

InSights

**Supervising Preservice
Teachers program review**

June 2015

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Contents

1. Executive summary	1
2. Introduction	3
3. Methodology	5
4. Findings	6
Demographic data	6
Identification of supervising teachers and support provided to undertake the role	10
Respondent roles and reasons for participating in the SPT program	11
SPT program commencements and completions	13
SPT program content and delivery	17
SPT program effectiveness	19
Challenges associated with supervising preservice teachers	43
SPT program strengths and possible enhancements	44
5. Discussion and recommendations	48

1

Executive summary

Synergistiq was engaged by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to undertake a point in time review of the Supervising Preservice Teachers (SPT) program.

The SPT program was developed in conjunction with the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (now Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards) and the Queensland College of Teachers in 2012 and commenced in 2013. The program is an interactive and self-directed online professional learning program. While it was designed primarily for teachers who are supervising a preservice teacher or are considering doing so, the SPT program may also be useful for school leaders, mentors and personnel from initial teacher education providers and regulatory authorities.

The review addressed the following key questions.

- Who is engaging with the SPT program and what role do they play in relation to professional experience?
- What are the main reasons for participants engaging with the program?
- How do participants perceive the impact of the program on their supervision of preservice teachers? Are they utilising resources from the modules?
- How do participants perceive the impact of the program on their ability to reflect on and improve their own professional practice?
- What are the challenges that teachers face in supervising preservice teachers and how useful is the program in addressing these challenges?
- What are the reasons for participants not completing modules or parts of modules? If they are completing only some sections, are they still gaining useful information?

This review found that the SPT program is being accessed by staff across all jurisdictions in order to gain a better understanding of the role of the supervising teacher, as well as to improve their own knowledge and skills. This includes supervising teachers, principals/school leaders, other school teaching staff and staff involved in teacher education and registration.

It is clear from the findings of this review that the SPT program is, overall, meeting its objectives and addressing the targeted professional learning needs of participants. Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the online medium is an accessible and appropriate format to deliver nationally consistent training, and agree that the resources are useful.

On average, supervising teachers reported that the program improved their capacity across all modules, and this encouraging result is supported by the views of their principals. Importantly, participants report that in addition to building skills and knowledge, the program also provides supervising teachers with more confidence to work with preservice teachers.

Participants from other cohorts, including teachers based in schools who are planning to supervise preservice teachers in the future and teachers who are not planning to become supervising teachers at this stage of their careers, also reported improved capacity across the content covered in the modules.

Further, non-school based personnel, including staff from initial teacher education providers and regulatory authorities, indicated positive responses in relation to their participation in the program.

According to supervising teachers who responded to the survey, the most common challenges of the supervising teacher role are finding the time to provide guidance and support to preservice teachers, and strengthening their ability to provide relevant and constructive feedback to those teachers. Not surprisingly, these two challenges also provide the areas of greatest opportunity to enhance the professional placement for the preservice teacher and, in the case of feedback, to potentially include some additional resource material in the SPT program.

2

Introduction

Synergistiq was engaged by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to undertake a review of the Supervising Preservice Teachers (SPT) program.

The SPT program was developed in conjunction with the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (now Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards) and the Queensland College of Teachers in 2012 and commenced in 2013. The program is an interactive and self-directed online professional learning program. While it was designed primarily for teachers who are supervising a preservice teacher or are considering doing so, the SPT program may also be useful for school leaders, mentors and personnel from initial teacher education providers and regulatory authorities.

Since the program's release, there has been a steady increase in registrations and module completions. However, AITSL's data indicates that many users complete only one module. There are also more registrations than module completions.

With the above in mind, the following key questions were addressed through this review.

- Who is engaging with the SPT program and what role do they play in relation to professional experience?
- What are the main reasons for participants engaging with the program?
- How do participants perceive the impact of the program on their supervision of preservice teachers? Are they utilising resources from the modules?

- How do participants perceive the impact of the program on their ability to reflect on and improve their own professional practice?
- What are the challenges that teachers face in supervising preservice teachers and how useful is the program in addressing these challenges?
- What are the reasons for participants not completing modules or parts of modules? If they are completing only some sections, are they still gaining useful information?

This is the final report of the SPT program review. Section 3 describes the methodology used to conduct the review. Section 4 provides the findings from the data collection strategies and Section 5 offers a discussion on these findings, with recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the SPT program.

3

Methodology

The key aspects of the methodology applied by Synergistiq included the development of a project logic for the SPT program, which articulated the theory of change inherent in the program design. The project logic was developed in conjunction with AITSL staff and key evaluation questions were then derived from the SPT project logic.

Data collection strategies for this review included a survey that was distributed to all registrants of the SPT program (a total of 2,237 registrants). The total number of respondents to the survey was 537, or approximately 24 per cent, which provided a confidence level of 99 per cent ($\pm 5\%$). The survey sought both quantitative and qualitative feedback on the evaluation questions. Survey questions varied and were tailored specifically for each cohort of participants, depending on the category with which they identified. Participants included principals and school leaders, teachers who were supervising preservice teachers, other teachers in schools, and non-school based personnel from initial teacher education providers and regulatory authorities.

To complement the survey data, fifteen telephone interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of program participants. The participant sample, in terms of number and categories of participants to be interviewed, was determined in conjunction with AITSL staff, following preliminary analysis of the survey responses. Interview questions were developed to examine key themes emerging from the survey data in greater depth.

Analysis of data was informed by the Guskey Framework.¹ This framework has been designed to examine the impact of professional development at five levels within the school, as follows:

- Level 1: Participants' reactions including course content and design
- Level 2: Participants' acquisition of new knowledge and skills
- Level 3: Organisational support and change
- Level 4: Participants' application of new knowledge and skills (where possible)
- Level 5: Student learning outcomes (Level 5 was out of scope for this review)

This analysis sought to assess the impact of the SPT program on the first four levels of the Guskey Framework. Systems Thinking principles were also applied to analyse the broader implications of the review findings on the SPT program.

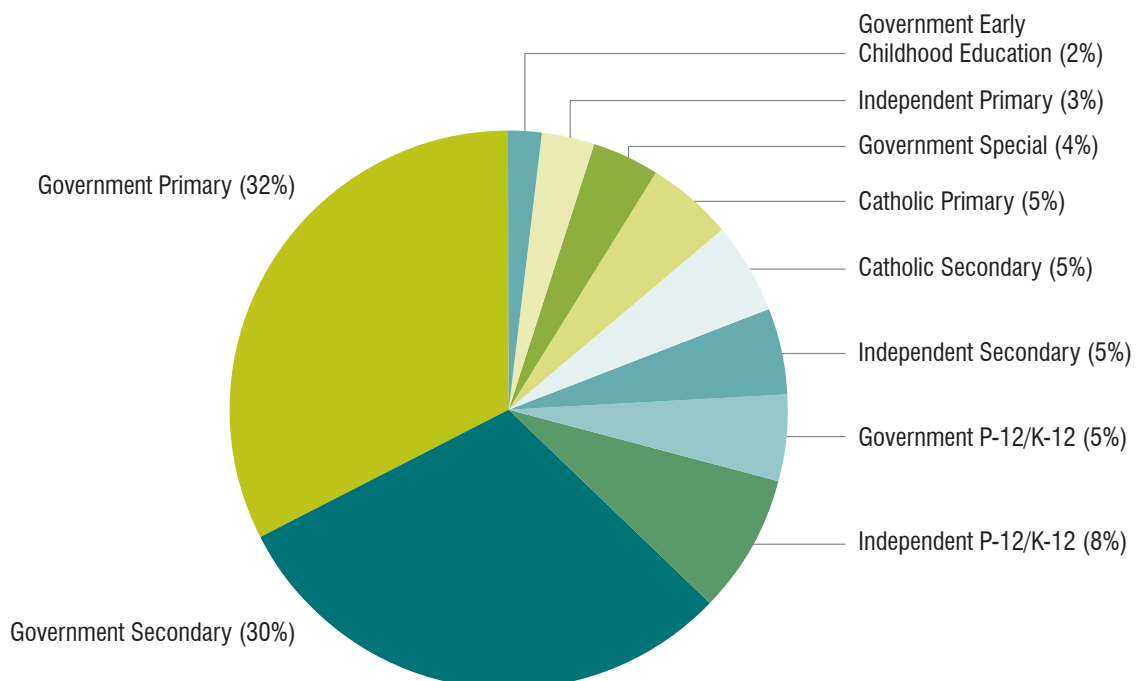
¹ Guskey, T.R. 2000, *Evaluating Professional Development*, Corwin Press Inc, California.

This section outlines the key findings from the combined data collection strategies (survey and phone interviews). The questions asked of stakeholders were based on the agreed Evaluation Framework.

Demographic data

As mentioned, 2237 people were invited to undertake the survey,² of which 537 people responded. As such the response rate represents a confidence level of 99 per cent ($\pm 5\%$). The type of school and/or education sector from which respondents came is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: School/sector type of survey respondents (n=443)



² Figure excludes bounced and 'opted out' email invitations.

Importantly, the major school and sector representations outlined in Figure 1 broadly mirror those of the full cohort of SPT registrants³, as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Survey respondents and SPT cohort by school/sector type

School/Sector	Survey respondents (%)	SPT cohort (%)
Government Primary	32	30
Government Secondary	30	26
Independent P-12/K-12	8	9
Catholic Secondary	5	5
Independent Secondary	5	4
Government P-12/K-12	5	4
Catholic Primary	5	4
Other ⁴	9	19
Total (subject to rounding)	100	100

³ Taken from Overview Report provided by AITSL.

⁴ Schools/organisations classified as 'other' included: Independent Other, Government Special, Independent Primary, Government Employing Authority, Catholic Other, Independent Early Childhood, Catholic P-12/K-12, Government Early Childhood, Catholic Employing Authority, Independent Employing Authority, Catholic Early Childhood, Independent Special.

Figure 2 displays the distribution of respondents by state/territory. As shown, the majority of survey respondents were based in South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. As shown in Table 2, the state/territory distribution of survey responses is similar to the distribution of the full SPT cohort.

Figure 2: State/territory of survey respondents (n=534)

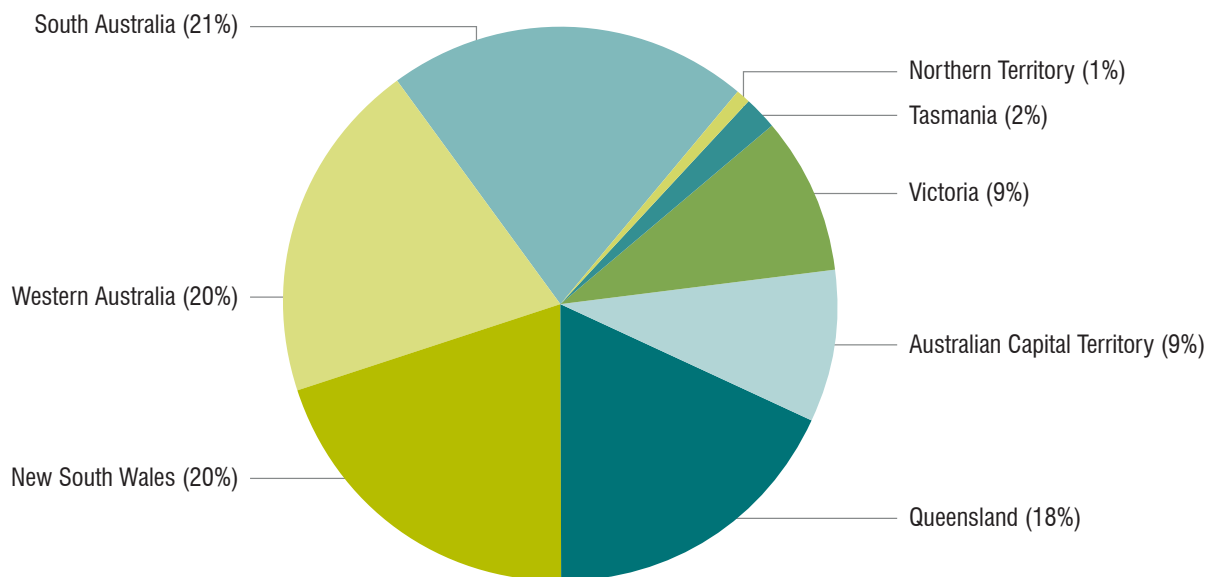
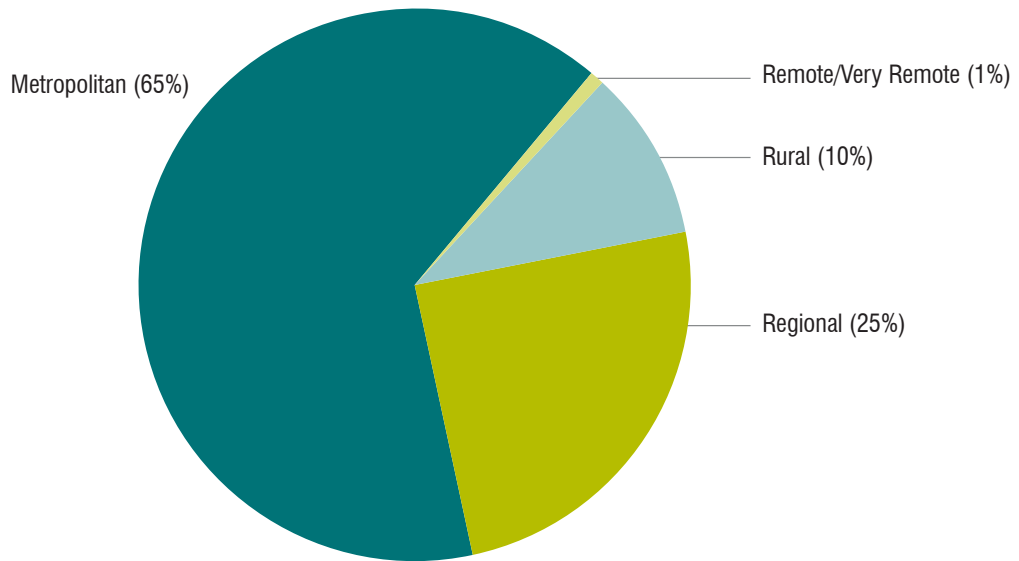


Table 2: Survey respondents and SPT cohort by state/territory

Location	Survey respondents (%)	SPT cohort (%)
South Australia	21	18
Western Australia	20	17
New South Wales	20	21
Queensland	18	19
Australian Capital Territory	9	10
Victoria	9	10
Tasmania	2	2
Northern Territory	1	2
Total (subject to rounding)	100	100

Looking more closely, the majority of respondents were located in metropolitan locations, with slightly over one third of respondents coming from regional or rural locations (refer Figure 3).

Figure 3: Location of survey respondents (n=534)



Once again, the profile of survey respondents broadly aligns with that of the full SPT cohort, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Survey respondents and SPT cohort by location

Location	Survey Respondents (%)	SPT Cohort (%)
Metropolitan	65	64
Regional	25	25
Rural	10	9
Remote/Very Remote	1	1
Total (subject to rounding)	100	100

The statistical significance of the survey population, and its close alignment to the demographic characteristics of the full SPT cohort profile, strengthens the reliability of the findings from this review.

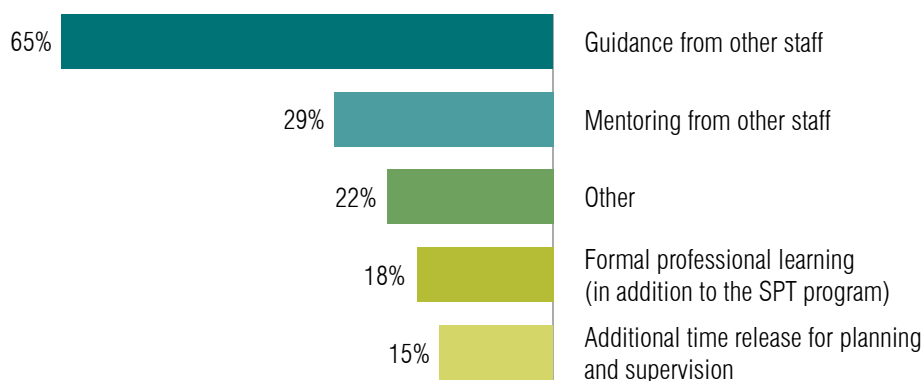
Identification of supervising teachers and support provided to undertake the role

As part of the survey, respondents were asked how they were identified as a supervising teacher in their school. Of 155 responses to this question, 90 said they volunteered and 56 indicated they had been nominated by senior staff.

Additionally, information was sought from these respondents about the type of support provided to them as supervising teachers in performing this duty. Survey results indicated that almost two thirds of supervising teacher respondents (64% or 100 out of 155 respondents) indicated that they did not receive support from their school to assist them to prepare for their role.

Of the 55 respondents who did receive some support, 65 per cent received guidance from other staff, 29 per cent received mentoring from other staff, 18 per cent received formal professional learning and 15 per cent received additional time release for planning and supervision. Over one fifth of respondents received 'other' support, including guidance from preservice teachers' universities, and general discussions about the program with various stakeholders (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Support provided to supervising teachers (n=55)



Respondent roles and reasons for participating in the SPT program

Survey respondents were asked to identify their role in the school or organisation they represent. The majority of respondents were teachers who have supervised preservice teachers (refer to Figure 5). When asked why they wanted to participate in the SPT program, almost two thirds of respondents indicated they undertook the program to better understand the role of the supervising teacher, while under half wanted to improve their knowledge, increase their skills and learn more about the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Standards) (refer to Figure 6).

Figure 5: Please choose the option that most closely describes your current role (n=261)

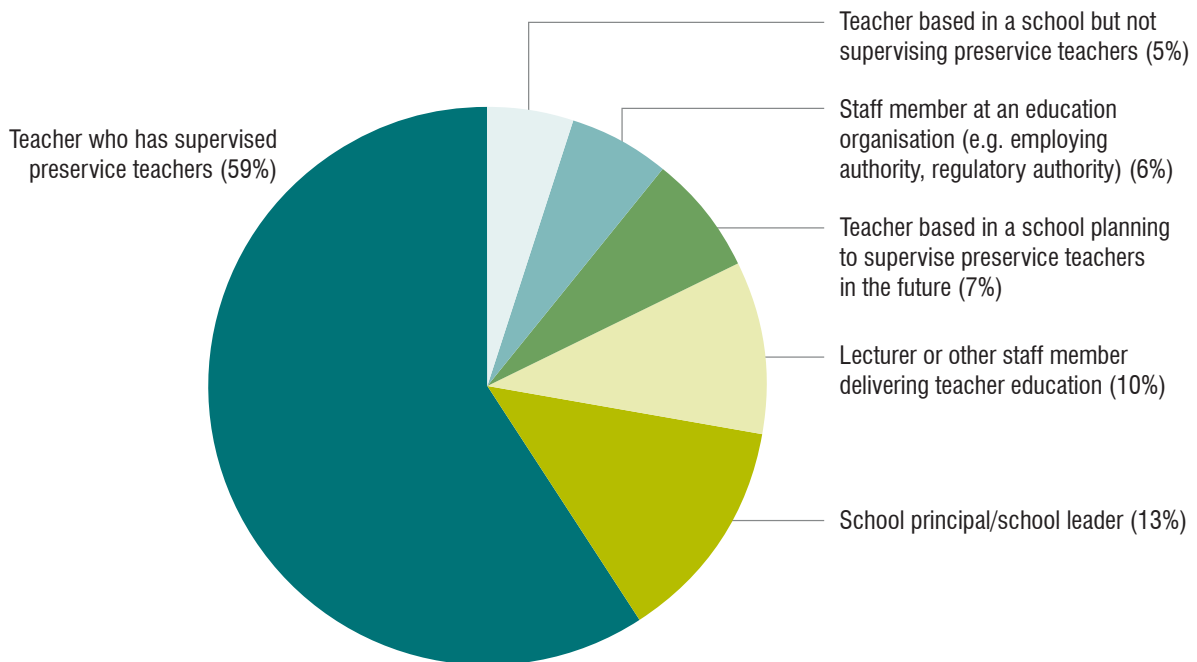
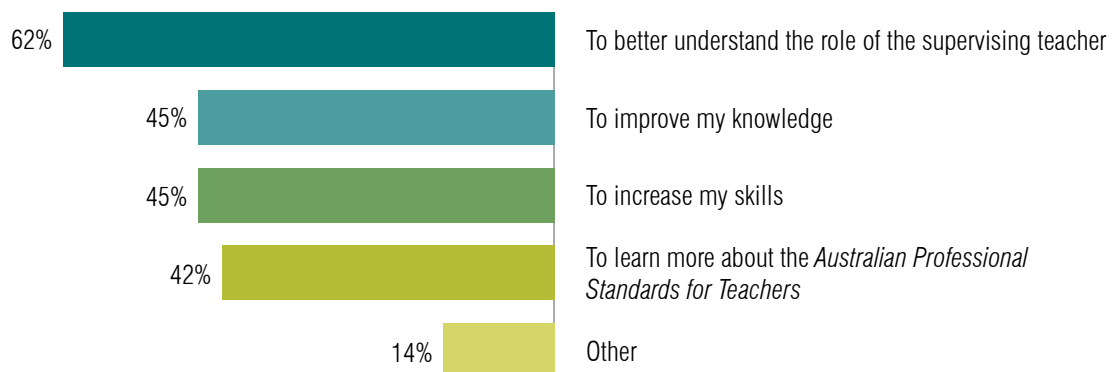
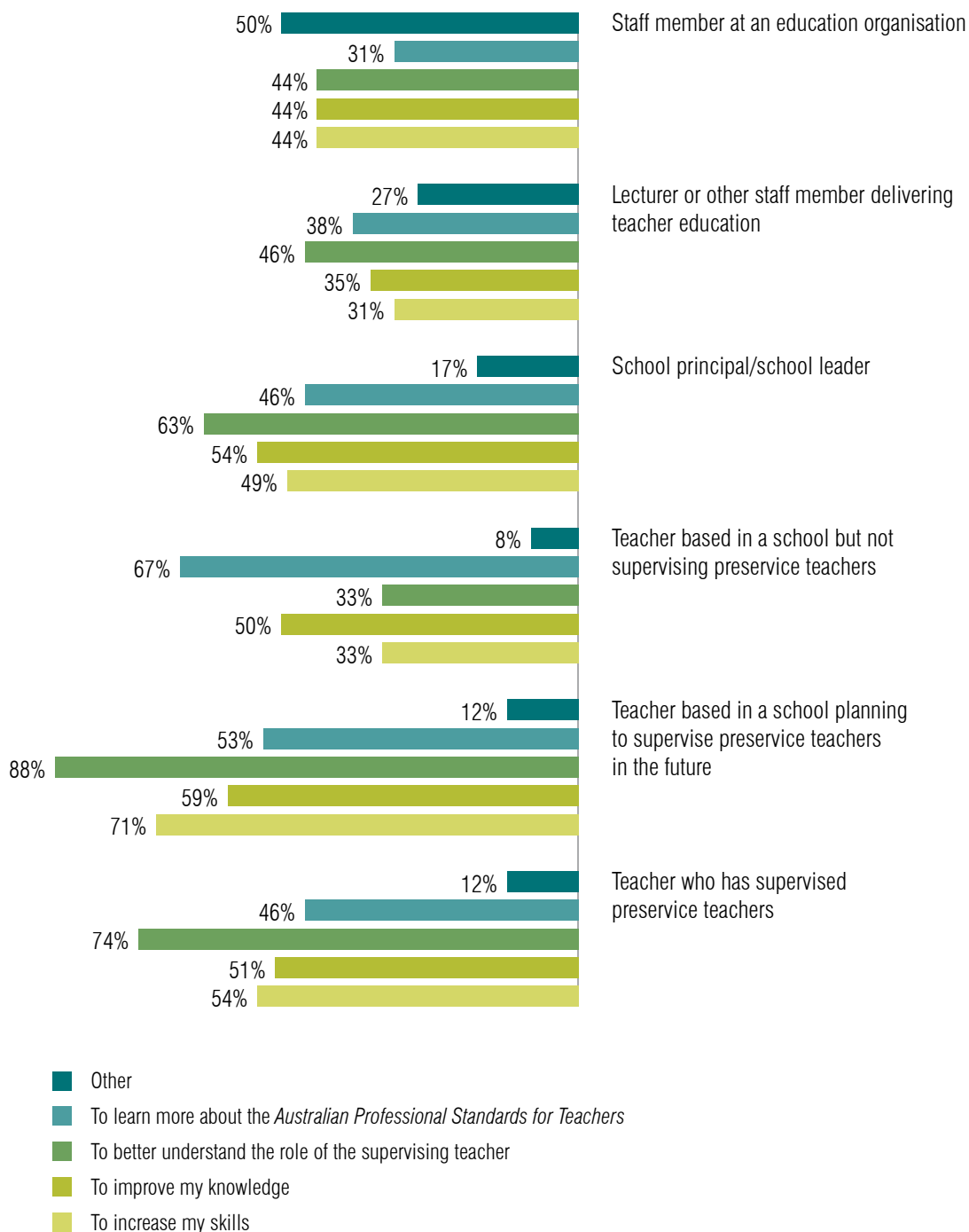


Figure 6: What were the reasons you undertook the SPT program? Select all that apply (n=510)



A correlation of Figures 5 and 6 indicates that respondents' roles influenced the reasons they undertook the program (refer to Figure 7). For example, teachers based in a school who are planning to supervise a preservice teacher and teachers who have supervised preservice teachers mostly undertook the program to better understand the role of the supervising teacher. For teachers based in a school but not supervising preservice teachers, the main reason for undertaking the program was to learn more about the Standards.

Figure 7: Reasons respondents undertook the SPT program by role. Select all that apply (n=261)



I wanted to mentor the preservice students to the highest levels of professional standards where they could integrate their knowledge into practice. My previous experience of mentoring was very un-structured where there were no clear expectations, the assessments were not quantified and the result was a beginning teacher who struggled in practice. Linking the program to the Australian Professional Standards was also another reason why I chose to undertake the SPT program. (Survey respondent)

SPT program commencements and completions

Program data provided by AITSL suggest 1907 people out of 2447 have completed at least one page within a module, while 540 people have not yet completed a page within a module. The data indicates 721 people have completed at least 15 pages, which is the average number of pages over the four modules.

Table 4: Module completion data (n=2447)

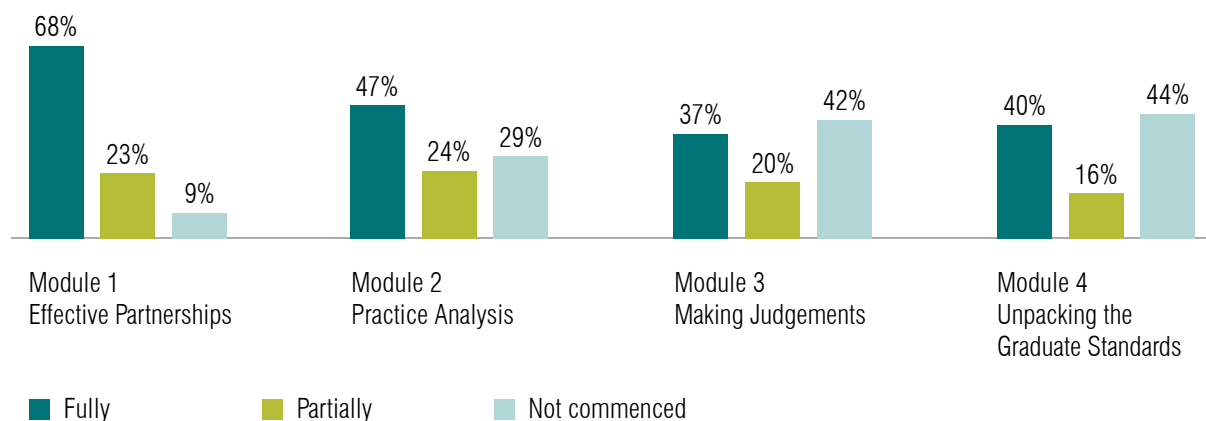
	Effective Partnerships	Practice Analysis	Making Judgements	Unpacking the Graduate Standards
Total number of pages in module	10	17	11	22
No pages completed	34%	61%	75%	74%
At least one page completed	66%	39%	25%	26%
All pages completed	33%	9%	13%	5%
Average percentage of completed pages excluding those participants who have not completed any pages	72%	63%	69%	58%

As can be seen from Table 4, there is a trend of decreased uptake and completion rates from Module 1 (Effective Partnerships) through to Module 4 (Unpacking the Graduate Standards). Effective Partnerships has the highest uptake and completion rate of the four modules. Regarding uptake, of the 2447 enrolments, only 829 (34%) people have not completed at least one Effective Partnerships page, compared with 1488 (61%) for Practice Analysis, 1800 (74%) for Unpacking the Graduate Standards, and 1826 (75%) for Making Judgements. Regarding completion rates, 797 (33%) people have completed Effective Partnerships, compared with 320 (13%) for Making Judgements, 218 (9%) for Practice Analysis, and 116 (5%) for Unpacking the Graduate Standards.

The trends in the program data are also reflected in survey responses, where completion rates decline across modules and non-commencement rates increase (refer to Figure 8).

Interviewees reported that they primarily started at the beginning of the modules and worked their way through. Those who approached the program this way thought it was the best approach.

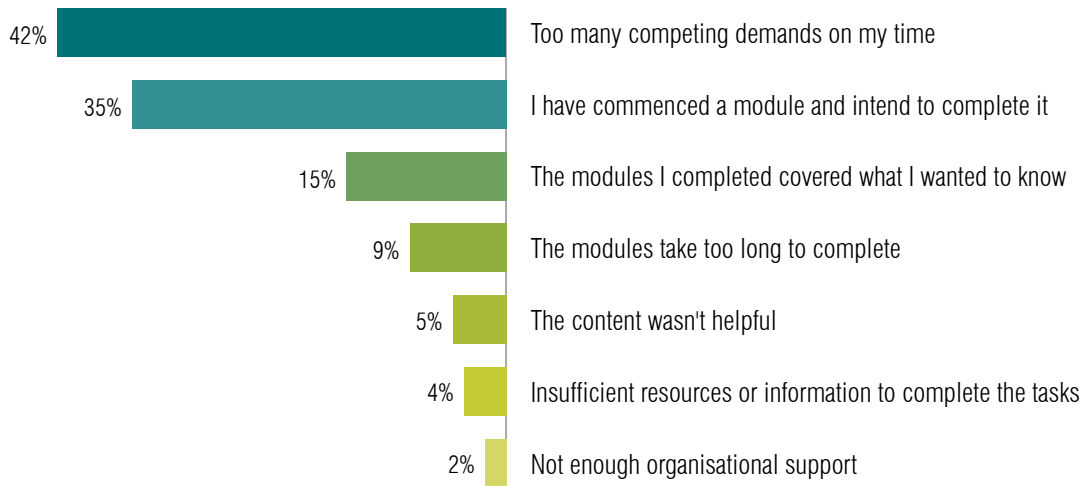
Figure 8: Please indicate whether you have fully completed, partially completed or not commenced the following SPT program modules: (n=275)



As shown in Figure 9, of those respondents who had not completed one or more of the modules, 42 per cent indicated the reason for this was because there were too many competing demands on their time, while 35 per cent indicated they had commenced a module and intended to complete it. Fifteen per cent of respondents indicated the modules that they had completed covered what they wanted to know.

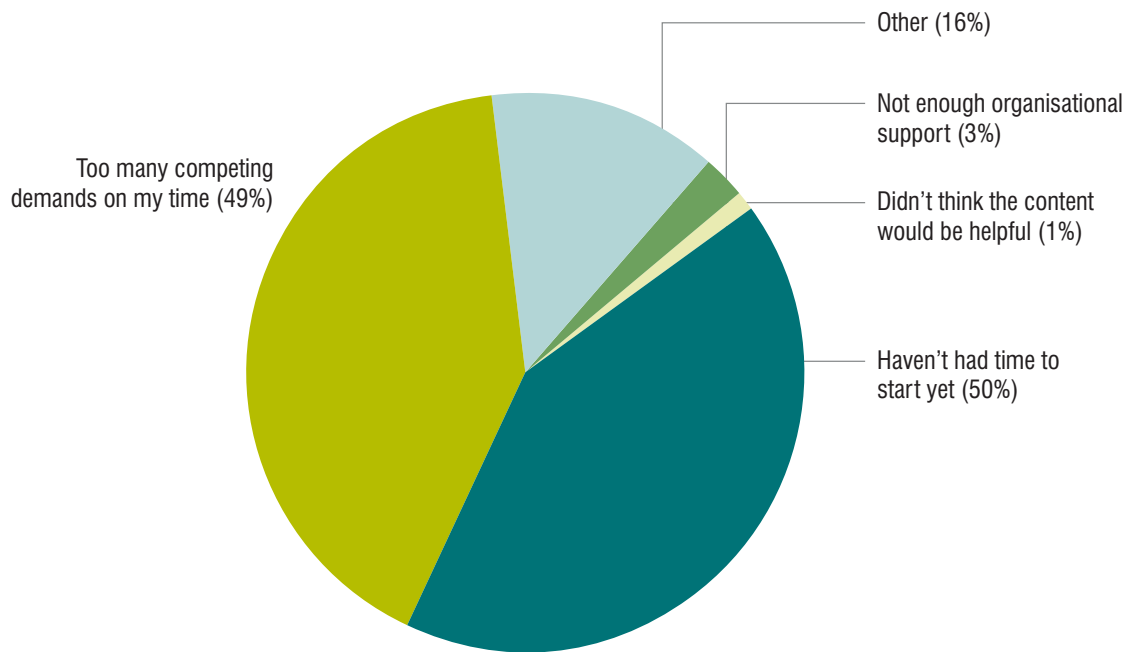
Those interviewed who had not completed all of the modules reported that they had covered the information they were looking for in the content they had completed.

Figure 9: If you have not completed one or more of the modules, what are the main reasons for this? Please select as many that apply (n=215)



Of those survey respondents who had not commenced a module, half (50%) indicated they had only recently enrolled and had not yet had time to begin the program, and half (49%) indicated there were too many competing demands on their time to begin the program at that point. A minority of respondents (3%) indicated they did not have enough organisational support to commence.

Figure 10: What are the main reasons you did not commence a module? (n=215)

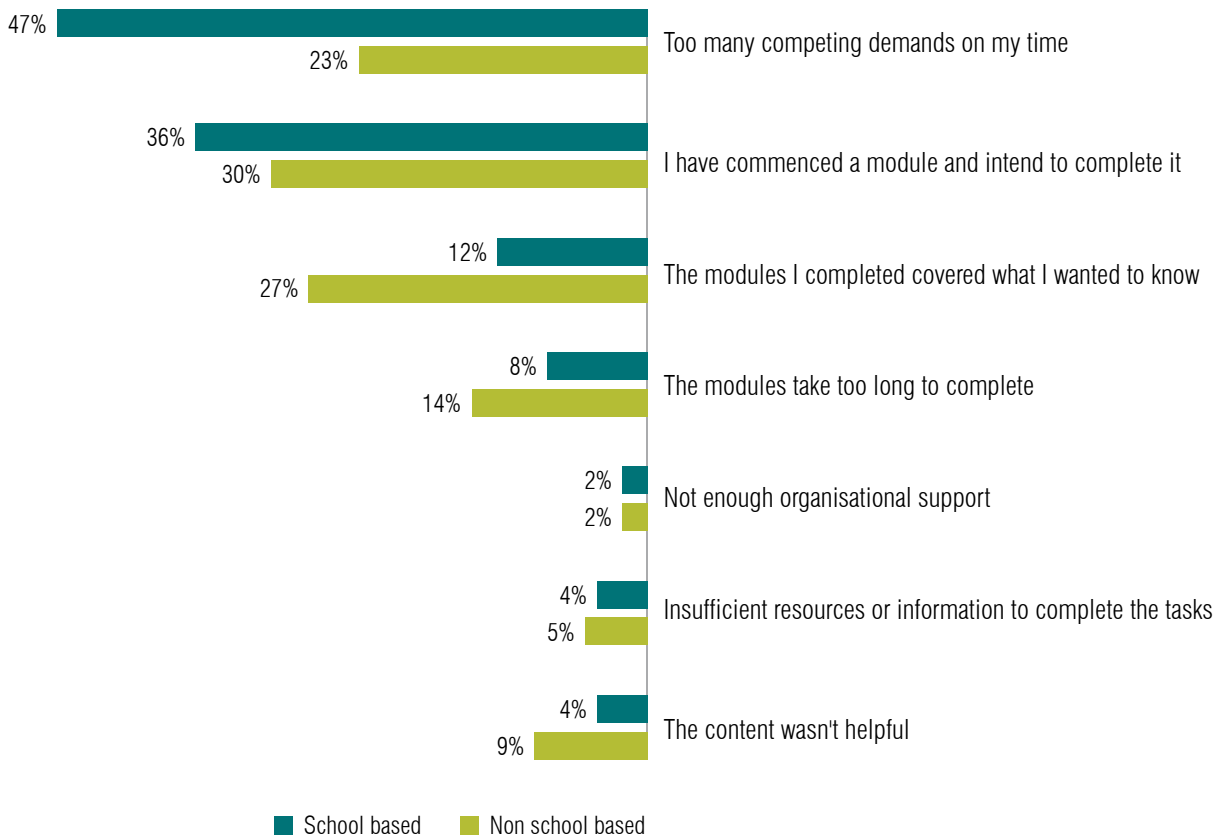


Figures 9 and 10 both point to the lack of time available to survey respondents to commence and/or complete modules. This result was further explored by examining the feedback from school-based staff compared with non-school-based staff.⁶

As can be seen from Figure 11, school-based respondents were more likely to have been unable to complete a module because of competing demands on their time compared to non-school-based respondents (47% compared to 23% of respondents). Non-school based respondents, when compared with school-based respondents, were more likely to have not completed a module because the content they had already covered was sufficient.

⁶ 444 survey respondents were school based staff (83%) while 91 respondents were non-school based (17%) (n=535).

Figure 11: If you have not completed one or more of the modules what are the main reasons for this? Please select as many that apply – school based versus non-school based (n=215)

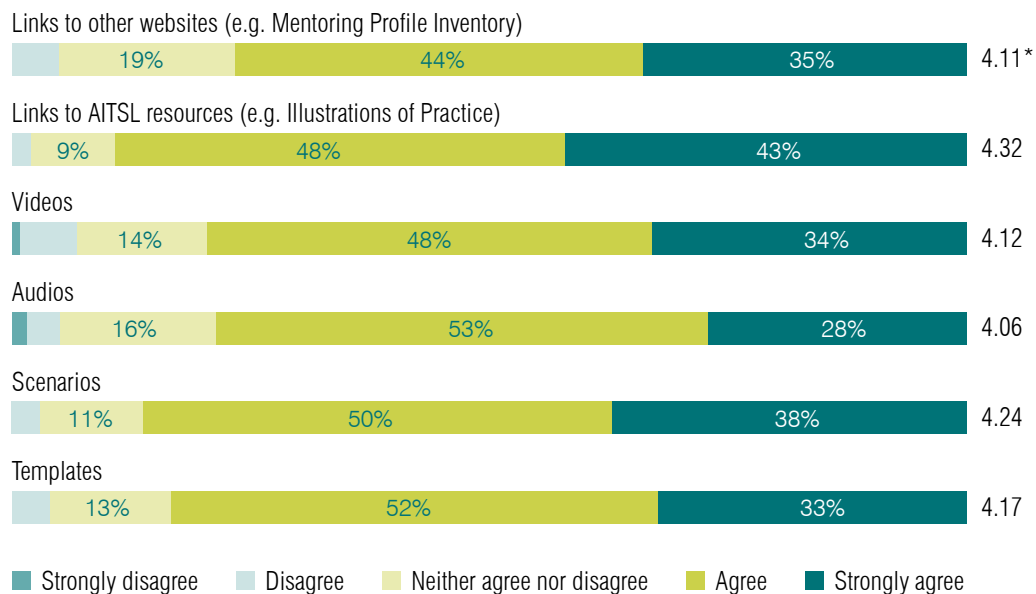


SPT program content and delivery

Survey respondents regarded the content of the modules highly, with 91 per cent (237 out of 261 respondents) either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the program content was current. A further 89 per cent (231 out of 261 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed that the program content was relevant to their needs.

Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the resources offered to SPT program participants, including links to other websites, links to AITSL resources, videos, audio files, scenarios and templates. On average, respondents agreed that all of the resources were useful (Figure 12).

Figure 12: The following resources offered as part of the modules were useful (n=261)



*These figures are the calculated mean regarding the level of agreement based on a five point Likert scale where: 1–1.5 = strongly disagree; 1.5–2.5 = disagree; 2.5–3.5 = neither agree nor disagree; 3.5–4.5 = agree; 4.5–5 = strongly agree. 'Unsure' responses were excluded from the survey analysis. Data labels counting the percentage of Likert scale responses are only provided when they equal or exceed five per cent.

Survey respondents were also asked about the mode of delivery. In total, 92 per cent (237 out of 258 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed that the online medium was easily accessible. In addition, 89 per cent (231 out of 258 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed that the online medium was an appropriate means of delivering the program.

Figure 13: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The online medium is...? (n=258)



A common theme from survey respondents was that the online medium allowed for self-paced learning, at times that were convenient to participants.

It is the better option for professional development and learning given the demands on teachers' time after hours. (Survey respondent)

Being able to work at [my] own pace, it was relatively easy to navigate and is accessible- this is especially important for teachers in rural areas. (Survey respondent)

SPT program effectiveness

In assessing the effectiveness of the SPT program for participants, this review sought feedback from the following categories of stakeholders that have accessed the SPT program:

- supervising teachers, to glean information on the impact of the program on their own personal efficacy
- principals and school leaders, to gain their views on the impact of the program on supervising teachers at their school/organisation, as well as to get an indication of the influence of the program on principals and leaders themselves
- teachers planning to supervise a preservice teacher
- teachers not planning to supervise a preservice teacher
- participants from non-school based organisations.

Views of supervising teachers

Supervising teacher survey respondents were asked a range of questions in relation to the impact the SPT program had on their ability to supervise and support preservice teachers (Figures 14, 15 and 16).

As shown in Figure 14 overleaf, supervising teachers' responses indicated that they agreed most strongly with the statements that the SPT program improved their capacity to provide feedback to assist preservice teachers to improve their professional practice and to assist preservice teachers to use self-reflection to improve their professional practice.

When asked to what extent the SPT program had resulted in positive outcomes for their schools because they had participated, supervising teachers indicated least agreement, although the level of agreement was still high with 66 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the program had resulted in positive outcomes in this area.

Figure 14: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The SPT program has improved my capacity... (n=148 Responses from supervising teachers)

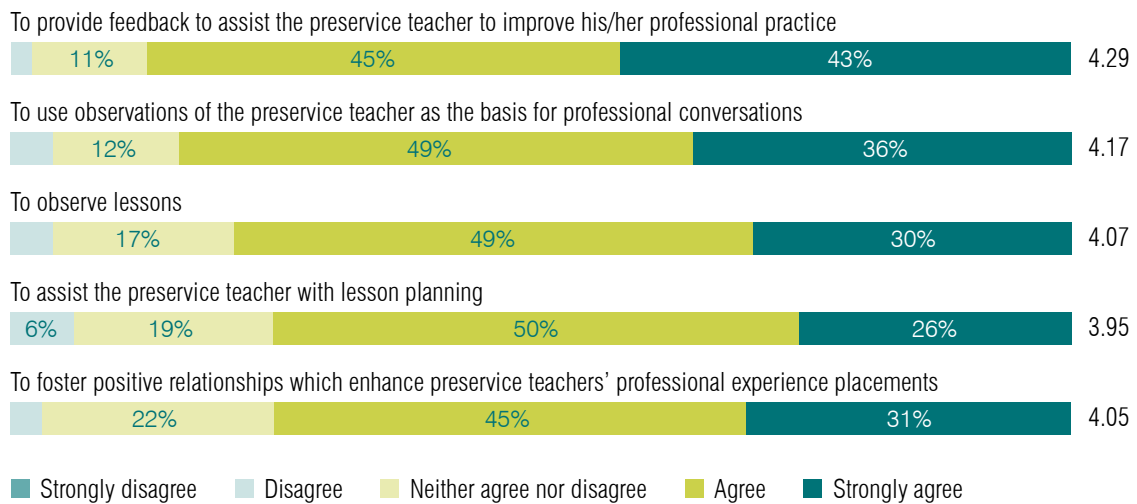


Figure 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The SPT program has improved my capacity... (n=145 responses from supervising teachers)

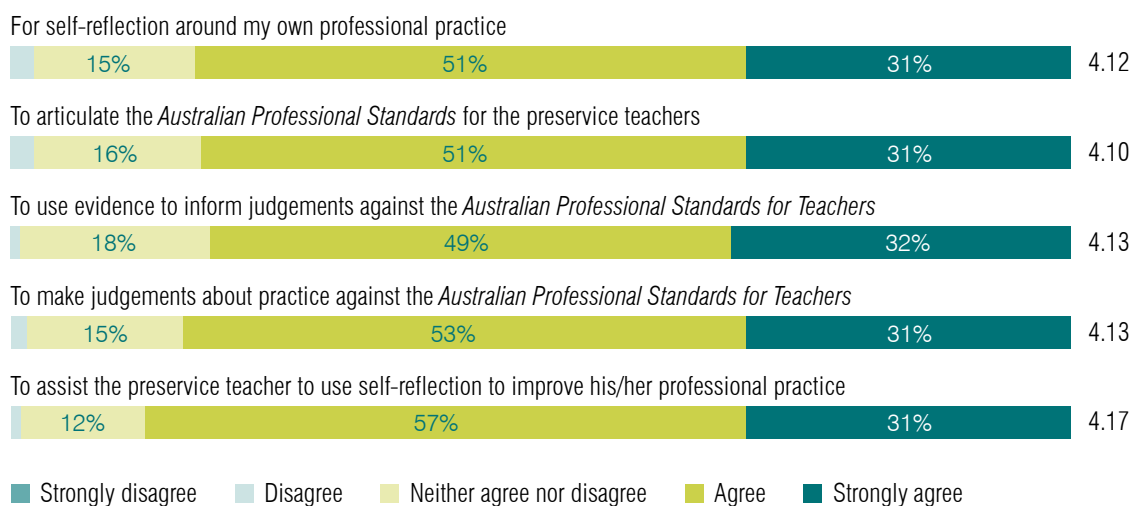
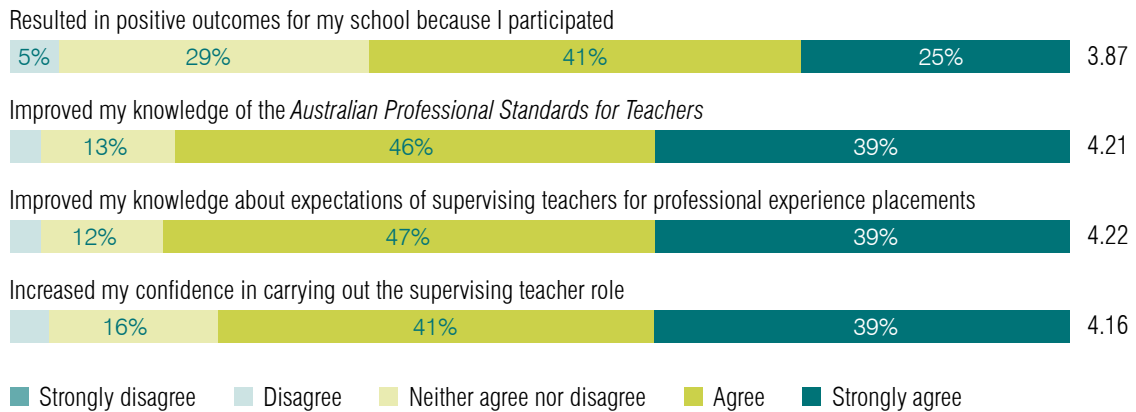


Figure 16: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? The SPT program has...
(n=148 responses from supervising teachers)



Views of supervising teachers at interview

Supervising teachers who were interviewed were asked about:

- the skills, knowledge and personal attributes they thought a teacher needed to be an effective supervising teacher and what support would best assist development in these areas
- how they decided where to start in terms of completing the modules and why
- which aspects of the program, including the resources, they found the most helpful and why
- whether there was anything they would like to see included in the program to further assist with providing feedback to preservice teachers
- what could be included in the program to make it more valuable for the schools in which they worked
- where they heard about the program.

Consistently, supervising teachers thought they needed to have sound knowledge of curriculum and classroom practice, to be able to demonstrate high level skills in their roles, and to be able to articulate all aspects of their teaching practice clearly. Some described this as the need to:

- have the up-to-date pedagogical and theoretical knowledge that the preservice teachers are gaining in teacher education programs
- be able to demonstrate, and to guide preservice teachers to develop, high level practical classroom skills.

You have to put the focus on another. It's a reflection of yourself and how you approach your own learning, your mindset and the ability to listen actively. You need the ability to know and to communicate content and classroom practice. (Interviewee)

They need an understanding of the Standards, to be able to articulate goals and to have high expectations (e.g. of behaviour management), to have empathy and to build relationships, to actively listen and to interpret what others are saying, to remember what it was like to be there. (Interviewee)

More emphasis was placed on the need for excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence, and much focus was placed on the ability to communicate clearly with the preservice teacher, especially with regard to giving feedback. Attributes like patience, respect, empathy, clear and effective communication, honesty and self-reflection were mentioned frequently.

There was also discussion about a passion for teaching and learning and the capacity to communicate this to students and preservice teachers within and outside the classroom.

Some diverse views were offered in response to what support would best assist the development of these capacities. Some respondents believe that the universities should play a role in providing support directly to supervising teachers; others thought formal support – such as participation in the SPT program – was preferable; however, a majority of those interviewed thought that the school was the best source of support.

For support the supervising teachers need to receive it from their own immediate supervisor and it should be part of the school's functioning, a part of the context of the school. There should also be support from the directors and heads of schools as well as some from the unis. (Interviewee)

In this context, several teachers noted that, in the schools in which they worked, participation in the SPT program had resulted in increased professional conversations within the school and, for some, a whole school approach to working with and supporting preservice teachers in a consistent way.

There is a team in the school that looks after preservice teachers – principal class and one other rep from each section of the school. We felt that the school lacked documentation in this area and that we needed a whole school approach. In 2013 we had a big group of teachers do the online course and now every teacher who has a preservice teacher has to read the allocated modules...that the school has decided are important. (Interviewee)

The starting point in the modules was dependent on the purpose of completing the program. If teachers were completing the program as part of a unit for professional learning such as a university program, or to complete it in order to determine its effectiveness for other teachers generally, they started at the beginning and worked their way through. If they were seeking some specific guidance or information, for example on how to give feedback, they sought out that starting point and then worked around it.

At the time I did the modules I had a preservice teacher who was resistant to feedback so I went first to this section of the modules, then went back to the start and I skimmed some. The Standards were being introduced at the time so the program was particularly helpful here. (Interviewee)

I started at the beginning and went to the end and I would suggest to anybody to do it this way. I thought about looking for what would be the most useful to me and doing that first, however, I started at the beginning and worked through it steadily and at times I went back and looked over things. (Interviewee)

The aspects of the program that supervising teachers found most useful were dependent on their own learning needs. Most interviewees (in all categories) noted that they liked the fact that the modules presented information in a variety of ways, that videos were included as 'real' examples, and that the written word was there to return to when wanting to re-check information. Several of the supervising teachers liked the templates and the links to other AITSL resources. The Illustrations of Practice were referred to a number of times as being of significant value.

I found the links to the video clips really good. Other than in terms of the preservice teacher supervision training, it was all helpful to me as a teacher generally. (Interviewee)

I thought the resources were the most useful part and they are still part of my continuing education, I still use them now myself. Videos were good, especially where they were relevant to special education. The links were helpful and I explored more that was offered after I finished the course. (Interviewee)

Giving feedback was mentioned as being a challenge for supervising teachers but they appreciated the way emphasis was placed on aligning feedback to the Standards and that examples were evidence-based. While some supervising teachers would have liked more content on feedback, it was generally noted that this could be difficult and there were no specific ideas from this group, other than more videos, around possible format.

There were some ideas for possible additions or inclusions to make the program more relevant to schools generally. One suggestion was to develop a short module as an overview which could be viewed by staff as a whole group and which might lead to individuals completing the full program. Another was to have a self-assessment component for individuals to complete before and after the modules to demonstrate increased knowledge and competency and thus promote the effectiveness of the program to school leaders.

There could be modules, or parts of modules that could be done as a whole staff activity without the need to input the responses. (Interviewee)

All supervising teachers interviewed noted the value of the program in assisting them to conduct professional conversations.

Views of principals/school leaders regarding supervising teachers

Almost three quarters (72%) of principals/school leaders surveyed were responsible for arranging supervising teachers for preservice teachers (n=32). Principals/school leaders either asked for volunteers to become a supervising teacher or nominated teachers they thought would be suitable for the role.

Principals/school leaders were asked a range of questions about the impact of the SPT program on supervising teachers at their school. The questions related to supervising teachers' ability to support preservice teachers (refer to Figures 17, 18 and 19). The results from principals/school leaders were very similar to the responses recorded for supervising teacher respondents.

Principals/school leaders agreed most strongly with the statements that the SPT program improved supervising teachers' knowledge of the Standards, improved supervising teachers' capacity to provide feedback to preservice teachers to assist them to improve their professional practice, and improved the capacity of supervising teachers to use observations of preservice teachers' practice as the basis for professional conversations.

Principals and school leaders were least likely to agree that the SPT program resulted in positive outcomes for their schools because the supervising teachers had participated. Again, the level of agreement was high with 73 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it had resulted in positive outcomes. This percentage of agreement was higher for principals and school leaders when compared with the views of supervising teachers, teachers planning to supervise preservice teachers and those who were not planning to become supervising teachers.

Figure 17: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has improved the capacity of supervising teachers...? (n=33 responses from school principals/school leaders)

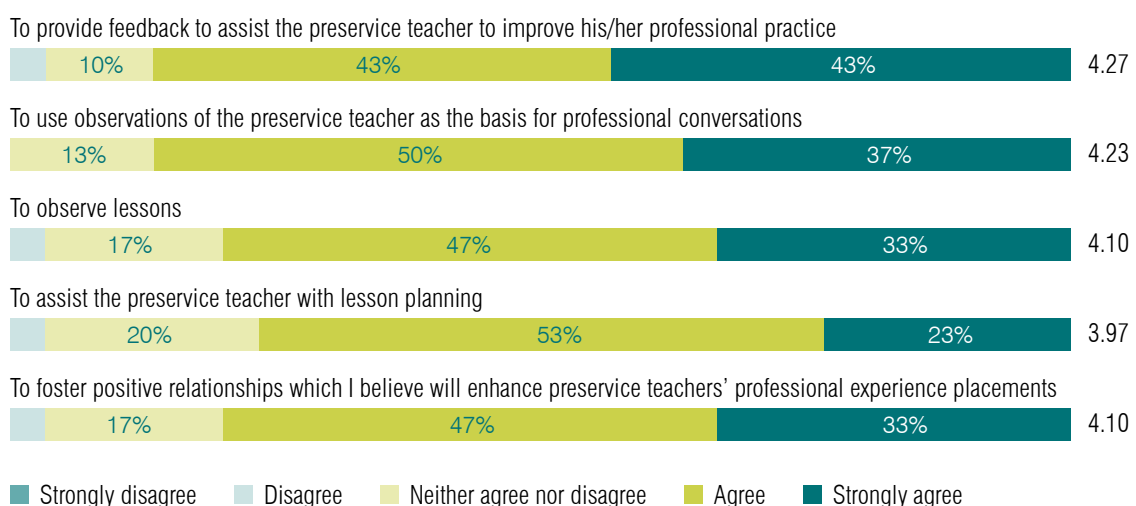


Figure 18: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has improved the capacity of supervising teachers...? (n=33 responses from school principals/school leaders)

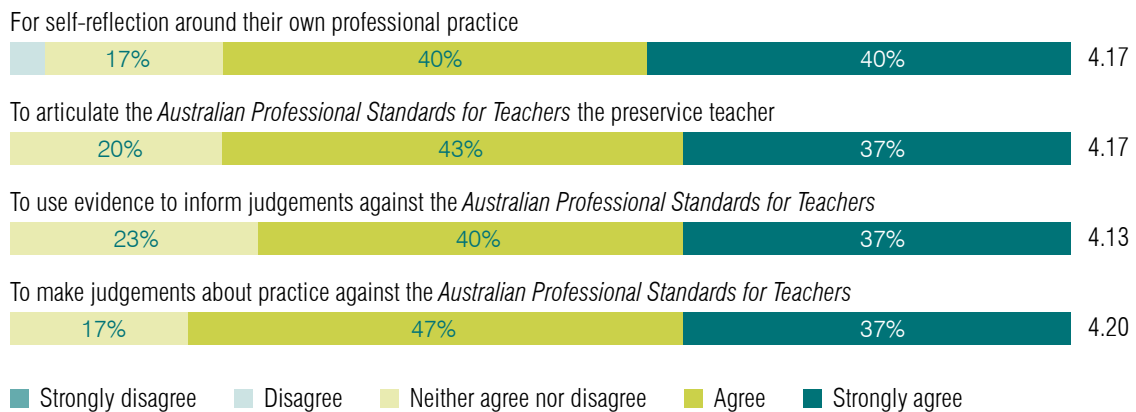
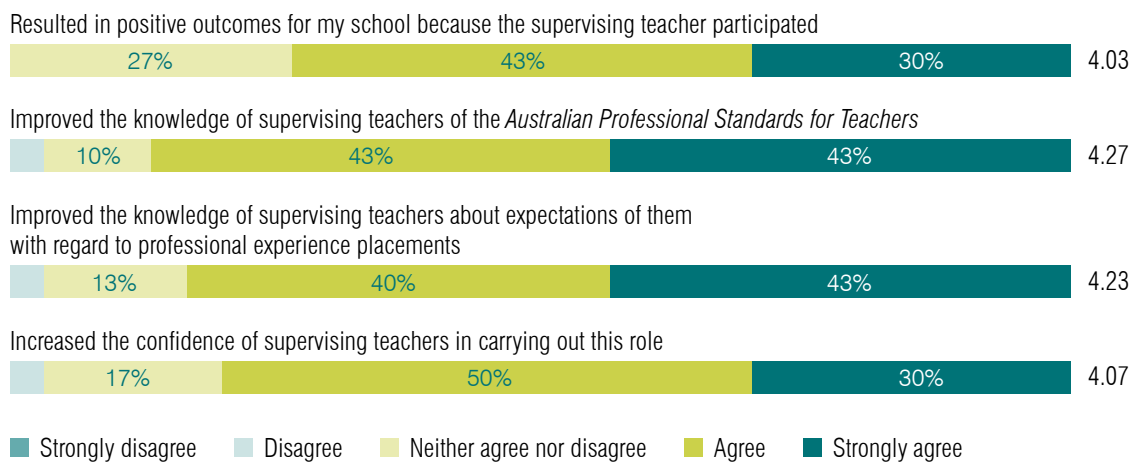


Figure 19: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...? (n=33 responses from school principals/school leaders)



Views of principals/school leaders regarding themselves

Principal/school leader survey respondents were asked about the impact of the program on their own professional practice (refer to Figures 20, 21 and 22).

These respondents indicated strong levels of agreement with the statements that the SPT program had improved their knowledge of the Standards, had improved their knowledge of the expectations of supervising teachers with regard to professional experience placements and had improved their capacity to use observations as the basis for professional conversations.

They were least likely to agree that the program had improved their capacity to observe lessons, with 62 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was the result.

Figure 20: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has improved my capacity...? (n=32 responses from school principals/school leaders)

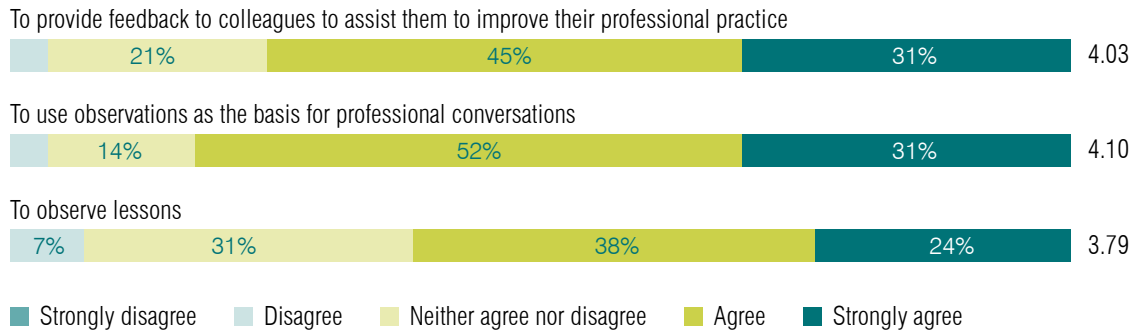


Figure 21: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has improved my capacity...? (n=32 responses from school principals/school leaders)

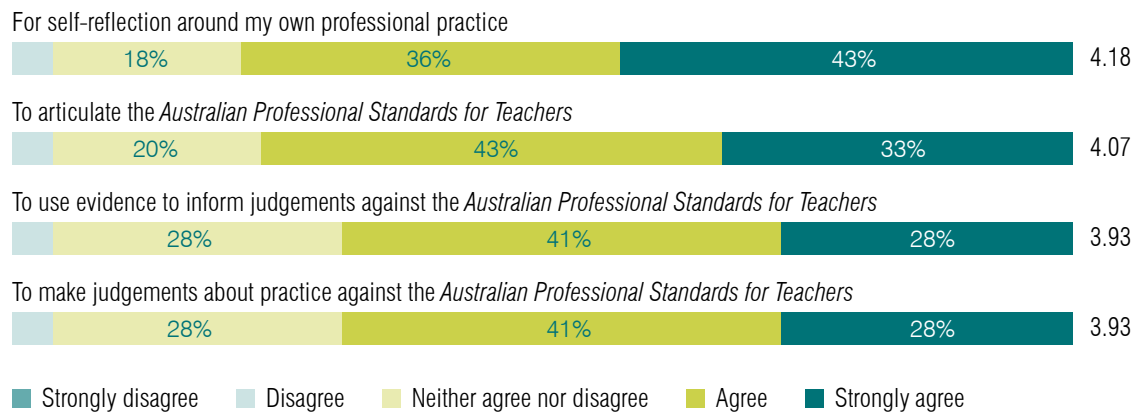
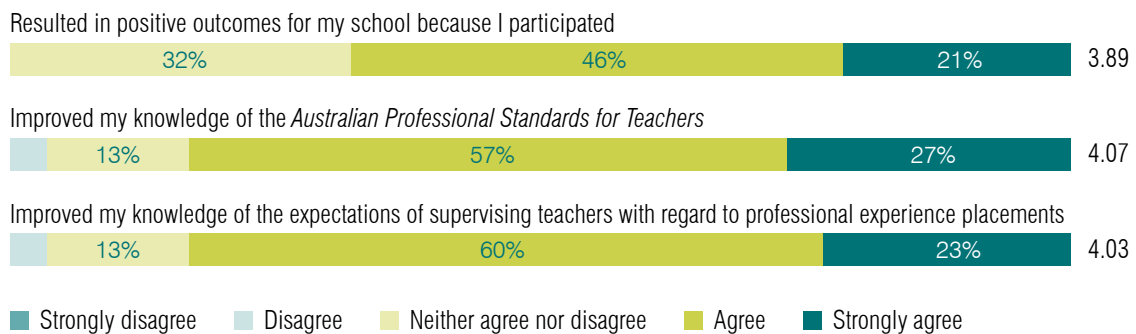


Figure 22: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...? (n=32 responses from school principals/school leaders)



Views of principals/school leaders at interview

Principals/school leaders who were interviewed were asked about:

- the skills, knowledge and personal attributes they thought a teacher needed to be an effective supervising teacher and what support would best assist development in these areas
- how they identified teachers to be supervising teachers in their schools and what support was provided for them to undertake this role
- how they decided where to start in terms of completing the modules and why
- which aspects of the program, including the resources that they found the most helpful, and why
- whether there was anything they would like to see included in the program to further assist supervising teachers with providing feedback to the preservice teacher
- why they thought the program might not have improved their capacity to observe lessons
- what could be included in the program to make it more valuable for their school.

The responses of principals and school leaders about the skills, knowledge and qualities required in a teacher to be effective in supervising preservice teachers were closely aligned to those of the supervising teachers themselves. They discussed the critical importance of strong pedagogical and curriculum knowledge, a high level of classroom practice, the capacity for self-reflection and having a passion for their work.

You need to be empathetic, direct, honest and reflective and to be able to lead others to be reflective as well. (Interviewee)

Supervising teachers need to have a strong knowledge of curriculum and of the Standards. They need to be able to have the hard conversations, have a sense of humour and be able to relate to the individuals they work with. They need to recognise that preservice teachers are beginning teachers. (Interviewee)

They need a positive attitude. There are preservice teachers who say they don't know why their supervising teachers are doing the role. They need a passion for teaching and learning. (Interviewee)

They need to be an outstanding mentor, to have a professional approach and not have personal opinions, be able to coach, be professional, be a good colleague. (Interviewee)

There was a view expressed by some respondents that networking with other teachers who were working in a supervisory capacity was a supportive factor for teachers in this role. Again there were diverse views about who should provide support for supervising teachers and what this needs to include, but generally those interviewed noted that schools were primarily responsible, with initial teacher education providers needing to have clear guidelines for their expectations of both supervising and preservice teachers during professional experience placements.

The need for supervising teachers to have a very clear understanding of the expectations of preservice teachers, both in terms of working towards demonstrating the Graduate career stage of the Standards and also in meeting the expectations of the initial teacher education provider, was one aspect discussed in more detail by this group of interviewees. Another issue raised was that, in some schools, a distinction is made between coaching and mentoring, and the supervising teachers needed to know with surety which role they were expected to undertake. The description provided was that, with a mentor a preservice teacher could discuss anything and with a coach, anything connected with professional practice could be discussed. This distinction is relevant to the provision of feedback and questions about matters outside those related to classroom practice.

There needs to be a distinction between a coach and a mentor. At my last school we ran practical supervision that was a coaching role, a supervising role for the preservice teacher, however, the preservice teacher could also select a mentor and they had separate roles...With a mentor you can discuss anything and with a coach you discuss things about practice. (Interviewee)

Leaders in schools that were not located in close proximity to initial teacher education providers noted that the school could go for long periods of time without having any preservice teachers allocated to them. This was difficult in terms of developing a consistent approach to working with both the teacher education professionals and the preservice teachers and also for supervising teachers to build their skills and confidence.

The way we identify supervising teachers is a bit fragmented here. We're not close to a uni so unless there is a preservice teacher from this area we don't have a lot. (Interviewee)

In other schools where the demand for supervising teachers is high, there are not always sufficient and suitable supervising teachers to meet need.

For all the school leaders interviewed, supervising teachers self-identified or volunteered to undertake the role but some additional 'screening' was added, in most cases by the school's leadership team making an informal assessment of each individual's suitability to supervise.

We have a program for aspiring supervising teachers to do the AITSL program and also a DECD course, then there is a list of teachers and for each practicum round I check that all the teachers are travelling okay before the PSTs are placed. Potential supervising teachers are suggested by senior staff and also can volunteer for the role. Both ways work okay. (Interviewee)

One leader suggested that teachers were keen to supervise because it assisted them to build their portfolio of evidence to gain advancement to the Highly Accomplished career stage of the Standards.

Another leader noted that, in the school where she worked, senior staff could nominate teachers to supervise if they had not volunteered. The belief there, was that teachers might be highly competent and able to fulfil the supervising role well but lacked the confidence to do so. This leader considered that formal training, such as the SPT program, along with mentoring for the supervising teachers, would help develop the necessary confidence and additional skills, particularly around making decisions based on evidence and aligned with the Standards.

Generally, there was no additional support or incentive offered for teachers to undertake the role, other than perhaps a meeting to discuss the paperwork that was required by the initial teacher education provider.

As with the supervising teachers, the school leaders decided where to start the modules depending on their purpose for completing the program. Some found a topic that resonated with them and worked from there, and others started at the beginning and worked through because they wanted to see if the program would be of value for other staff in their school.

I looked through and found what was resonating with me and then worked backwards and forwards. The flexibility is great. I'd advise others to do it this way too. Ultimately I completed it all. It can be worked around to suit the individual and to maximise engagement. (Interviewee)

School leaders noted that the most useful aspects of the program for them were the diversity in presentation of content, the scenarios which helped participants consider what to do in various situations, the videos because they gave actual examples and were easily accessible, the links to other resources (especially the Illustrations of Practice) and the fact that the modules are designed so that you can keep looking back into them and rechecking information or finding resources. This group of interviewees also commented on the importance of the modules in stimulating and supporting professional dialogue.

This group of interviewees thought that a strength was the fact that the content around providing feedback was evidence-based and that examples of giving feedback were shown. They repeated the view that giving feedback is difficult and is dependent on having good interpersonal skills.

The school leaders all noted that, where their role would change to include being part of the registration process, the nature of their classroom observation would also need to change. Their observation of lessons had been limited by time, funding to facilitate the role fully, or observing teachers in a general sense if they were alerted to the fact there was a problem with a preservice teacher. They suggested that the SPT program would assist in improving lesson observations for those who were not experienced in doing this. All considered negotiated and specific observations which are evidence-based to be more supportive than general classroom observations.

In NSW the DEC is introducing a new Performance and Development framework and this will be a key component – school leaders doing classroom observations. In the past it might have been too general but if it's based closely on the Standards with a focus on particular aspects of practice it could be better, particularly if the observed person has identified areas as needing support and the observation has been negotiated.
(Interviewee)

A number of suggestions were made which school leaders considered could assist in making the SPT program more valuable for their schools. These included developing a short version of an aspect of the program, perhaps twenty minutes, which could be completed by school staff as a group. This would give a 'taste' of the program's content and how the modules are presented and might encourage teachers to complete the entire program.

Another suggestion was to see whether the program could be accredited with all state and territory regulatory authorities to give it greater exposure. Making a short version targeted at principals specifically was also suggested and this could then be advertised specifically to principal groups.

It would be good for AITSL to communicate at the whole school level about what it does. They need to communicate this broadly to the schools...To have courses accredited through state/territory regulatory authorities and have the hours count towards ongoing teacher registration, that would be a good thing. (Interviewee)

As with the supervising teachers, the school leaders noted the importance of the program for stimulating professional conversations and giving participants a common 'language' for discussing issues around supervision.

Views of teachers planning to supervise a preservice teacher

School-based teachers planning to become supervising teachers were asked a range of questions in relation to the impact the SPT program had on their preparedness to supervise and support preservice teachers (Figures 23, 24 and 25). The results from teachers planning to supervise were very similar to the responses recorded for supervising teacher respondents.

This group of survey respondents' most positive response was to the statement that the SPT program had increased their confidence to carry out a supervising role in the future, where there were 100 per cent of responses in the agreed or strongly agreed categories (Figure 25). While there were high levels of agreement to most of the statements, in particular they agreed or strongly agreed that the program improved their knowledge about expectations of supervising teachers for professional experience placements, improved their knowledge of the Standards and prepared them to articulate the Standards for the preservice teacher.

They were least likely to agree that their participation in the SPT program resulted in positive outcomes for their school, with 56 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement (Figure 25).

Figure 23: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...? (n=17 responses from teachers based in a school and planning to supervise)

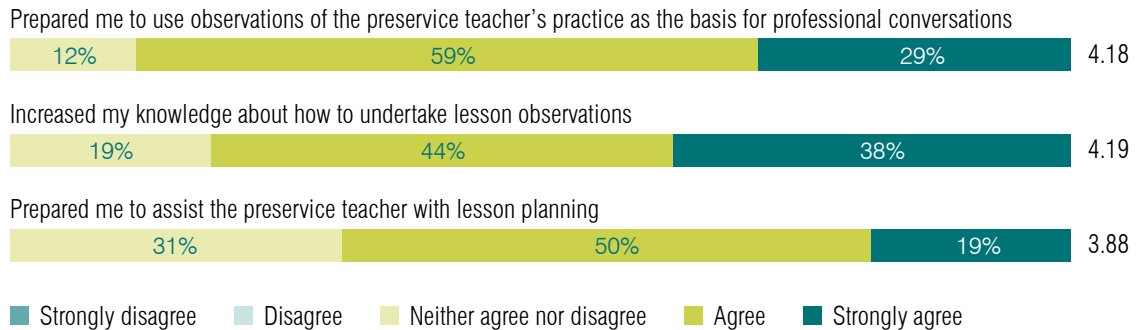


Figure 24: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...?
(n=17 responses from teachers based in a school and planning to supervise)

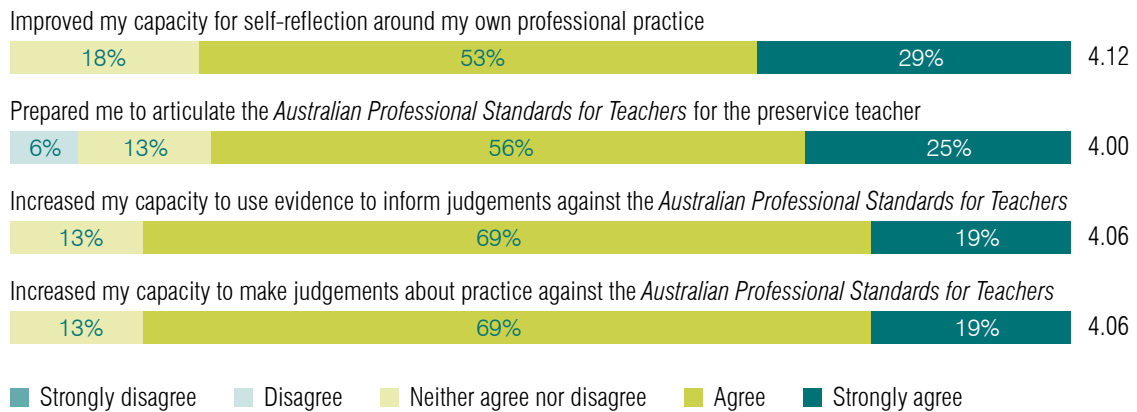
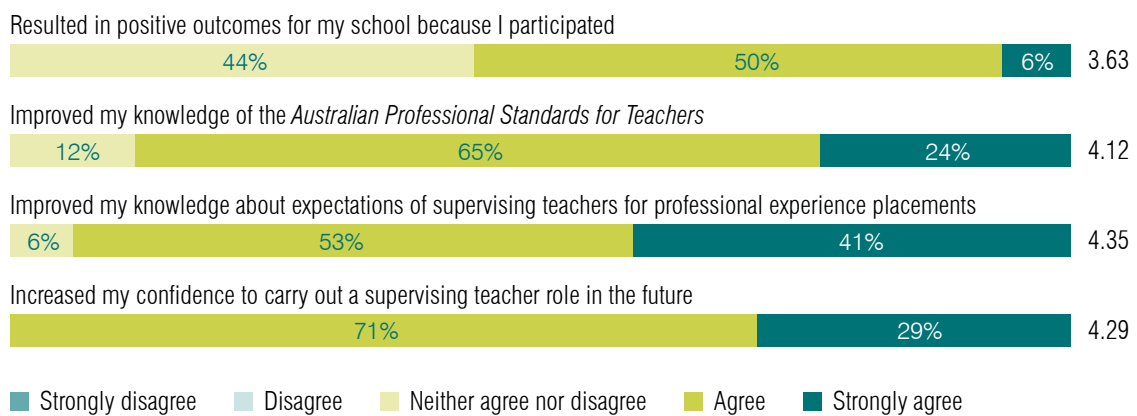


Figure 25: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...?
(n=17 responses from teachers based in a school and planning to supervise)



Views of school-based teachers not planning to become supervising teachers

School-based teachers not planning to become supervising teachers were asked a range of questions in relation to the impact the SPT program had on their professional practice (see Figures 26 and 27). The results from this cohort were very similar to other respondent cohorts.

There were three statements to which these respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed at 100 per cent. These were that the SPT program had improved their capacity to use evidence to inform judgements against the Standards, to make judgements about practice against the Standards and to provide feedback to colleagues to assist them to improve their professional practice.

These respondents were least likely to agree that their participation in the SPT program had resulted in positive outcomes for their schools, however, their rate of agreement (agree or strongly agree) to this statement was still high at 72 per cent.

The overall agreement rates for this group were the highest for any cohort.

Figure 26: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has improved my capacity...? (n=12 responses from teachers based in a school and not planning to supervise)

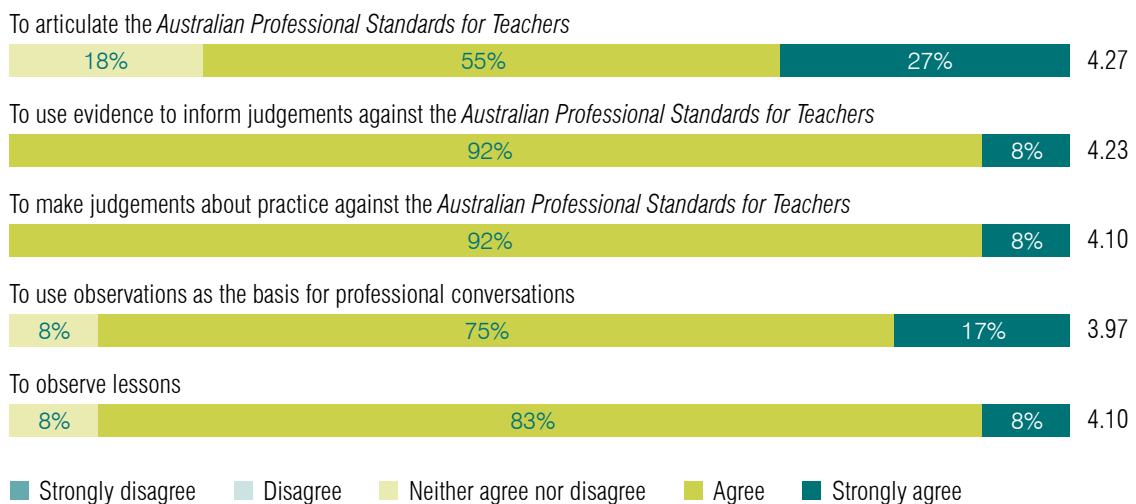


Figure 27: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...?
(n=12 responses from teachers based in a school and not planning to supervise)



Views of other teachers at interview

Teachers who were planning to become supervising teachers in the future and teachers who had not yet thought about this as a possibility were asked at interview:

- how long they had been teaching
- what skills, knowledge and personal attributes they thought a teacher needed to have in order to be an effective supervising teacher
- how they decided where to start in terms of completing the modules and why
- the aspects of the program, including the resources they found most useful, and why
- whether there was anything lacking in the program which they would like to see included around giving feedback
- what could be included in the program to make it more valuable for the schools in which they work
- where they heard about the program
- whether the program helped them learn more about the Graduate Standards.

The teachers interviewed in these categories were, by chance, highly experienced.

They considered that in order to be effective supervising teachers a degree of experience was required, that teachers should have excellent classroom management skills, and be exemplars of good teaching practice. They also said that supervising teachers need a clear understanding of what the universities expected of the preservice teachers as part of their professional experience placements and that a deep knowledge of the Standards at the Graduate career stage is part of this.

These teachers, like others interviewed, emphasised the need for supervising teachers to have strong interpersonal skills and put specific focus on their capacity to develop trust with the preservice teachers.

Again, the SPT program was thought to be a good basis for the development of skills and understanding, and that the school was the primary source of support for a supervising teacher.

They need to base their work on the Standards, to give positive feedback to the preservice teacher and to build self-confidence. (Interviewee)

These teachers completed the modules by starting at the beginning and working their way through sequentially and said they would advise others to do the program this way as well.

They generally noted the videos as helpful because they are visual and make information easier to remember. There was also appreciation for the reflective questions which assisted them to better examine their own practice and for the way the modules all work together to build a cohesive 'whole' in developing skills and knowledge.

Around giving feedback, again the videos were cited as being especially important – 'this is how you can do it' – and they thought these sections would be especially helpful for less experienced teachers. They also mentioned the templates as being valuable.

The interviewees in this group considered the Unpacking the Graduate Standards module to be very effective at prompting them to think about the Standards in a more structured way than they had before, and this worked together with the self-reflection sections to assist them in looking at their own professional practice. They said they had done no thinking specifically around the Standards prior to undertaking the modules.

Prior to doing this course I had done nothing in terms of the Standards and was only just starting so I wasn't really aware of them properly. This was a help. (Interviewee)

They believe the key to making the program more valuable for schools is to convince school leaders of its worth. Completing the program in groups was suggested as a way to assist in extending its usefulness through schools. One interviewee noted that schools that have few preservice teachers may not see the relevance of the program, however, having completed the program this teacher did not think that was the case.

For schools you might want to look at different aspects of the program, and it might be helpful for several people in the school to be doing the program at the same time so they could talk about it. I think it is helpful for education in general and not just for supervising teachers or for the SPT program. (Interviewee)

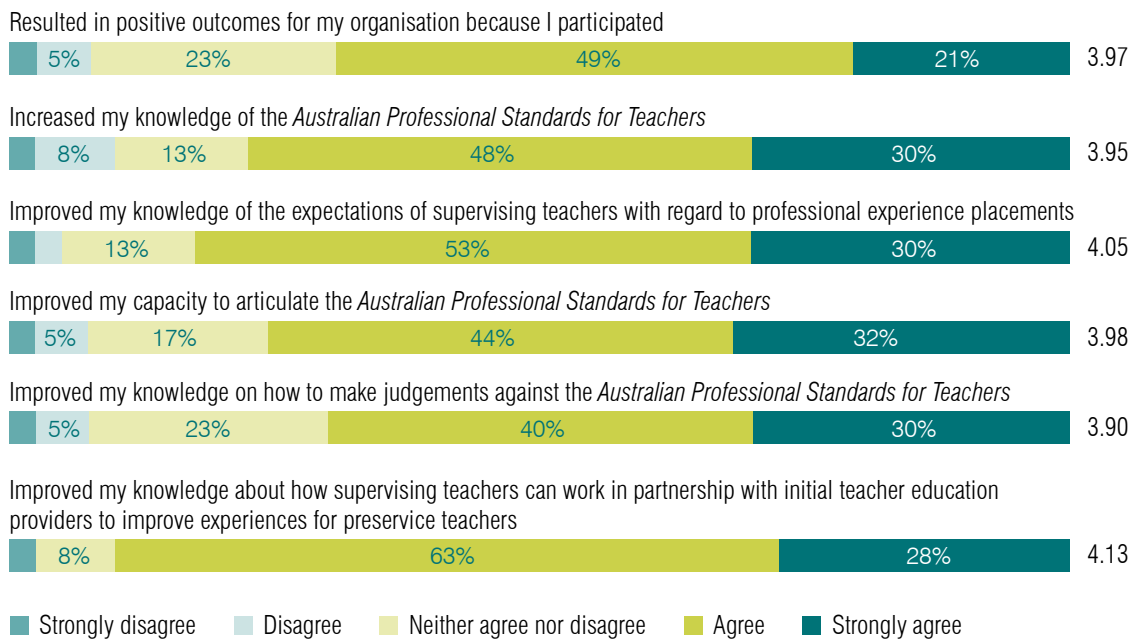
These teachers agreed that, for them, the program was most valuable, helpful and 'good'. They believe it would be useful for both experienced and inexperienced teachers and that they will use and re-use information and resources from the program frequently.

Views of non-school based respondents

Non-school based respondents (e.g. staff members at initial teacher education providers and regulatory authorities) were asked a range of questions in relation to the impact the SPT program had on them (Figure 28). The questions focused on the impact of the program on knowledge of the Standards and how they and their organisation could support preservice teachers.

Of the 41 respondents in this cohort, 91 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the SPT program had improved their knowledge of how supervising teachers can work in partnership with initial education providers to improve experiences for preservice teachers. Seventy per cent agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in the SPT program had resulted in positive effects for their organisations.

Figure 28: To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The SPT program has...?
(n=41 responses from non-school based participants)



Views of non-school based personnel at interview

A small number of personnel working at initial teacher education providers and in teacher registration roles were interviewed.

They were asked:

- how they decided where to start in terms of completing the modules and why
- which aspects of the program, including the resources, that they found the most useful and why
- whether there was anything additional that could be included in the program about giving feedback to preservice teachers
- what could be included in the program to make it more valuable for the schools in which program participants work
- whether the program increased their knowledge of the Standards and if they saw a place for similar modules around the other career stages of the Standards, and for the staff at initial teacher education providers
- what they learned from the program that could enhance their working relationships with schools and supervising teachers around professional experience placements for preservice teachers.

Most of the interviewees in this group started at the beginning of the modules and worked through to the end. The reason given for this was that their purpose in completing the program was to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the program for preservice teachers or other professionals.

All thought the program was useful but there were differing views about which content was most valuable. One person considered there was too much text and would have preferred the inclusion of more videos and audio files, which all interviewees in this cohort found useful. The self-reflection tools and the Illustrations of Practice were noted specifically as being excellent.

The self-reflection tools were good. And the module on the Graduate Standards was good too. (Interviewee)

I started at the beginning and went to the end and think this is the best way to go. I think maybe there is too much information, talk and text in them. The videos and the clips are excellent. (Interviewee)

The video clips were useful and the observations of practice because they resonate with people. (Interviewee)

This group was divided in terms of the time taken to complete the modules. One person said it took too long while others said it was not onerous and that was one of the advantages of the modules.

There was considerable discussion with each interviewee in this group around the provision of feedback. As with all other groups, the importance of building a professional relationship in order to provide a sound basis for the provision of feedback was highlighted. Additionally, these professionals noted that learning to give feedback requires mentoring, that it cannot be taught completely in an online format. Further, they noted that teachers at all stages of their career need mentors, to continue their own professional growth. For preservice teachers they noted feedback needed to be evidence-based, it should be aligned to the Standards, and that the program was a positive beginning in learning about giving feedback.

Feedback should be reflective and non-threatening and you can learn about it online especially if the examples are of the way to do it or not to do it and talk about what the pitfalls are. There needs to be examples of doing it well. (Interviewee)

Feedback needs to be mentored. There needs to be more mentors for all including the teachers. Feedback can't be taught electronically. (Interviewee)

To make the program more useful for schools generally, these interviewees thought schools could have groups of staff complete the program together. One person noted that teaching is quite an isolated profession and all noted that professional conversations are critical in deepening and understanding practice, so any actions schools can take to facilitate those conversations are important.

To work with the whole school you need to facilitate the professional conversations and be able to go deeper, look at a deeper level at the issues. Staff need to work in groups and be able to do more work on the modules at a deeper level. (Interviewee)

These individuals believed the Unpacking the Graduate Standards module increased their understanding of what an exemplary teacher would look like. All thought that the concept could be extended to include modules on the other career stages of the Standards, although for one respondent, there was some concern that experienced teachers develop skills in different areas so it might be challenging to assess themselves broadly against the Standards. While they might not have thought this module increased their own particular knowledge base, as their roles demanded a thorough knowledge of the Standards anyway, they considered it helpful in general.

Around working relationships between initial teacher education providers and schools, interviewees in these groups provided little specific information, other than to say that university funding and staff changes impact on their capacity to form close relationships with schools at times. During interviews with other professionals, this issue was raised a number of times. Generally, the view was that relationships between initial teacher education providers and schools could always be improved and that they were often dependent on the particular people involved or on the priority placed on the roles by individual schools and universities.

General views of professionals at interview

All professionals interviewed had a positive view of the SPT program, and its overall benefits, even where they considered it was not of specific assistance to them. Many of those interviewed thought that wider awareness of the program would be of benefit because their schools had not known about it when individuals enrolled and/or completed the program.

Although it was not a specific question asked, there were no topics covered in the program that respondents thought should be removed, and there were no suggestions regarding topics that were missing.

As noted above, a number of the interviewees made comment on the inherent challenges in forming strong relationships between schools and initial teacher education providers. They considered that, possibly due to lack of funding or limited staffing in both schools and universities, the development of solid partnerships was impaired. There were several contexts in which this concern was raised. Some school-based staff noted that the only contact they would have about preservice teachers around their professional experience placements was the documentation which came with the preservice teacher for the commencement of their placement. Other teachers commented that their communication with universities was only by email. Others reported fewer (or no) visits to monitor preservice teachers' placements. While generalisations cannot be made about the sector as a whole, and this feedback is non-specific as no questions in the survey or during interview sought to explore this information, it was expressed as a concern from school-based and non-school-based interviewees.

Challenges associated with supervising preservice teachers

According to supervising teachers who responded to the survey, the most common challenge of the supervising teacher role is finding the time to provide guidance and support to preservice teachers, or to undertake the role as well as they would like to.

Finding the additional time to do the job properly given an already full workload. (Survey respondent)

Providing the preservice teacher with enough dedicated time and support within school hours, to make it a positive and valuable experience for them, without eating into the time usually spent on other priorities within school. (Survey respondent)

To provide specific and skilful feedback to support the professional development of the preservice teacher in a way that is relevant to the Standards. (Survey respondent)

Being able to provide meaningful feedback that helps the preservice teacher to improve their practice. (Survey respondent)

Another key challenge facing supervising teacher respondents was the ability to provide relevant and constructive feedback to their preservice teacher. This is interesting given that 88 per cent of supervising teachers who responded to the survey either strongly agreed or agreed that the program improved their capacity to provide feedback to preservice teachers.

Similarly, when asked about key challenges facing supervising teachers, the most common response from all other categories of stakeholders surveyed (principals/school leaders, teachers planning to supervise a preservice teacher, teachers not planning to supervise a preservice teacher, and participants from non-school based organisations) related to time constraints and to providing effective feedback.

SPT program strengths and possible enhancements

Strengths

In summarising the feedback provided by stakeholders, the key themes emerging about the SPT program strengths include:

The online platform

As mentioned previously, respondents suggested that the online platform provides an accessible resource that allows people to undertake professional learning at their own pace and at a time and location that suits them. They also noted that it is helpful to be able to 'dip in and out of' the program and not get timed out. Respondents also found the use of examples, scenarios and videos helpful. Several respondents made note of the fact that the program is free.

It is accessible wherever you are based and the use of videos, scenarios and links helps to build understanding. (Survey respondent)

It's online and self-paced which is a great to reach all teachers/administrators. (Survey respondent)

This program is designed for any teacher who is keen to assist preservice teachers. It is user friendly, easy to apply and the scenarios presented are what you experience in daily life at a school or centre. Since I started, I have seen an increase in the number of teachers taking on the program and that in itself proves that it is a vital tool to have and to use in your practice. (Survey respondent)

Content

Another strength emerging from the data is the alignment of content to the Standards. The program also provides supervising teachers with a nationally consistent way to work with the preservice teachers and clarifies the expectations around what a graduate teacher needs to know and be able to do when they begin their teaching career.

It focuses on the Standards, and covers most aspects of the supervising preservice teacher experience. (Survey respondent)

It raises [a] supervising teacher's awareness of the need for a very professional approach to supervising teacher education students. (Survey respondent)

Providing a professional approach to supervising preservice teachers rather than the usual "who wants a prac student this term?" (Survey respondent)

Self-efficacy

Another consistent theme emerging about the strengths is the increased knowledge and skills gained through participating in the SPT program. In particular, some supervising teachers suggested the program helped their confidence in working with preservice teachers.

It improves the knowledge and skill of supervising teachers. (Survey respondent)

Makes you more aware of what you need to do as a supervising teacher. (Survey respondent)

Confirmed and gave me confidence that I was doing what I needed to in most aspects of supervision. (Survey respondent)

Module One gave me confidence to take the role on. (Survey respondent)

Enhancements

Given the feedback regarding the key challenges associated with supervising preservice teachers, it is not surprising that the key themes to emerge regarding program enhancements relate to addressing time constraints and more support for providing effective feedback.

With regard to managing time constraints, there were suggestions for the modules to be 'unpacked' so that participants could access the specific sections of the program that they felt they needed without having to go through a full module(s). This 'tailored' approach to accessing professional development would help time poor participants wanting to access just what they feel they need. It seems clear from Figure 11 that many non-school based participants are already dipping in and out of modules.

Using the modules doesn't need to be linear, just be aware of why you have honed in on certain parts. (Interviewee)

An additional potential enhancement in terms of the time taken to complete the modules would be to provide suggested completion times for larger segments or entire modules as some participants noted that they completed modules at different rates to the indicative ones and wondered if they had done something 'wrong' or were missing some of the information.

Another possibility would be to have a progress bar to indicate the degree of completion of a module. This might be a motivating factor for some participants, especially those who identify themselves as visual learners.

In relation to the other theme of guidance and support around providing feedback to preservice teachers, as discussed earlier, interviewees suggested that it was difficult to know what could be included in the SPT program to support this. The non-school based personnel noted that improving capacity to give feedback required mentoring input and could not be wholly 'taught' in an online format.

Some teachers noted that they had completed other professional learning programs which complemented the SPT program and perhaps some additional videos of feedback sessions and teacher discussions, or complementary programs around feedback could be included as resources with links from the SPT program.

Additionally, several interviewees suggested that the SPT program might be accredited as part of other professional learning programs and offered examples of this happening already. One example given was in a University of Tasmania unit, where completion of the program was part of the requirement for that unit.

This area in particular is one where whole school or school team approaches to working with preservice teachers would be of significant benefit. Teachers interviewed who had the benefit of undertaking the program with colleagues were confident about the value of this 'group' approach in consolidating their learning, changing practice in their schools, and increasing the benefits of the professional experience placement for the preservice teacher. Finding a way to communicate this benefit to schools will likely be a key factor in increasing the completion rates of modules, and potentially, gathering new registrants.

The professional dialogue in the school was most important, we were all working on the modules together and this really helped. You need to be having the conversations in the school. (Interviewee)

Other themes to emerge from this data included the possibility of using more videos and scenarios.

Discussion and recommendations

5

This review has found that the SPT program is being accessed by staff from across all jurisdictions including supervising teachers, principals/school leaders, other teaching staff in schools and staff involved in teacher education and registration, in order to gain a better understanding of the role of the supervising teacher, as well as to improve their own knowledge and skills.

It is clear from the findings of this review that the SPT program is, overall, meeting its objectives and largely addressing the targeted professional learning needs of its registrants. Survey respondents have overwhelmingly indicated that the online medium is an accessible and appropriate format to deliver nationally consistent training, and agree that the resources are useful.

On average, participants from all cohorts report that the program has improved their capacity across all modules, and this result was supported both by survey responses and feedback during interviews. Importantly for supervising teachers, in addition to building skills and knowledge, the program also provides them with more confidence to work with preservice teachers.

Supervising teachers and their principals/school leaders agree, on average, that participation in the program has also resulted in positive outcomes for their school, and anecdotal information from interviews supports this result.

Respondents have consistently indicated that the major impediment to the program is time, and that the provision of more time to undertake the program – and in fact more time to devote to supervising preservice teachers – would enhance the impact of the program. While the provision of time release is outside the influence of the program, AITSL may wish to consider strategies that address the issue of time from several fronts, some of which are directly controlled by AITSL and others which rely on influence.

As discussed in the Findings Section, it seems apparent that some participants (notably non-school based staff) are selectively choosing the modules that interest them and 'dipping in and out' of the program. This may be contributing to the gradual increase in module non-completions as people progress from the first module to the last. Data collection both through the survey and interviews, confirms participants' satisfaction that the program allows the flexibility to move between pages and access topics or areas of particular interest. It also confirms the view that the program is able to meet specific needs of registrants without them needing to complete the entire program if that is not their wish. This is affirming in that participants are using the program in the way that it was intended to be used.

With this in mind, several respondents suggested that AITSL could provide more detailed explanations of module content so that participants could be efficiently directed to modules that are most relevant for them. This could be done through, for instance, the development of a questionnaire that participants undertake during registration and that indicates which pages in the modules would best meet their needs (see recommendation 1).

Teachers were confident that, where the program was undertaken by groups of staff from the same school, the benefits for both individuals and the school were significant. Teachers interviewed who had the benefit of undertaking the program with colleagues were confident about the value of this group approach in consolidating their learning, changing practice in their schools and increasing the benefits of the professional experience placement for the preservice teacher. The professional dialogue facilitated by this participation deepened the understanding of teaching practice and consolidated school wide practices around working with preservice teachers. Finding a way to communicate this benefit to schools will likely be a key factor in increasing the completion rates of modules and potentially gathering new registrants (see recommendation 2).

In recognition that strong leadership and organisational support are key contributors to the embedding of professional learning, AITSL may also wish to consider developing communication and awareness raising strategies to foster the provision of additional support for supervising teachers by principals/school leaders. This could occur through the development of a guide for principals, or be included in an introductory video that could be used to inform all staff about the SPT program (see recommendation 3).

Another theme was for guidance and support around providing feedback to preservice teachers. As discussed earlier, interviewees suggested that it was difficult to know what could be included in the SPT program to support this and the non-school based personnel interviewed noted that improving capacity to give feedback required mentoring input and could not be wholly 'taught' in an online format. While the general view is that the program provides excellent examples of giving feedback, some responses indicated that more video examples could be included and that links could be made with other AITSL resources around feedback to strengthen this area even further (see recommendation 4).

Some teachers noted that they had completed other professional learning programs which complemented the SPT program. Additionally, several interviewees suggested that the program might be accredited as part of other professional learning programs and offered examples of this happening already. One example given was in a University of Tasmania unit where completion of the program was part of the requirement for that unit (see recommendation 5).

Synergistiq therefore makes the following recommendations.

- Recommendation 1: AITSL considers the provision of a more detailed explanation of module content so that participants could be efficiently directed to modules that are most relevant for them. This could be done through, for instance, the development of a questionnaire that participants undertake during registration and that indicates which pages in which modules would best meet their needs.
- Recommendation 2: AITSL communicates the value of the program in promoting professional dialogue for individual teachers and schools when teams complete the modules together.
- Recommendation 3: AITSL considers developing a guide for principals and an introductory video that could be used to inform all staff about the SPT program.
- Recommendation 4: AITSL considers including more video examples and links to other AITSL resources around feedback to strengthen this area even further.
- Recommendation 5: AITSL considers developing communication and awareness raising strategies for the SPT program generally and investigate ways it might be linked to other programs or professional learning to enhance that awareness.

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