



InSite Hub School Project Prototype One (2016)



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1. RESEARCH AIM

Interest in teacher education reform at a national level has resulted in a range of initiatives. Most notable is the New South Wales Department of Education's October 2015 announcement of the introduction of formal agreements between schools and universities to form strategic partnerships in innovative practices to improve the professional experience opportunities of pre-service teachers. These are known as 'Hub School Partnerships'. The InSite program is one of the Hub School Partnerships, being a collaboration between Turrumurra High School (THS) and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the extent to which the InSite program is fulfilling its purpose of 'transformative professional learning which enables futures-focused learning'. This report presents an evaluation of the first prototype, which was delivered in 2016.

The report commences with a brief overview of two key Australian reports into teacher education in order to situate the first InSite prototype in the current context of initial teacher education reform. An overview of the research design is then presented, and this is followed by discussion of emergent themes and recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

(a) Review of teacher education

It is recognised that improving school systems can only come from adequately preparing teachers for the profession from the very beginning of their teacher education. Recent recommendations in teacher education are to clearly articulate standards for teacher education programs and identify candidates for the profession who possess a combination of personal attributes suited to the teaching profession whilst concurrently demonstrating the necessary academic skills (Teacher Education Ministry Advisory Group (TEMAG), 2014).

In the period 2000–2012 a decline in the reading and mathematical abilities of 15-year-olds in Australia was observed (ACER, 2014). This decline occurred during a period when efforts to improve both literacy and numeracy levels increased nationwide and when other countries were seeing an improvement in their average numeracy and literacy outcomes. These occurrences brought to the attention of education professionals and national policy makers the importance of researching ways to make education more equitable for all students. Studies in the 1990s and early 2000s concluded that issues like class sizes and government spending had little to do with the success of students, but rather some teachers were better at ‘promoting student learning and achievement’ than others (ACER, 2014). As a result, it has become necessary to examine the effectiveness of teacher education.

In April 2014, researchers into best practices in teacher education examined a growing body of literature, and they outlined the most significant characteristics of effective teacher education programs internationally. These include:

1. coherence
2. strong core curriculum
3. extensive, connected clinical experiences
4. well-defined standards of professional knowledge and practice
5. explicit strategies
6. an inquiry approach that connects theory and practice
7. strong school–university partnerships
8. assessment based on professional standards. (ACER, 2014:x)

In addition, to ensure the quality of teaching entrants, highly regarded teacher education programs use policies and mechanisms in relation to:

1. recruitment into the program by
 - a. making it a lucrative option for high achievers
 - b. ensuring demand meets supply
 - c. having high standards for gaining admission into the program
2. regulating the accreditation of, and putting in place rigorous systems for, institutions to be considered eligible to administer teacher education programs

3. requiring high levels of assessment and mentoring over time as the graduate transitions into their job. (ACER, 2014:xiii)

The *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* report into teacher education (TEMAG, 2014) also identified seven areas of concern:

1. weak application of national standards
2. poor public confidence in initial teacher education
3. demonstrated evidence of poor practice in a number of programs
4. insufficient integration of teacher education providers with schools and systems
5. inadequate application of standards for pre-service teachers
6. insufficient professional support for beginning teachers
7. gaps in crucial information about the effectiveness of initial teacher education, including workforce data.

The TEMAG findings resulted in the formulation of five key proposals and 38 recommendations. The five proposals are:

1. a strengthened national quality assurance process
2. sophisticated and transparent selection for entry to teaching
3. integration of theory and practice
4. robust assurance of classroom readiness
5. national research and capability.

In November 2015 the *Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education* (SETE) report was released (Mayer et al., 2015). This reported a longitudinal study which followed graduating cohorts of 2010 and 2011 to their first teaching positions and their subsequent careers. Importantly, this study explored the School Principals' perceptions of the quality of teachers in their beginning year. This research sought to answer three questions:

1. How well equipped are graduates to meet the requirements of the diverse settings in which they are employed?
2. What characteristics of teacher education programs are most effective in preparing teachers to work in a variety of school settings?

3. How does the teacher education program attended impact on graduate employment destination, pathways and retention within the profession?

Table 1 depicts areas where early career teachers felt teacher preparation programs were helpful and/or areas, where they perceived themselves to be more effective, and the areas which might be improved (Mayer et al., 2015). Notably, early career teachers and their principals indicated that more time spent in schools with less focus on theory might help to better prepare them in these ways.

Table 1: ECTs perceived areas of preparation

ECTs felt Teacher Education programs prepared them in these areas	ECTs felt less prepared in these areas
Pedagogy	Classroom management
Professional Ethics	Professional engagement with parents/carers and the community
Engagement with ongoing professional learning	Assessment and the provision of feedback/reporting on students learning
	Teaching culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse learners.
	Designing and implementing the curriculum

Table 2 outlines the characteristics of effective teacher programs and where programs may be improved (Mayer et al., 2015).

Table 2: Perceived strengths and areas for improvement of teacher education programs

Strengths of the program	Ways it might be improved
High quality university teaching staff	Opportunities for extending professional experience components.
Valuable Practicum experiences	Better preparing graduates with classroom management
Opportunities for practical application of professional knowledge (e.g. in assessments)	Creating safe and supportive leaning environments

The SETE Report also notes that students overwhelmingly agreed that their time spent in schools during a practicum was most valuable (Mayer et al., 2015). In particular,

- ninety-five per cent of students said the skills developed during this time were significant

- ninety per cent of students said that it helped them feel better prepared if the school in which they completed their practicum was similar to the school in which they were employed
- those who stated they had undertaken an internship thought themselves more prepared.

The findings reported in the Action Now (2014) and SETE (2015) reports have been instrumental in generating the demand for changes to the ways Australian educators think about, and do, teacher education.

(b) Re-visioning teacher education

The THS strategic directions 2015–2017 (**Appendix A**) sees THS as extremely well-placed as a hub school, noting the school's vision statement: "[THS] seeks to empower individual learners through the creation of a future focused learning environment prioritising collaborative and innovative practice". In collaboration with staff, students and parents, THS has developed three strategic directions that are clearly aligned with the Department of Education's position to support innovative practices and collaborative partnerships:

1. engagement – student engagement through innovative quality teaching and learning practices
2. wellbeing – holistic development of students and staff through wellbeing, capabilities development and leadership
3. learning community – a collaborative and connected community of future focused learners.

The initial planning phase of THS and UTS hub school project mapped out key elements, as depicted in slides (February, 2016) (**Appendix B**). A Fishbone Diagram of the overarching problem statement was prepared (**Appendix C**):

Teachers are coming to schools from a traditional teaching education model having a very narrow, content focused approach on their role as a teacher and their place in the educational environment/school.

This initial planning was then more precisely articulated and formally presented in the form of a Driver Diagram (**Appendix D**). The Driver Diagram comprised five core principles:

- developing and maintaining sustainable processes
- analysing and responding to complex data
- supporting collaborative learning
- developing purposeful, professional learning
- developing as a flexible, supportive and evolving program.

It is the evaluation of these five core drivers underpinning the InSite Hub School Project that forms the basis of this report.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

(a) Improvement Science

In the context of the InSite program, a desire to more effectively prepare graduate teachers is underpinned by principles of Improvement Science. Improvement Science has a history of success in transforming learning opportunities in fields beyond education (Gawande 2007; Rother, 2009).

In order to understand how something works or doesn't work, randomised controlled trials are often used. Minimising variation during these trials is thought of as the ideal standard for drawing conclusions about causation. Variation is a particularly important issue to understand for ensuring educational improvement. Minimising variables or variation is a near impossibility in teaching settings. However, Improvement Science, through the inclusion of 'profound knowledge' as a significant contributor, recognises that both the variations and the setting are important contributors to the end result, and it treats these pieces of information as vital to understanding how improvements might take shape (Lewis, 2015: 55). This means that instead of conceiving of a tool or 'some other instructional resource as having proven effectiveness' (Bryk et al., cited in Lewis, 2015: 55), Improvement Science tries to understand how this resource or tool might be adapted to different contexts in order to achieve a favourable result.

Other fields have extensively researched the effect of improving processes or systems through enacting Improvement Science models, but in education the understanding of how systems intersect with the practical implementations of improvement is under-researched (Lewis, 2015). However, Improvement Science has been used more recently in the education sector to improve the way learning can take place, or as Bryk et al. (cited in Lewis, 2015) succinctly put it, Improvement Science assists in making schools ‘better at getting better’.

There are two bodies of knowledge required to improve the way we solve problems (see Figure 1). The first is ‘basic knowledge from the discipline of education’ (Lewis, 2015:54) and the second is knowledge of ‘a system of profound knowledge’ (Deming, cited in Langley et al., 2009:75). Deming’s (2009) defines ‘profound knowledge’ as ‘the interplay of the theories of systems, variation, knowledge and psychology’ (in Langley et al., 2009:75). His rationale is that ‘profound knowledge’ is knowledge that will result in improvement in any given field.

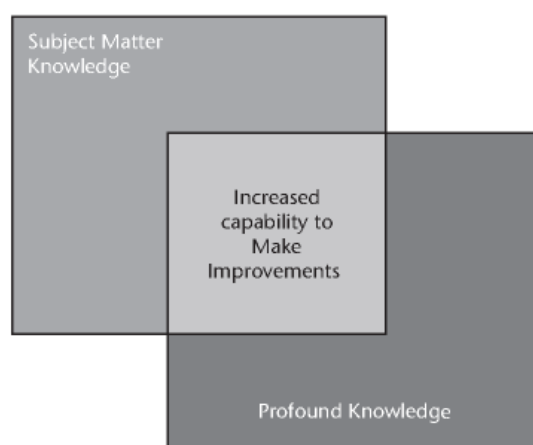


Figure 1. Interplay between Subject Matter Knowledge and Profound Knowledge (Source: Langley et al., 2009:76)

Langley et al. (2009) draws on Deming’s understanding of profound knowledge, which is comprised of four parts:

1. **Appreciation for a system** – this, they argue, is about understanding how all the parts of an organisation fit together to form a system. The parts work together then to achieve a common goal.
2. **Understanding variation** – understanding that some variation in data relates to ‘common causes’ and others relate to ‘special causes’. Not identifying the right causes can make a situation worse.
3. **Building knowledge** – when considering ‘improvement’ it is important to measure the outcome of this change by measuring the results that take place as a result of this change. The most efficient way of doing this is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle (explained further below).
4. **Human side of change** – this recognises the differences in the way people behave, how they relate and interact with one another and with, and within, a system which ‘helps us understand the motivations of people and their behaviour’.

It is important to note that this deconstruction of profound knowledge is made in relation to improving organisations more generally and not specifically related to education. However, understanding how these parts operate in an educational setting involving universities and schools has proven to be valuable in improving teaching strategies (Lewis, 2015). It is argued that three questions should be posed in working toward improvement in the education setting:

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How will we know that a change is an improvement?
3. What change can we make that will result in improvement?

These questions can be explored through the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle (as depicted in Figure 2) which is thought to assist in the rapid implementation of new changes in a given system.



Figure 2. Improvement Science: Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle (Source: Langley et al., 2009).

The four stages are:

1. Plan – outline what you wish to test, specifying questions that need to be answered and offering predictions for answers and detailing data collection.
2. Do – attempt the plan and make observations of what happened and how.
3. Study – compare data with initial predictions.
4. Act – implement changes based on what was learned.

The InSite program has been developed around the Improvement Science model. The research project – the subject of this report – falls within the *STUDY* component of the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle. Given this, research analysis compares data to predictions, summarises what was learned, and subsequently contributes to the *ACT* stage where recommendations are made for changes for the next cycle.

(b) Evaluation Research

Evaluation Research methodology was used to examine the first InSite prototype. More specifically, the *goal attainment model* of Evaluation Research was used; this seeks to determine the extent to which a program is achieving its formal goals (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). As mentioned earlier, in this case, the core drivers of the project are:

- developing and maintaining sustainable processes
- analysing and responding to complex data

- supporting collaborative learning
- developing purposeful, professional learning
- developing as a flexible, supportive and evolving program.

The purpose of this research report is not so much to judge the program's value as to focus on identifying practical implications for the findings (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). This evaluation is viewed as being 'responsive', that is, the views and experiences of various stakeholders have been incorporated and the research takes account of three factors: implementation, context and the human factor (Hartas, 2010).

Two research methods were employed to achieve the research objectives: focus groups and document/artefact analysis

Focus groups

Focus groups were considered appropriate for this research as they can offer a rich data set from discussions in which participants are likely to bounce off one another when discussing the topic. The conflicting opinions or in depth description of a shared experience is likely to generate robust data (Travers, 2006). Seven focus groups were held with UTS staff, THS staff and InSite students. The focus groups fed into an Evaluation Day held with the researcher, THS staff and a UTS Professor (Institute for Sustainable Futures).

The focus groups were conducted using a 'lessons learned' approach that allows for both formative evaluation (monitoring and continuous improvement) and summative evaluation (project evaluation and information for future projects). Under the lessons learned approach three questions were posed to interview participants:

1. What is working well?
2. What can we improve upon?
3. What should we do differently?

These questions were asked with participants' attention directed towards the five core drivers of the InSite program previously described.

Document analysis

While the focus group data is the main component of the data analysis, themes that emerged from the focus groups were then triangulated through analysis of documents and artefacts that had been created since the inception of the program in late 2015 through to November 2016 and made available to the researcher via a shared GoogleDrive. These resources were particularly enlightening as they emerged in situ and systematically captured the interests, goals and direction of the project in sequential order (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Ethics

This research has UTS Human Research Ethics approval (no. ETH16-0896).

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings are organised around the InSite program core drivers as previously described and expanded in **Appendix D**. The nature of qualitative data and phrasing of the core drivers meant that these five drivers could not necessarily be analysed in isolation and in some instances were examined concurrently. The five core drivers are listed below in three groupings:

- A. Core Driver 1: developing and maintaining sustainable processes
- B. Core Driver 3: supporting collaborative learning AND
Core Driver 4: developing purposeful, professional learning
- C. Core Driver 2: analysing and responding to complex data AND
Core Driver 5: developing as a flexible, supportive and evolving program

A. INSITE CORE DRIVER 1: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES

Improvement Science identifies the need to understand how all the parts of an organisation fit together to form the system. To understand the effect of the first

prototype cycle in relation to the InSite system, six themes and associated recommendations for the second prototype cycle emerged from the data:

- (a) participation
- (b) documentation
- (c) communication
- (d) commitment and compensation
- (e) time
- (f) space.

(a) *Participation*

For any system to function cohesively and effectively the component parts (in this instance, people) must be considered. The participants of the InSite system include:

- (i) the leadership team (THS executive staff and UTS staff from the School of Education and the Institute for Sustainable Futures)
- (ii) the InSite students (UTS MTeach Mathematics and Science pre-service teachers)
- (iii) mentors (THS staff)
- (iv) supervisors (THS staff)
- (v) administration staff (THS and UTS).

The diversity of experiences and philosophies that underpin the practices of the system members increased the complexity of the system. Using the timeline of participants' entry to the InSite system we can evaluate issues emerging at each time point.

(i) Leadership team

The leadership team comprised THS staff (School Principal and four executive staff members), UTS staff (Head of the School of Education (or Acting Head), Professor (Institute for Sustainable Futures), Senior Lecturer (School of Education) and the School of Education, Partnerships and Professional Experience Liaison academic. This team conceptualised the InSite program and developed the comprehensive purpose and goals of the program. There were some UTS staff changes during the course of the year, most notably the departure of the original UTS Team Leader (Senior Lecturer).

Whilst this report has been in preparation, it has been announced that a second Professor from the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures has been appointed to the InSite project. See the *InSite: Re-imagining Initial Teacher Education* paper (**Appendix E**), which was prepared to 'provide background for the appointment of a suitable research and development leader'.

(ii) InSite students

The Master of Education degree at the UTS School of Education is a two-year course to prepare individuals who already hold an undergraduate degree to work as secondary school teachers. In February 2016 a call for Expressions of Interest in the InSite program was extended to all new enrolments. Students then expressed interest through submission of a formal statement (**Appendix F**), and applicants then took part in a panel interview comprising UTS and THS staff on 25 February 2016 (**Appendix G**).

Ten students commenced the program in March 2016. This number reduced to nine. Two of these students received no credit for a subject delivered as part of the InSite program as they entered the program with insufficient units in their teaching field (i.e. they did not reach the threshold) and were required to complete additional campus-based units to enable them to gain relevant teaching codes.

(iii) Mentor teachers

Mentor teachers' participation was voluntary and constituted the first 'relationship' established between InSite students and THS. InSite students spent the initial weeks at THS with their mentor teachers, who were from outside their Faculty areas. Each mentor took a different approach to their mentoring role, with some having their InSite student shadow them around the school and others arranging for the InSite students to engage in a range of activities with different teachers across the school.

(iv) Supervising teachers

In general, the supervising teachers did not feel their participation was voluntary. This was due to all InSite students coming from only two Faculty areas: mathematics and science. As a result, a large portion of the mathematics and science teachers was required to

participate as supervising teachers. This was intensified with each InSite student being allocated two supervising teachers from their Faculty.

(v) Administration staff

There was one school administrative officer employed at THS (one day per week, based on notes of 25 February 2016). UTS administrative staff were also required to engage in the project on an as-needs basis, particularly in relation to issues around timetabling.

Notably absent from the system were the UTS Subject Co-ordinators for the subjects identified to be delivered through the InSite program. It may also have been prudent to have a representative from the Department of Education and/or BOSTES to further inform system processes.

The establishment of project members roles and responsibilities was addressed during a planning meeting on 5 February 2016, but these were not fleshed out into clear descriptors that would provide all system members (and external parties) with understanding of the functions of various personnel.

The cost to each institution for staff involved did not form part of the analysis.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. InSite students should have only one supervising teacher from their Faculty area in order to (a) reduce load on THS staff and (b) avoid confusion as to who takes 'responsibility' for the InSite student. This recommendation should not be construed as limiting the relationship between an InSite student to a single THS teacher.
2. UTS subject co-ordinators should be involved in collaborative planning for delivery of subjects at THS. The aim would not be to replicate subject delivery at a second location, but to advise on the subject objectives, links to Professional Standards, time commitment and assessment obligations likely to be experienced by the InSite students' peers. This would help ensure equity for all students, who will gain credit for the subject toward their teaching degree.

3. Clear role descriptions should be created for every member of the InSite system to avoid duplication and enhance functioning.
4. UTS students should only be eligible for InSite program if they meet threshold minimums to ensure they are not required to take additional UTS subjects to gain relevant teaching codes.
5. Options for participation should be evaluated and selected:
 - a. Insite students are purposefully selected based on pre-determined characteristics (e.g. live (semi)-locally to THS and are in specific Faculty areas) OR
 - b. InSite students self-select for the programAND
 - c. mentors/supervisors are purposefully selected because they possess the knowledge and characteristics to excel in their role as mentor/supervisor OR
 - d. mentors/supervisors self-select and volunteer for the program.

b. Documentation

The leadership team has been highly successful in capturing and sharing via GoogleDrive the authentic progress of the first prototype through minutes of meetings, visual capture of planning boards and collation of formal documents (e.g. invitation letters to potential students). It is evident from the minutes of meetings (from 5 February 2016) the leadership team identified many of the complex issues which needed to be addressed.

A PST Hub School *Implementation and internal progress monitoring* tool was developed and it provided a clear overview of target activities (**Appendix H**). InSite students were given a 1.5 page overview of the *UTS Masters of Teaching embedded mode program* (**Appendix I**). They also engaged in an orientation session on the first day attending THS (**Appendix J**).

At the conclusion of the first prototype InSite students held strong views that formal documentation was required to guide their participation. Whilst there was acceptance that unknowns were inevitable given this was a pilot iteration, the widely held view was that by the conclusion of the first year there should be a distribution of formal documentation to guide future years. The InSite students desired a level of documentation in line with traditional UTS Subject Outlines, but written in terms of the entire two-year InSite program and clearly outlining the requirements for participation in terms of time and dates; details of activities to be completed (e.g. observations, team-teaching, independent teaching); and assessment tasks. This form of detailed documentation would be vital if students become highly anxious about their participation in the program.

The THS supervising teachers also required more traditional documentation in the form of a practicum handbook. There was consensus that formal documentation is necessary to enable effective communication between supervising teachers and InSite students around their participation in teaching and extra-curricula activities, the time-period for engagement, and reporting processes.

While mentor teachers did not express a specific need for explicit guiding documentation, they were clear that they required more guidance on the types of activities they should engage with their mentee and the timeframe for their involvement across the program as a whole.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. Clear processes/accountability should be established to ensure that action items from meeting agenda are completed within specific timeframes and reported to relevant systems members.
2. Review the *Implementation and internal progress monitoring* tool (**Appendix H**) to assess achievement of pre-determined goals and milestones beyond Term 1.
3. Produce an online guidebook which clearly outlines to all current and future members of the InSite system their:

- a. role descriptions
- b. role responsibilities
- c. calendar of key activities
- d. time commitments
- e. reporting processes
- f. lines of communication.

Such a guidebook would provide an anchor to ground the project when individuals become overwhelmed by their participation in this innovative program.

NOTE: the formalisation of activities/time must be carefully articulated to enable sufficient flexibility for needs-based activities with individuals/groups as they emerge.

(c) Communication

Issues around communication were evident in Minutes of the Meeting on 11 August 2016, and by the time the focus groups occurred (October 2016) communication was a primary factor creating unease within the system, particularly for the InSite student who described it this way: *'If we were to grade it [communication] it would be like an F with multiple minuses on the end'*. The InSite students described frustration at receiving multiple and conflicting advice at key points in the program and unease with the *'trickle-down information system'*, which left them as conduits for information to the supervising teachers.

THS teachers acknowledged that they did receive information, but lengthy emails were not easily digested and they felt the lack of face-to-face communication at key points detracted from their involvement. THS teachers also expressed concern that there was no communication between mentors and supervisors about the school experiences the InSite students had had with the mentors prior to being placed with their supervising teachers. THS teachers also had no knowledge of the UTS subjects being delivered at THS, leaving them feeling excluded from the overall program *'We are not privy to what occurs on Thursdays'* – Thursdays being the day the InSite learning labs were held at THS with a UTS Professor (or in her absence one of the THS leadership team). The InSite learning labs are intended to

provide an opportunity for expert input, for 'check ins' to share student learning and experience and to 'engage in the double look learning' necessary to improve the core job of learning to facilitate futures focused learning. (InSite: Re-imagining Initial Teacher Education, Appendix E, p. 7)

There were other communication problems between UTS and THS, leaving some personnel in the UTS School of Education feeling excluded from the decision-making process, being told of planned actions after they have been decided, rather than being part of the collaborative program development process. There were also concerns raised regarding a perceived defensiveness, and perhaps lack of regard, from School of Education staff towards the project.

Insufficient communication also occurred within the UTS School of Education when some academic and professional staff were not fully informed of the program and its possible impacts for the InSite students in relation to completion of traditional university commitments. Problems also arose between the UTS School of Education and UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures, likely due to different underlying teaching, learning and research philosophies.

The THS teachers desired more in-depth communications about the InSite students. Given the nature of the MTeach these students came to InSite with diverse life experiences. Teachers (particularly mentor teachers) wanted greater detail about the InSite students' backgrounds, their educational experiences and the like. It was apparent that some THS teachers assumed the InSite teachers had teaching backgrounds and were taken aback at how raw the InSite students proved to be.

Communication and sharing is problematic because UTS and THS use different online systems. Email is of course common to both, but it does not appear to have been effective as a means of communication across the entire system, including between the THS and UTS leadership team members.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. Relevant email communications between all parties forming the InSite system throughout the first prototype should be collated and analysed. This would contribute valuable data for interpreting the degree to which viable processes may be established and how these processes may be more transparent.
2. To avoid duplication and/or omissions, documented lines of communication and official lines of reporting should be established to clearly set out how and by whom information will be communicated.
3. Face-to-face meetings should be held with all InSite system members at key points across the program (e.g. at the commencement, before InSite students start with their mentor, and immediately before and after periods of intensive teaching).
4. One person should be responsible for delivering all formal communications to InSite students, and this person is to ensure that relevant information is received (and understood) by other system members in addition to the InSite students.
5. An online communication and sharing platform that is accessible to all system members should be identified and utilised.
6. Sharing of the project should occur more broadly, both internally across the two institutions and to external organisations.

(d) *Commitment and compensation*

All participants valued their involvement in the program and clearly articulated the benefits for themselves and their teaching practices. Most notably the InSite students valued the strong bonds they had built with their fellow InSite peers and felt the collaborative relationships were the most beneficial aspects of this project. A primary contributing factor was the weekly 'check-ins'. The InSite students suggested this aspect should be built into the traditional UTS teacher education program.

Mentor teachers said their motivation for engaging in the project was aimed at preparing future teachers to succeed and excel in the profession. Several mentors said they could make a valuable contribution, and to a far greater extent than the initial InSite prototype had enabled them.

The time commitment for InSite students has been significant, but it is only possible to quantify this in a general sense. For UTS students engaged in the traditional program, coursework in the 013401 Professional Experience 1 subject requires 10 hours of workshop sessions and a professional experience placement which equates to 28 days (five observation days and 23 teaching days). The Independent Study elective is credited as an 18-hour subject plus additional reading/writing task. In comparison, the InSite students report having invested over 60 days and in some cases over 70 days in the InSite program, and this does not include the completion of their 5,000-word Independent Study report and preparation for associated presentations.

By the conclusion of the first prototype, Insite students were becoming overwhelmed with their commitment to the program. Notably, some were exhausted from juggling travel (in some cases up to two hours each way on public transport), employment commitments and other University commitments (classes/assignments). Many felt that, despite the benefits, the workload was unsustainable. InSite students expressed disappointment that there was not more formal recognition for the time and effort put into the program. They also wondered if and how the program would contribute to increased employability.

InSite students were also beginning to contemplate the hours they had committed to the program – compared with their peers taking the traditional model – and were questioning its value. It should be noted, however, that such focus group responses present a snapshot in time, and at the time the students were particularly stressed due to ongoing University commitments.

Supervising teachers, particularly those who did not feel their participation was voluntary, reflected on their role as a supervising teacher as being a more intensive commitment when compared to traditional practicum supervisor models that are clearly defined and usually confined to one specified intensive period. Some teachers expressed frustration at the lack of communication regarding supervisor teacher payments and the need to follow up such aspects.

From a UTS perspective the program has been expensive to deliver. There is the cost of personnel, with two to three staff members travelling to THS for leadership meetings each month. The UTS School of Education, School Partnerships and Professional Experience Liaison academic was employed on a fractional appointment and spent a significant portion of this time engaged in activities related to the InSite program. A Senior Lecturer (School of Education) was also engaged in many hours of preparation work, such as recruiting and interviewing potential participants, and a Professor (Institute for Sustainable Futures) attended THS on Thursdays for approximately a half-year to engage in weekly InSite labs. With only nine students enrolled, this does not constitute a UTS-recognised 'teaching allocation', which makes sustainability more complex. With no allocated UTS budget for delivery of the program, it currently runs on the goodwill of UTS participants who value the potential of the program.

Focus group data suggests it is not only the culture of the University which needs to change, but also the mindset of practising teachers and university students who have pre-existing expectations for the program to reflect elements of the traditional pre-service program delivery that occurs in school.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. Provide formal recognition for InSite student participation which can be used in employment applications.
2. Formalise the process for supervising teachers to receive financial compensation for supervising students and/or time in lieu where appropriate.
3. Streamline processes to reduce high demands on staff at both UTS and THS and consider the allocation of funding across these institutes to meet the high level of engagement required to develop, implement and evaluate the second prototype.

(e) Time

The complexity of the system is particularly highlighted through the concept of time. At a pragmatic level, the limited time available for InSite activities is exacerbated by the official

University timetable, compared with the secondary school year. This is also an issue in relation to planning, where UTS academic staff availability is higher across periods where THS staff are on school holiday breaks. The number of non-teaching weeks at the University greatly reduces the available weeks for InSite students mandatory attendance and participation at THS.

The number of days InSite students were required to attend UTS was problematic and this was intensified with some InSite students viewing their Thursday commitment at THS as 'UTS subjects' rather than InSite activities. InSite students raised further concerns that mandatory attendance on Thursdays was not the most convenient time (all suggested a Tuesday alternative) because they missed the THS sport. The students were also concerned about having to devote the whole day to THS, given its timetable structure of a morning session, a substantial break and then an afternoon session.

Further timetabling issues emerged when InSite students participated in an intensive block of teaching, when the times they did attend THS did not match the classes of their supervising teacher/s. As well, having to continue with Thursday InSite sessions during the intensive teaching period was to the detriment of the previously identified positive experiences of the programs.

The degree to which InSite students managed their own timetables to maximise possible time at THS varied, with one student electing to enrol in UTS subjects which were run after 5 pm so that time in school could remain flexible. By contrast, another student had far greater limitations on UTS subject selection due to work commitments and chose not to take up offers to work with a subject co-ordinator to negotiate an alternative timetable.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. Increase the number of UTS subjects delivered at THS to reduce InSite students' need to attend UTS Broadway campus.
2. Increase flexibility of mandated InSite lab activities (currently held each Thursday at THS).

3. Produce a calendar to structure the second prototype year. (Note: This was subsequently produced at the time of writing this report and is at **Appendix K**)

(f) Space

The physical distance between UTS and THS is prohibitive for many of the desired activities to take place. While initial goals included ongoing and sustained collaboration between THS staff and UTS staff, physical distance prevented regular meetings with academic staff and teaching staff and were instead limited to the leadership team. The physical divide between University and School prevented informal 'workplace' conversations and widespread collaborative planning opportunities, which might have otherwise occurred if co-located. The physical divide also prevented the sharing of resources across the workplaces. UTS focus group data and Minutes of Meetings indicate that consideration of the potential of a 'third space' to facilitate collaborative relationships has been explored, but this potential has not emerged through the first prototype.

The physical space at THS was problematic given the high number of InSite students in just two Faculties. Teachers mentioned that the extra bodies and noise in staffrooms negatively contributed to their experience of the program. Examples of poor staffroom etiquette were reported by several teachers. Teachers also expressed concern that they did not get a break from InSite students who were regularly present in the staffroom, and this prevented them from engaging in lesson preparation and other work-related activities.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. The number of InSite students in a given Faculty should align with number of available teaching staff and actual physical space available to house the InSite students.
2. A system should be put in place to advise InSite students when teaching staff are available for consultation and when they are not.

3. Consideration should be given to trialling different models of InSite student integration (particularly where larger number of students are present at THS). For example, a designated space could be made available for the InSite program in which both pre-service teacher and teacher professional development activities would occur and where InSite students would be permanently located, with specific structured periods set aside for InSite students to be immersed in staffrooms.
4. InSite activities should include explicit learning opportunities regarding school workplace etiquette.

B. *INSITE CORE DRIVER 3: SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING*

INSITE CORE DRIVER 4: DEVELOPING PURPOSEFUL, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The degree to which Core Driver 3 and Core Driver 4 are being met through the first prototype are explored through three themes:

- (a) cross-faculty mentoring
- (b) subject development and delivery
- (c) InSite students progress toward professional standards AND as futures-focused teachers.

(a) Cross-faculty mentoring

In terms of teacher professional development, the mentoring component of the InSite program resulted in positive gains for mentors, who engaged in a two-hour professional development workshop delivered by UTS staff at THS.

The opportunities for InSite teachers to observe and teach in areas outside their specialisation enabled them to see practices which are less common in their own teaching fields. These experiences also exposed some mentor teachers to practices that they would not normally employ in their lessons because the InSite students approached teaching/learning episodes from markedly different perspectives to the mentor teachers.

These opportunities were valuable for both mentors and mentees. This aspect of the program represents an area for further exploration for teacher educators and in terms of teacher professional development.

Mentors expressed a desire to have greater involvement in the InSite program and said they would relish additional opportunities to engage in both formal and informal activities with their mentees to continue to guide their induction into the profession and also to work more collaboratively with InSite students and UTS academic staff.

Capturing and sharing the components of effective mentoring relationships and these rich experiences will contribute to both mentor and mentee pedagogical awareness. However, this should not be too prescriptive and must enable flexibility to develop and evolve in terms of the unique characteristics of each mentor/mentee relationship and the emerging needs of each InSite student, and to guide their progress in a supportive manner and assist in addressing any problems as they arise.

The mentor/mentee relationship proved essential in addressing concerns for the teaching progress of some InSite students, which highlights the potential for mentors to take on aspects of the traditional supervisory role of reporting on pre-service teachers progress toward independent teaching.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. There should be a clear role description for mentors in relation to duration and extent of engagement with InSite students.
2. There should be sharing of the various mentor/mentee activities, including those innovative approaches demonstrated by highly accomplished mentors.
3. Mentors should be purposefully selected for this role based on their personal attributes and demonstrated teaching excellence.

4. Consider the possibility that each mentor has one existing InSite and one new InSite student through each two-year cycle to facilitate a mentor/mentee relationship between 1st year and 2nd year InSite students.
5. Consider increasing the opportunities for mentors to work collaboratively and form more explicit communities of practice between themselves, their mentees, THS colleagues and UTS academic staff (which reflects 9 March 2016 Minutes Rich Picture – multiple networks of support).
6. Investigate the pros and cons of having mentors taking responsibility for reporting student progress and achievement, and the ways in which this might be done in consultation with academic staff and supervising teachers.
7. There should be further consultation with the current extensive body of literature on mentoring of pre-service teachers to continue to inform and develop this positive aspect of the InSite program, for example, Renshaw's (2012) Literature Review and Environmental Scan – Supervising Professional Experience Students.

(b) Subject development and delivery

At the commencement of the program a number of UTS MTeach subjects were put forward by UTS as appropriate for delivery at THS. Beyond this, however, there appears to have been little to no communication between academic staff (subject co-ordinators) responsible for preparing the subjects and ultimately being responsible for submitting InSite student grades and the UTS academic staff member who 'delivered' the subjects at THS. It appears this breakdown in the system resulted in the InSite students, their mentors and supervisors being unaware that one unit related to Classroom Management was delivered at THS. Upon discovery of this, teaching staff suggested a number of ways they would have liked to have been involved, including highlighting specific teaching staff at THS with strengths in developing positive rapport with high school students and thus demonstrating high-level classroom management.

A number of THS teachers expressed interest in being involved in the development and delivery of subjects, suggesting ways that Insite students' activities could meaningfully contribute to school practices, such as InSite students being involved in programming, with associated tasks to contribute meaningful content to Faculty programs. Developing

and delivery of such subjects would be beneficial to the program and to THS teachers' professional development.

At the time of conducting the focus groups, the InSite students were experiencing high-levels of anxiety about completing their Independent Research Project, which was the second subject delivered at THS. The group perception at the time was that significant contact hours had been spent on this subject (between 36 and 48 hours) and most students had made little progress in writing up their 5,000-word reports or preparing for the associated presentation to THS staff. The other concern of some students was that this subject was heavily focussed on research, whereas they had entered the InSite program on the basis it would be practice oriented.

Challenges also emerged as a result of retrofitting UTS subjects into the InSite model. THS staff expressed feelings of exclusion in not being informed of the subject delivery occurring at THS and being excluded from InSite Thursdays. This appears to have perpetuated the school/university divide and continued to send the message to InSite students that practical teaching is done by the teachers and academic work by University academics.

The key stakeholders appear to hold very different views on the number of university subjects which should be delivered on-site at THS, with some envisaging full immersion and all subjects delivered at THS. InSite students suggested that some subjects lend themselves to delivery as part of the InSite program, such as Professional Practice, Professional Experience and Inclusive Education. In contrast the InSite students valued the on-campus delivery of teaching methods subjects because it increased their exposure to a broader range teaching strategies than may be experienced when working with supervising teachers during their time at THS.

Several THS teachers alluded to their desire for InSite students to inform and improve THS current practices by bringing to THS new strategies and techniques learned at University. They were disappointed this did not transpire as it would have aligned with the initial InSite program goals of being 'futures-focused' rather than replicating existing practices.

It appears that system members are maintaining a perception of subject delivery that continues to perpetuate the divide of pre-service teacher learning occurring at either University or School rather than a united delivery across two institutions.

There is evidence in early planning documents and various Minutes of Meetings that the leadership team carefully reflected on the types of projects and engagement that would be beneficial for the InSite students during their time at THS. Potential projects clearly reflected the 'futures-focussed' goals of the program, such as examining the 'innovative use of learning spaces' at THS and other schools. These ideas should be continually revisited to determine opportunities for potentially powerful initiatives to be integrated into the program.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. Accredited UTS subjects should be more authentically integrated into the regular teaching activities of THS. This would require identification of appropriate THS staff to work collaboratively with UTS subject co-ordinators to develop 'equivalents', noting that the subjects should not merely be 'delivered' at THS. The innovation would come from authentically embedding the subjects into school activities and classroom practices.
2. Develop (and have formally approved) InSite-specific subjects which achieve the objective of facilitating development of 'futures-focussed' learning by pre-service teachers.
3. The Independent Project subject should be reconceptualised to capture the InSite goal of 'futures-focussed' learning.
4. Formal procedures and measures for monitoring InSite student progress and assessing achievement of subject-specific learning objectives be should be developed and implemented.
5. As a short-term measure, consider developing a generic assessment task model that can be used across the various teaching methods subjects (still delivered at UTS) and allow the InSite students to work collaboratively with relevant THS staff to identify, implement and reflect on current innovative practices in the field.

(c) *Insite students progress toward professional standards AND as futures-focused teachers*

The current nine InSite students represent the diversity of teachers working in many Australian schools in terms of gender, age and cultural backgrounds, and their personal experiences as pioneers of the InSite program reflected this diversity. On a number of occasions the InSite students were described by THS supervisors or mentors as being unprepared to teach. Evaluation of the progress of InSite students varied considerably across the stakeholders, with some of the view that the InSite students were poorly prepared to teach and continued to present like students rather than teachers. By contrast, one InSite student noted:

I'm definitely more confident ... significantly definitely ... I think it helped me because the [THS] students ... didn't actually identify me as a prac teacher because I was there for so long and a lot of the time they just thought I was actually just a new teacher ... because they would always see me in the staffroom and so they knew I wasn't a prac teacher ... that helped a lot with management.

All InSite students concurred that the rapport they had with THS students was one of the key benefits of the program.

One experienced UTS professional placement staff member (who was a previous school principal) suggested the nine InSite students represented a typical breakdown of student achievement that would be demonstrated after a period of block teaching, with three of them exceeding expectations, four meeting expectations and two at risk of failing. It appears that the possibility of students 'failing' their practical teaching evaluations, or even any coursework, was not considered, until the issue arose during the block of intensive teaching.

Particular concerns raised by THS teachers in relation to InSite students' teaching performances was one student's refusal to use the whiteboard due to spelling insecurities and another whose English-speaking skills were not sufficient to be understood by THS students. It would seem that one of the potential strengths of the InSite program, if it is

engaging in rapid cycles to improve outcomes, would be its ability to quickly identify issues such as these and initiate strategies to deal with them, thereby ensuring the InSite student can address areas of deficiency.

In the UTS School of Education traditional Master of Teaching mode, students demonstrate achievement of graduate professional standards through their completion of BOSTES-accredited subjects that explicitly articulate how subject content and assessment tasks relate to the teaching standards. Minutes of Meetings throughout the first prototype suggest the leadership team has considered the use of formal assessment tools and, at this conclusion of the first prototype, it would be timely to revisit the potential of tools (e.g. REVIEW) for student self-assessment and identification of InSite students' achievements of accredited subject and course objectives.

The greatest point of contention with regard to the first prototype was the students' completion of a block period of intensive teaching. It is apparent there was a breakdown in communication between all elements of the InSite system about the need for, and characteristics of, the block period. This caused significant anxiety and stress, particularly for InSite students and THS supervising teachers. Whilst the implementation of this component was challenging at the time, the focus groups and InSite students' blogs showed that this component of the program was valuable in helping them understand the complexities of sustained teaching:

Skills from teaching content to interacting with students have been improved from both success and failure. This prac has given me a great chance to understand the real life of a teacher. (InSite student blog, 13 October 2016)

But, the experience also highlights issues to address in future prototypes:

Over the course of the practicum, I have had to travel a long and difficult path in getting back my spark for the profession. The main challenge was (through some bad luck) not having the opportunity to continue with one set of students for my practicum. This meant that I was not building any rapport with any of the students and I would have to prove myself again and again in every class I teach. Time management was another issue that I have had to contend with especially in

preparing lessons and dealing with university assignments. But this was a steep learning curve for me in the sense I have had the opportunity to see the profession from a casual teacher's point of view. (InSite student blog, 13 October 2016)

UTS professional experience administration staff and subject co-ordinators have expressed concern about the Professional Experience reports that were prepared for InSite students by THS staff. These reports are used by pre-service teachers in applications for employment, and there was a view that the InSite students' reports were not adequately 'showcasing' the InSite students' achievements or demonstrating where professional growth had occurred. For comparison, a small selection of InSite student Professional Experience 1 reports and traditional-mode Professional Experience 1 reports are included at **Appendix L**.

InSite students highlighted the value of the program in building rapport with the THS students, which greatly contributed to positive teaching experiences. There were concerns raised, however, that remaining at THS for professional experience or going to a nearby high school for a second professional experience, would not give them the same breadth of experience as working with students from other socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Attempts to both facilitate and understand the learning journey of the InSite students have been important components of the first prototype, and data has been captured through student completion of *Learning Profiles*, blog entries on CIC and formal reflections such as *My Learning Journey: Me as a teacher*. Independent analysis of the InSITE reflective blogs was provided by Dr Adam Aitken, Writing Analytics Researcher (UTS – IML/CIC) (undated). He concludes that the more in-depth blogs highlight the positive impact of the students' collaborative relationships and reveal positive growth in students' reflections. There is evidence of students evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and reflecting on the impact of their practice. Dr Aitken's full report is found at **Appendix M**.

The InSite students completed learning profiles near the commencement and near the conclusion of the first prototype. They also engaged in regular check-ins. Professor Ruth Deakin-Crick has analysed these profiles and her 'check-in' observations, and she found:

- Students self-reported learning dispositions – very little change pre and post in terms of the learning and reflection of their work.
- Changes in collaboration and belonging – testament to the tight-knit group that we have.
- They haven't really developed in terms of their reflection on teaching and learning.
- Some of the students have made very significant changes – however the sorts of changes we were hoping for were around their thoughts about learning.
- They are beginning to make insightful observations in their check ins.
- The type of thinking is more of a 'let's get the job done'.

(source: Minutes of Planning Meeting, 3 November 2016).

A copy of the InSite students' collective pre- and post-Learning Power Profiles are found at **Appendix N**.

An attempt was also made to collect data on InSite student self-efficacy, but only three of nine students returned their personal evaluation. Similarly, supervising teachers, mentors and InSite students were asked to complete a survey on the students' progress toward Professional Teaching Standards, but these provided no significant insight into students' progress. Future InSite prototypes should require formal assessment of student progress to be embedded in classroom and school activities in order to generate meaningful statements about their progress towards the Professional Standards and their careers as futures-focused teachers.

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. The new InSite students (2017) should be matched/aligned with a MTeach student studying in the traditional model for a small comparative study.
2. Measures should be put in place to collect longitudinal research data on the professional development of the InSite students upon graduation and into their teaching careers.

3. Subject delivery should include assessable components that are specifically designed to measure InSite student progress.
4. Include measures for identifying students' capabilities and formalised ways of addressing student progress, or lack thereof, and specific progress toward Internship mode.
5. Review Professional Experience 1 and Professional Experience 2 reporting and consider the types of evidence of learning that will be collated by traditional-mode by peers and produced at competitive interviews.
6. Identify additional professional experience placement locations that allow diversity of teaching experience, ideally where 'futures-focused' practices are being implemented.

C. *INSITE CORE DRIVER 2: ANALYSING AND RESPONDING TO COMPLEX DATA INSITE CORE DRIVER 5: DEVELOPING AS A FLEXIBLE, SUPPORTIVE AND EVOLVING PROGRAM*

The *InSite: Re-imaging Initial Teacher Education* document to 'provide background for the appointment of a suitable research and development leader' includes details of the proposed "Measurement Model and Data Collection", "Learning Analytics" and "Learning Architecture for InSite: the improvement intervention" (pp. 5-6). The sources of data included:

- student teacher observation measures (framed against the TESA framework drawn from the South Australian Teaching for Effective Learning research model) collected through SPARK
- student teacher pre- and post-learning power profiles
- narratives of transformation
- university subjects assessments
- reflective learning journal.

The tools for data collection were:

- SPARK Assessment data for 360 degree formative assessment and reflection
- inSITE Reflections – multi-site blogging for social learning
- MyEd activity – a learning management environment

- Declara – Learning Power for Resilient Agency Profiles – through the SOLA platform
- Evidence Hub for collaborative knowledge building (TBC).

For the purposes of this report, analysis has only been undertaken of focus group data and documents and artefacts that were available to the researcher via the Google Drive. The researcher was able to locate the shared blogs on the CIC site and this data has also been included. For completeness in evaluating Core Driver 2: Analysing and Responding to Complex Data, integration of the sources of, and tools for, data collection used throughout the first prototype should be formally included.

It is also noted that areas identified for research in June 2016 (Minutes of Meeting) were extensive. Taking account of the strengths and challenges of InSite Prototype One, as outlined above, the initially proposed research directions should be revisited and pursued, where deemed appropriate. A clearly articulated Improvement Science research plan for Prototype Two should include:

- ‘snapshot’ research to enable rapid cycles
- evaluation research to reflect and act upon each iteration of the program
- comparative and longitudinal research to determine the effectiveness of the InSite program to prepare futures-focused educators working in schools after graduation.

A number of additional data sources were used to determine the degree to which the program was responding in sufficiently rapid cycles, as identified through principles of Improvement Science. First, the *Three Stars and a Wish* observation and assessment method used at THS has provided useful feedback (evidenced in 19 May 2016 meeting notes). *Three Stars* identified positives which continued to be reflected in the focus groups in October. *Wishes* as at May 2016 appeared to have translated into *stress* by June 2016 (Minutes of Meeting) and *frustrations* by October (Focus Groups). Consideration needs to be given as to what constitutes rapid cycle evaluation and action.

The leadership team is responding to emerging research data. This is evident through planning initiatives such as the recent Evaluation Day and Planning Meeting, where clear Action Items were established in response to existing data sets and themes emerging from this evaluation research. Review of the monthly Minutes of Meeting demonstrates innovative planning for the program in both the short and long term. It may be prudent to revisit these planning and meeting documents to extract elements where it may be timely to implement for the second/expanded iteration of InSite

Recommendations for the second prototype

1. The leadership team should revisit the monthly Minutes of Meeting and with the benefit of hindsight identify activities that are suitable for the second prototype and align with innovative practice and the futures-focused agenda.
2. A clearly articulated research program that includes a detailed research methodology and timeline should be established as a collaboration between THS, UTS School of Education, and UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures.
3. Formal protocols should be put into place to identify students who are at risk or have specific deficit areas, and to remediate these issues where appropriate. Alternatively put structures in place to monitor student progress and report risk of failure to the student.
4. The Leadership Group and/or Research Group should be informed by, and where possible establish links, with academic and school staff delivering:
 - a. Melbourne University – Master of Teaching
 - b. Oxford Deanery projects

8. Conclusion

The first InSite Hub School prototype has achieved a great deal in a one-year period. The commitment of the leadership team to develop an innovative teacher preparation course is outstanding. The passion the InSite students have toward the project is a testament to its strengths.

The initial prototype has demonstrated success in many areas. Most notably, the development of clear guiding core drivers and reflection around these principles; the collaborative and supportive spirit of the InSite student group; authentic immersion of the InSite students into the school and a commendable mentorship program.

As expected when any existing structure is challenged there have been areas of conflict, but these have not been sufficient to overshadow the positive benefits of the program.

Many recommendations have been made in this Report to assist the Leadership Team in refining and expanding the InSite program in 2017.

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