be successfully enacted. As one supervising teacher stated:

> *Straight away I would be judging them on how they're relating to the students … positive relationships … interact positively … can control the class … then you can look at some sort of progression with their teaching skills as we go along … but you always look at do they really want to be here [school] and have they got the personality for teaching. (#7)*

In summary, Table 2 shows that the supervising teachers placed more importance on the personal qualities of pre-service teachers than professional practices. The data suggests that supervising teachers' first impressions of pre-service teachers' personal qualities was what supervising teachers judged first.

Categories	Major Themes	Cues and Constructs	Importance High/Low
Personal Qualities	Disposition traits for Teaching (non-academic)	PST self-awareness, personable, enthusiasm, passion, intuition, empathy, flexibility, reflectivity, proactivity	Very High
	Professional Attributes	PST dress, speech, demeanour	Very High
		PST ability to be collaborative, dedicated, committed, and adaptable to specific school context	
		PST acts as a future colleague	
	Interpersonal Qualities (non-academic)	PST has enthusiasm with children	High
		PST has ability to establish collegial relationships with colleagues	
Professional Practices	Learn & develop as a teacher	PST teacher engages in observation, planning, enacting, reflection cycle	High
		PST acts and learns from feedback and demonstrates growth in teaching skills	
	Willingness, ability & knowledge of planning for teaching & learning	PST demonstrates knowledge and ability to deliver content, understands how students learn and takes this in account when planning & teaching	High
		PST knowledge of students, enactment of behaviour management strategies, caters for individual differences	
		PST demonstrates a willingness to take on ideas, initiative, take risk	
	Self-awareness in the use of evidence to inform teaching practice	PST demonstrates knowledge of what to use and why (practical knowledge) when teaching	Low
		PST has a vision of teaching & learning	
		PST has an awareness of the need & use of evidence for teaching & learning	
	Professional teaching standards (APST)	ST use APST as basis for judgements	Low
		ST use APST as a " back up" to justify/ confirm judgements	
		ST use standards to ensure consistency "I am making the same judgments as my colleagues"	

Pre-service Teacher = (PST) Supervising Teacher = (ST) Australian Professional Teaching Standards = (APST)

Table 2: Cues and Constructs within themes and importance rating.

Informing Judgements during Practicum

In response to the second question, the study found that supervising teachers' judgements of pre-service teacher's capabilities were often informed by the observable, for example, appearance, speech or personnel qualities like enthusiasm and passion. Clearly, the idea of being able to fit into the school presented a broad, subjective notion. One supervising teacher described what he believed was important to match what other teachers do at the school: "clear speech, conservative dress and being prompt" (#1). For the participants, judgements regarding preferred personal and professional attributes, were one of the first judgements made and were most often a subjective critique of a pre-service teacher's personality. It was clear that the school context had an influence on the type of judgement being made about individuals. This is implied by one participant who commented on the critical importance of teacher personality needed to work in her school: "any judgements of a pre-service teacher, for me has to be obviously based on their teaching ability, but importantly their ability to fit into the teaching profession, the school, their personality is well, critical" (#4).

Often the supervising teachers were considering the pre-service teacher as a potential future colleague and this informed the judgement on whether the pre-service teacher had the ability to fit into the school: "a person I [can] work with, a candidate with teaching ability and ability to fit into teaching, someone who could work with children" (#4). All participants placed a high value on the potential of the pre-service teacher to be a competent colleague. The following statement illustrates this expectation: "are they going to be able to carry their weight and successfully teach a class of students without having to rely on everyone else" (#3).

This study revealed that the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching (AITSL, 2011) were used to affirm previous judgements made by supervising teachers on pre-service teachers. If a pre-service teacher was deemed weak in a specific teaching area (i.e., not able to relate to students/staff) the supervising teacher would look to APST 1 (Know students and how they learn) to support their judgement, for example, "we have the standards and we know … we go to them to back us up" (# 6). The standards in this way were being used to corroborate the supervisor's working knowledge of teaching. The supervising teachers expected pre-service teachers to have knowledge and understanding of subject content, pedagogy, behaviour management, syllabi, planning and assessment practices, aligning these with specific APST descriptors. Yet, none of the participants explicitly discussed how evidence from teaching practice could be used to meet/measure teaching standards. Rather, the supervising teachers referred to the "practical knowledge needed to be a successful classroom teacher" (#1). The following statement identified how one supervising teacher aligned his practical knowledge of teaching to the standards when making judgements of an individual: "we use them … they help to look for the practical things in teaching" (#3).

It was interesting to note that the supervising teachers considered teaching standards as important part of their professional knowledge and had some place informing their judgements of pre-service teachers' teaching practice. The supervising teachers used APST to provide feedback to the pre-service teachers, as one participant commented: "I use the standards to show them, 'at this stage you are not where you should be … what should we do about that?'" (#1). While for other participants, when using the APST it was first necessary to consider slight adjustments in terms of the individual or the context: "I hope they [supervising teachers] all use the same, might be slight adjustments because of special needs, maybe tweaked a bit" (#3). The idea that the standards alone were not enough to support judgements in all cases indicated that supervising teachers saw the standards as additional to their own practical knowledge and were used to substantiate judgements rather than

informing the type of evidence needed to demonstrate successful practice.

To clarify judgements, teacher colleagues played an important social role, as illustrated by this comment: "chatting to other teachers about expectations of a pre-service teacher helps to clarify … am I right in my thinking?" (#5). The comments from participants consistently indicated the value they placed on shared judgements; this was of particular importance to supervising teachers when they were concerned about a pre-service teacher's capabilities: "when there is an issue I chat to a trusted colleague to get advice and see if they would feel the same as I do based on what the pre-service teachers is doing or not doing" (#7). Ultimately, judgements were made on what was observable early in a practicum, how the pre-service teacher presented professionally, their dispositional traits, ability to develop interpersonal relationships and present and work as a future colleague. This is clearly expressed by the following comment: "so how does the person fit into being a member of the teaching profession at the coal front … can they do it" (#7).

Discussion

Understanding supervising teachers' judgements of pre-service teachers' capabilities and determining whether they are ready to teach is a highly political, complex and subjective process (Alland et al., 2014; Biesta, 2007, 2009; Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013; Haigh & Ell, 2014; Haigh, Ell & Mackisack, 2013; Southgate et al., 2013). Earlier research on judgement making (e.g., Haigh & Ell, 2014; Haigh et al., 2013) identified judgements made by supervising teachers on pre-service teachers but did not indicate which ones were the most important. A key finding of the current study is that supervising teachers placed a higher priority on pre-service teachers' personal qualities than on professional practices when making judgements about pre-service teachers (see Table 2).

The study identified three specific areas within the category of personal qualities: dispositional traits (e.g., enthusiasm, passion), professional attributes (e.g., dress, speech, collaboration) and interpersonal qualities (e.g., positive relationships). Importantly, this explorative study showed that supervising teachers' judgements of pre-service teachers' personal qualities were viewed as most important for teaching success. Accordingly, judgements were shown to emphasize personal qualities before the professional practices, with personal judgements often being intuitive and subjective, supporting previous research (Biesta, 2009; Ell & Haigh, 2015). When making judgements, supervising teachers sought support from colleagues when considering the pre-service teachers 'fit' for the profession. Results from this study align with research by Loughran (2007, 2010) who highlighted the importance of the personal aspects in judging a good teacher.

Social Judgement Theory was used to analyse supervising teachers' judgements, with findings revealing that there were multiple influences underpinning the basis of the judgements. Judgements were socially situated within supervising teachers' own classrooms and influenced by their prior experiences (e.g., this was how I was judged or how my last pre-service teacher presented). This was evident in many of the comments made by the participants, which were often individual and contextually situated (e.g., "the way they talk, the way they dress"). The supervising teachers' judgements about their pre-service teachers were often ambiguous and value laden (e.g., "having confidence, but not too confident").

Supervising teachers in this study used their own beliefs and values about how a teacher needed to dress, speak, interact and the preferred dispositional traits best suited for their school context. The basis of judgements can be viewed as being idiosyncratic and contextual, as noted in Social Judgement research (Allal, 2012). This study showed that supervising teachers often based their judgements of a pre-service teacher's teaching

competency on their non-academic capabilities (e.g., disposition, professionalism and interpersonal relationships) a finding supported by previous research (Krebs & Torrez, 2011; Sharplin et al., 2015).

Although each teacher highlighted their own expectations in terms of dispositional traits needed for successful teaching, there were similarities in the cues on which supervising teachers based their judgements. The supervising teachers identified commitment, dedication, passion, empathy, and flexibility as dispositional traits required for teaching success. This is supported by Meijer et al.'s (2009) research, which links the personal dispositional and professional for teacher success. The emphasis on certain dispositions and shared common ideas of what is good teaching supports the idea of a culture of sameness in teaching highlighted in Phelan (2005) research.

The supervising teachers described how they provided ongoing guidance and felt it was important to scaffold pre-service teachers in learning to teach, yet they were often critical of those pre-service teachers who failed to possess or display the desired professionalism. Not having the desired professional qualities was seen as a barrier to achieving success on practicum a finding supported by Krebs and Torrez (2011) research. In this study supervising teachers' judgements were often informed by their own values and beliefs on the professional attributes a teacher should exhibit (dress, speech, demeanour) and the underlying educational ideals that a teacher should display (passion, collegiality, flexibility). These expectations were influenced by the cultural, contextual or structural conditions in the school, a finding well supported in research (Biesta, 2009; Hascher, Cocard, & Moser, 2004; Ortlipp, 2006).

It is interesting to note that the supervising teachers discussed teaching practices as capabilities that could be supported and developed yet, offered limited suggestions on how to improve a pre-service teacher's disposition for teaching (flexibility, collegiality) or interpersonal qualities (e.g., establishing collegial relationships); they were deemed either present or not. This finding suggests that the supervising teachers had a fixed mindset on particular dispositional traits and interpersonal qualities that they thought a pre-service teacher should bring to teaching, and that these qualities could not be developed during the practicum (Dweck, 2006; Chui, Hone & Dweck, 1997; Vandewalle, 2012).

First impressions were influential in determining whether a pre-service teacher had the desired personal qualities deemed as necessary for the teaching profession. This perception of fit usually centred on the individual's dispositional traits, their professionalism and their interpersonal abilities. Previous research has indicated that early judgements are often based on traits, such as competency, trustworthiness and likeability (Willis & Todorov, 2014). Similarly, Cafaro et al., (2012) research identified the notion of specific personal characteristics needed for successful teaching. The supervising teachers in this study appeared less tolerant of individuals who did not seem to fit their own image of a teacher.

It was surprising that the supervising teachers did not place a great importance on teaching standards to inform judgements in light of the current national importance of standards. Supervising teachers did not explicitly deconstruct specific standards for pre-service teachers, but typically relied on their own beliefs and experience of good teachers and teaching practice. The supervising teachers had a sense that their own intuition and/or experience needed to be tied to the standards, with standards not necessarily used consistently to inform decisions but rather to confirm or validate decisions.

This finding is inconsistent with the increasing requirement for supervising teachers to use evidence to judge teaching practice (AITSL, 2011, 2015; CAEP, 2015; ECNZ, 2015). While teaching standards are being introduced by governments to support the development and judgement of quality teaching, the way they are being used in practice appears to be as a retrospective tool to support already made judgements. This concern was highlighted by Korthagen, (2004) who argued that competencies or standards used as the basis of judgement

may fragment the supervising teacher's role, making it insufficient to account for good teaching, with standardisation presenting significant challenges when making judgements (Hammersley, 2007). The supervising teachers acknowledged that in using standards it was important to consider modifications, with differing expectations in terms of the situation, the individual or the context. Judging pre-service teachers in this way highlights the complex, multifaceted process in making judgements, supported by previous research (e.g., Dottin, 2009; Smith, 2010).

The supervising teachers recognised the value of working in collaboration with colleagues, often referring to the plural (e.g., we, us, together) when commenting on how judgements were made. There was a sense in the participants' statements that their own intuition needed to be supported by consultation with colleagues and then backed up by standards to confirm or validate decisions (e.g., "… standards back me up … sometimes if needed I talk to another teacher to check…"). The social interaction with colleagues was viewed as an important aspect in judgement-making ensuring clarity and confirmation (Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2006). The supervising teachers indicated the value of having a colleague provide a second opinion to make fair judgements on a pre-service teacher, thus relying on collective professional wisdom (Hargreaves & Fullan; Coles, 2002). Haigh et.al., (2013) advocated that to increase consistency of judgement it is important for multiple people to be involved in the decision making process. Ell and Haigh (2015) referred to judgement making as involving the use of 'gut' feelings to inform teacher thinking. Similarly, this study showed that the supervising teachers' judgements were intuitive, informed by individual experiences and biographies, often supported with colleague collaboration.

Limitations

A limitation of the current study is that only seven supervising teachers were interviewed. However, the participants did represent a range of school contexts and had considerable experience and expertise in mentoring and judging pre-service teachers on practicum. Greater participant numbers across a wider range of school contexts, including differing experience levels of supervisors, would be useful to further explore judgement-making during the practicum. A methodological limitation was the two researchers were the two coders of the data, while there was 85% inter-rating comparison, to strengthen the coding process a third coder could have rated a number of data segments to ensure consistency of terms and categories.

The study did not intend to prove the validity or reliability of judgement making. Rather the study sought to explore what informs supervising teachers' judgements on pre-service teachers and the capabilities the teachers deemed as important for practicum success. Repeating the study with a greater range of participants, including pre-service teachers' perceptions of judgements made during practicum may confirm and expand the findings of this study. The use of semi-structured interviews raises the concerns of subjectivity and conscious and unconscious bias (Diefenbach, 2008). However, this exploratory research adds to the conversation of judgement making by supervising teachers of pre-service teachers. It must be noted that the supervising teachers in this study stated they were aware of teacher standards but may not have used the language of the standards, hence there may be some overlap of this research's categories and APST. Further research is required to "unpack" supervising teachers explicit knowledge of APST and how they are used by school teachers.

Conclusion and Implications

The focus on personal qualities and professional expectations in judging pre-service teachers' fit into a school context requires greater awareness across schools, initial teacher education programs and in the teaching profession. This focus has implications for selection of candidates for teaching, the development of pre-service teachers' non-academic capabilities and the need to review and consider the personal qualities in professional teacher standards. A better understanding of the personal qualities and professional expectations that guide judgement-making is important for supervising teachers and in support for pre-service teachers.

Within teacher education programs greater emphasis is required in developing the dispositional qualities, such as passion, empathy and flexibility, which this study found was most important for informing judgements. Pre-service teachers need to have explicit guidance on professional expectations and teacher education coursework needs to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop their interpersonal capabilities and their professionalism. Finally, there is a need early in the teacher education program to support pre-service teachers' awareness of the non-academic capabilities required for teaching and to provide opportunities to develop these further during the practicum. For those students who encounter difficulties in these areas, there needs to be support mechanisms in place to identify, address and improve non-academic capabilities within the teacher education program.

Further research into the intuitive and practical knowledge that supervising teachers use when making judgements, can assist in making the judgement process more transparent and equitable. Aligned with this is supporting supervising teachers to recognise that their own histories and individual understanding of 'good teaching'. This would address the subjectivity, inconsistencies and a lack of clarity for many pre-service teachers during the practicum. Clearly the cumulative effect of judgement making based on prior experiences and a teacher's own normative reference needs to be understood and recognised so as to better inform and ensure reliability of the individual's judgements.

Currently teaching standards place little emphasis on personal qualities, such as passion, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, which this study found as foundational to practicum success. This disconnect between the supervising teachers' view of important qualities for teaching success and teaching standards that place little emphasis on these non-academic qualities maybe one of the reasons why school teachers are less inclined to use the standards for judging pre-service teachers on practicum. The researchers argue that there needs to be greater consideration of the personal and professional qualities within teaching standards and the development of these capabilities within teacher education programs. Research into pre-service teachers' non-academic capabilities and how they may be developed within initial teacher education programs is important for the development of quality teachers, a high and continuing priority for all governments.

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