2017

Mentoring beginning teachers in Catholic schools in Western Australia: An exploratory study

John Topliss
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF
INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH QUESTION

Introduction

In the previous chapter, data was presented to answer the five subsidiary questions posed at the beginning of the study. For ease of reference, these are re-presented:

1) Does participation in a mentoring program for Early Career Teachers affect their career aspirations?
2) What perceptions do CUWA Post-Internship (Pre-Service) teachers hold regarding mentoring prior to the commencement of their teaching career?
3) How have these graduate teacher perceptions of mentoring changed as a result of having been teaching for three school terms?
4) What perceptions regarding mentoring do new graduates hold at the commencement of their teaching career?
5) What perceptions do principals have of how mentoring is conceived of in a Catholic School?

The integrative question is now considered. The integrative question is not only a question in its own right, but by its very nature, forms the backbone of the research. As such, it is used to frame the present chapter, it reads, “On the basis of the subsidiary questions 1-5, what key principles, conclusions and recommendations underpin the development of a Pre-Service and Beginning Teacher mentoring framework?” What follows is structured in terms of the three components of the integrative question. First, in terms of establishing principles, nine key findings as these relate to the subsidiary questions are considered individually. Second, 10 conclusions drawn from the data relating to the subsidiary questions are presented. Third, recommendations for developing a mentoring framework are made and anchored to what has been identified as the Borromeo Mentoring Framework.
**Principles for developing a Beginning Teachers’ mentoring framework**

To answer the subsidiary questions, data was collected and presented in the previous chapter. From that data, ten principles could be identified. Table 5.1 presents the ten principles, shows the subsidiary question to which each relates, and indicates the cohort that found the principle to be significant. As can be seen from the Table, not all principles were relevant to all three cohorts. In many ways, this is to be expected as Pre-Service teachers, Early Career Teachers and principals will have different priorities depending upon their stage of career development and role in an educational organization. Such differentiation is seen as a strength rather than a deficit for two reasons. First, focusing on a particular set of principles at a particular stage of development allows the individual to be engaged with what is relevant to them at the time, and also makes engagement with mentoring more manageable. Second, between the three cohorts, all ten principles receive coverage, so cross-pollination may occur for any cohort for which a particular principle is not seen (at least currently) as being significant. The ten principles, which are then considered individually, are as follows:

1. Complying with regulatory documentation
2. Establishing the fundamentals of mentoring
3. Recognising mentor attributes
4. Understanding the need for feedback in mentoring
5. Adopting a system-wide mentoring approach
6. Facilitating a school-based mentoring approach
7. Interfacing with teacher education institutions
8. Mentoring and Religious Education
9. Mentoring in the city vis-à-vis the country
10. Generating employment security
Table 5.1

*Principles Identified in the Data Relating to Specific Subsidiary Questions and their Significance for each of the Three Cohorts Involved in the Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Key principles identified from Subsidiary Questions</th>
<th>Principles related to subsidiary questions 1-5 data (as identified in Chapter 4)</th>
<th>Significance for:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complying with regulatory documentation</td>
<td>1 3 5</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Establishing fundamentals of mentoring</td>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recognising mentor attributes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding the need for feedback</td>
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<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Adopting a system-based approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Facilitating a school-based approach</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Interfacing with teacher education institutions</td>
<td>2 5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mentoring and Religious Education</td>
<td>2 3 5</td>
<td>✔ ✔ 2 ✔ ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mentoring in the City vis-à-vis the Country</td>
<td>2 3 5</td>
<td>✔ ✔ 2 ✔ ✔</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Generating employment security</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6 4 7</td>
</tr>
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Notes:

1 *Ticks/checks represent significance of the principle as expressed by a particular cohort.*
2 *This principle will only be significant for those CUWA students who are desirous of teaching in a Catholic school.*

**Principle 1: Complying with Regulatory Documentation.**

A pre-service teacher mentoring program is seen as highly desirable in the National School Improvement Tool ([NSIT], ACER, 2016) and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers ([APST], AITSL, 2011). Such an initiative has long been identified as an important part of a school’s induction process (Fiore & Whitaker, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2004; Wong, 2001). Robust documentation, with the aim of better equipping pre-service teachers and the principals in whose schools they will complete their practicums, may signal
to pre-service teachers that peer involvement with their career aspiration is important. In the longer term, such documentation if acted upon, may also help to stem the significant teacher attrition that is occurring. An Australian study undertaken by AITSL (2015) found that, “For primary school teachers, 11 per cent of those teaching for one to two years considered an alternative career; however, this increased to 24 per cent for primary school teachers teaching between three to five years” (p. 2). By way of comparison, other countries have similar concerns. In a USA study, Brown (2015) found that,

New teachers who are assigned mentors are more likely to continue teaching than those who are not assigned mentors. In 2008-2009, 92 percent of those who had first-year mentors were still teaching, compared to 84 percent of those without mentors. By 2011-12, 86 percent of those who had first-year mentors were teaching, compared to 71 percent who did not have mentors (pp. 1-2).

Easing the transition from intern to ECT via the assistance of a mentor who has the backing of a government mandated program may be one effective way of retaining teachers in the workforce.

Principals involved in the study recognised the importance of mentoring. In fact, such a perspective was expressed through the recommendation of developing a system-wide approach. Principal insights from focus interview questions (Appendix J) included:

An outline of what support is offered, as a school to Beginning Teachers is important, as is I believe incorporating the graduating standards from AITSL [APST] into what we are doing in schools. {Principal 14}

I am building so that the new teacher can have the time to talk about their Professional Learning and so on and a little bit of work on the AITSL [APST] standards. {Principal 10}

In summary, a consensus from the principals’ responses revealed a disparity in the type of mentoring being offered to an ECT in a Catholic school. A major reason for this was the perceived lack of system-based guide-lines for the training of mentors and principals. Principals, through the current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), have minimal
guide-lines for including mentoring in induction processes. In fact, the present EBA states that there is an induction process offered for an ECT during their first year of teaching and that they will receive a written progress statement at the end of their third term of teaching. The agreement (Section 27) between the CEOWA and the Independent Education Union Western Australia, referred to the importance of the principal’s role in induction as,

A teacher in his or her first year of teaching shall participate in an induction process of one year’s duration, unless the teacher and the employer agree that the induction process shall continue for a further year. The induction process shall be under the terms and conditions already established to assist the teacher’s professional development. The employer shall provide a written statement to the teacher one term before the end of the teacher’s first year, outlining the teacher’s progress and development. (CEOWA, 2015, p. 37)

On more of a system-based level, since 2015 the Executive Director of CEOWA has mandated that all Catholic schools create an Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP) that addressed each of the NSIT recommendations. Using their ASIP as the vehicle, a school can implement a mentoring program, which would enable principals to assist ECTs in the completion of essential National, State and System-based requirements such as Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST); Quality Catholic School (QCS) requirements; TRBWA registration; and Accreditation to Teach Religious Education in Catholic Schools. One way of ensuring that such documents are complied with and that mentoring is progressing as intended would be to engage in periodic evaluation as part of an accountability mechanism.

**Principle 2: Establishing the Fundamentals of Mentoring.**

The literature review identified 18 key theme descriptors (or simply, descriptors) pertaining to developing a framework for effective mentoring (Table 3.1). Once identified, these were tested against the three cohorts involved in the study – pre-service teachers, ECTs and principals. The subsequent analysis (Table 4.5) highlighted four descriptors as being
significant for all three cohorts, these being: Descriptor 1: Personal expectations; Descriptor 10: Mentor characteristics and assistance provided; Descriptor 13: Mentoring programs and experiences; Descriptor 16: Emotions during mentoring experience. Further nuanced from focus group interviews, these descriptors indicated how the mentoring of ECTs was affected by regional isolation; a lack of suitable mentors; inadequate access to technology; contractual arrangements for ECTs; budgetary constraints; and a lack of system-provided professional development (Appendix M & N).

It would appear from the above findings that in any dialogue around the fundamentals of mentoring, the following factors would need to be considered:

- Both mentor and mentee have certain expectations of each other – these need to be identified early in the relationship;
- There are certain characteristics of mentors that are desirable – this aspect is considered further under Principle 3;
- Mentoring programs that provide direct experiences – the place of praxis must be appreciated;
- An understanding that mentoring must encompass the affective as well as the cognitive domain – mentees require emotional support;
- Contextual factors need to be considered in mentoring – geographical location may be an important factor in mentoring success;
- Trained mentors can offer more than untrained mentors – although an informal mentoring relationship is better than no mentoring at all;
- Availability of relevant technology may make the task of mentoring easier – especially for those in remote locations;
- Mentees who have a more secure employment position may have greater commitment to a mentoring program – this matter is considered further under Principle 9.
- Without an adequate budget for release time, sourcing potential mentors may become problematic;
- System-based support for school-based mentoring is preferable to schools going it alone – discussed further under Principle 5.

Support from focus group interviews (Appendix H & J) indicates that matters relating to the above dot points are applicable to pre-service teachers as well as principals,
Coming into the prac, we had two Praccies [practicum students] so we got to have a whole staff lunch. It was good to get the other staff and with two other teachers in a triple stream school you got to know them. We had a wonderful system where emails would fly through and they just said I’d send you all my programs this term. That was really open as well, as the Year six team meeting twice a week at the beginning and end of the week you could talk with them about what was happening and cross mark [student work].

{CUWA Participant 1}

I found the same thing with the triple stream. It was very easy to do your planning because the three of you had to work together. Everybody, well, one person would do programming and having that support there, is better for graduate teachers. {CUWA Participant 2}

There was the Beginning Teachers PD [Professional Development] at XXXX [school] and we had to bear the cost or find alternative strategies to manage the classes whilst those Beginning Teachers went to the PD {Principal 4}.

My school has been fortunate enough to access those video regional conference facilities, so it will be interesting to see how that may be able to piggy back up on that PD using the technology but that two hour PD is not enough. {Principal 7}.

I have one of my 3 graduates who are attending the CEOWA leadership program [The Trial ECT program]. He says that the collegiality he is developing helps him feel a part of the system but he gets more practical help from the senior teacher who is his mentor here at school. {Principal 13}.

Schools are busy places; teachers are busy people. Sometimes, remote schools have added pressures of staff turnover and the need to continuously have something in place for Beginning Teachers {Principal 14}

Establishing fundamentals is important, for as Coe, Aloisi, Higgins and Elliot-Major (2014) proffered, “... teachers working in schools with ‘more supportive’ professional environments continued to improve significantly after three years, while teachers in the least supportive schools actually declined in their effectiveness” (p. 42). A greater emphasis on fundamentals may obviate the need for patching up at a later date a poorly thought out mentoring framework and subsequent program.
Principle 3: Recognising Mentor Attributes.

Table 5.1 indicates that the above principle is the only one that seems to have direct significance for participants in all three cohorts. As such, it needs to be at the forefront of any mentoring framework and subsequent program. A conclusion of the study was that the guarantee of a mentor may not alleviate all of the problems faced by an ECT. However, a mentor with the following attributes is highly likely to provide an ECT with professional security, stability and satisfaction:

- Advanced Pedagogical skills;
- Understanding of current educational issues;
- Honesty;
- Willingness and ability to provide meaningful feedback;
- Emotional Intelligence (empathy); and
- Content knowledge.

Two of the CUWA students personally observed some these mentor attributes in operation:

Someone who is able to make good relationship with you that builds that first step or point of contact, so you can always feel free and feel relaxed and not scared to contact and say like I need some help with this. So, they're not intimidating they are open and friendly but also professional and not afraid to say like what the truth is.

{CUWA Teacher 3}

What I found that my mentor teacher does really well was set objectives for the week for myself. So, it could be giving a compliment to every child on Wednesday. Little things like that you can build on like giving you a structure to go off and giving you feedback and making it actual relevant feedback like your timing is off, but really getting down to why is your timing off and what can we do to help you, or give you resources or things that you could implement to make your teaching better instead of just saying this needs to be worked on.

{CUWA Teacher 1}

An implication from this study is that focussing on the key attributes of a mentor could significantly influence the emotional transition of an ECT and bolster their future career aspirations. Sharply honed mentor skills eased the transition from CUWA Intern to ECT, as two Beginning Teachers commented:

A bit worried more like I wasn't sure I could do this, but once you get over the first month yes it was... and I haven't really been mentored before and to
have someone tell you that you're going to make mistakes and it’s ok, so you
don’t have to be perfect as I have that type of personality...it’s good to have
that! \textit{Beginning Teacher 1}

I think you also start to think about like where I'm going in my career.
What's your future going to be like? I know for example in my learning area
you have to specialise in a type of science if you want to get anywhere other
than Year seven and eight you know. So, it’s kind of what you’re doing and
so you start thinking a bit more about your future. \textit{Beginning Teacher 7}

The value of introducing a parallel training program for both ECTs and mentors was
suggested by Salazar, Lowenstein and Brill (2010) and Whitaker and Fiore (2013). The
implementation of such a program would provide a two-fold benefit, namely, enhancing an
ECT’s teaching through constructive feedback; and engaging a mentor through the learning
of current pedagogy. A further finding was that the mentoring of Beginning Teachers in
regional areas was influenced by the broader experiences of their principal. The influence of
the principal in the mentoring process can impact ECTs in both lifestyle and educational
choices, as two principals suggested:

... we needed to talk about how you stock the fridge and get some easy
cooked meals. \textit{Principal 6}

We had a staff member have an accident [after driving on her own for 4
hours] on coming back from PD just recently; it’s a real issue for regional
schools. \textit{Principal 5}

The complexity and handling of professional or personal issues experienced by an ECT may
be alleviated by a mentor and/or school leader who possesses the requisite attributes.

\textbf{Principle 4: Understanding the importance of mentor feedback to ECTs.}

The two types of feedback mostly provided by mentors to interns and ECTs were
highlighted. With regard to the former, the importance of the inclusion of targeted teaching
strategies in a tailored mentoring program is found in two recent Grattan Institute Reports:
\textit{Targeted Teaching} by Goss, Hunter, Romanes and Parsonage (2015) and \textit{Widening Gaps} by
Goss, Sonnemann, Chisholm and Nelson (2016). A mentor trained to collaboratively to work with an ECT in the implementation of targeted teaching strategies could instill confidence through offering, as composite points from the above two sources indicate,

1. Professional collegial support;
2. Exposure to relevant school policies and procedures;
3. Peer assistance with assessment tasks;
4. Relevant teacher registration requirements are met; and
5. Encouragement for ECTs settling into country areas and with their living conditions.

Figure 4.5 indicated that “Exchange of Teaching Ideas” with mentors during the internship (highly satisfied + satisfied categories), although very important (46.15%), appeared to have less of an impact on their mentees than did feedback on classroom management (69.23%) and the provision of emotional support (69.23%). This may be the result, in terms of perception anyway, of having had sufficient previous exposure to teaching ideas in a university course or professional practicum.

The significance of feedback via “Social Conversation” (70.27%) was judged to be as important for ECTs as the “Exchange of Teaching Ideas” (70.27%) (Table 4.15). Such a factor may be a key indicator in the development of the mentoring relationship. This understanding accords well with the findings of Leak (1986), who similarly found that social conversation was one of the most beneficial types of feedback. She stated with reference to her study on Beginning Teachers that, “Sixty-seven percent ranked Informal Conversation with the mentor as the function that they valued most highly” (p. 24). The benefit to mentoring of social or informal conversation observed from the present study is in assisting mentors and ECTs to build professional rapport. It must be cautioned, however, that as desirable as the building of strong mentee/mentor relationships are, the mentor must be careful to still maintain professional objectivity and integrity with their mentee. It is possible
to become too close and so create a counterproductive mentoring experience. Reading
between the lines, it may be possible that this is occurring in the focus question interview
(Appendix M & N) response from the following ECT,

My mentor is awesome and he took my class and he does things... here is
my phone number, my email... that really helped me and like he is right into
it, helps take the class and that’s a lot of help. \{Beginning Teacher 16\}.

The degree to which ECTs found that a mentor benefited their teaching (Table 4.6) was lower
(66.67%), than for CUWA responses (92.31%). It may be the case that the compulsory
structure of the one-on-one mentoring program offered to CUWA Internship students
indicates that the more structured mentoring program provided for these students resulted in
an overall higher satisfaction rate for mentoring, compared to that of the Beginning Teachers.

Currently, there is no official mandatory training program for ECT mentors on how to
provide feedback except for that being offered for school leaders through the Professional
Supervision Unit for a school Head of Professional Practice (HOPP) coordinated by the
CUWA[http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/fremantle/colleges/education/pg_newsletter_iss2_o
t09.pdf]. This is despite the importance of providing focused feedback to ECTs having been
advocated in the literature. Boogren (2015), for example, stated that “To help Beginning
Teachers identify areas that need improvement (and therefore, engage in deliberate practice),
a mentor can provide focused feedback – feedback that specifically refers to a teacher’s
progress toward his or her growth goals” (p. 53). There may be the existence of a culture
where the mentor feels that they need to act as a fount of all knowledge and wisdom, whereas
in fact this is not the case and neither is it desirable. One person, albeit a more experienced
one, telling another person what to do is not what mentoring is all about – as was affirmed in
Chapter Two of this thesis. As Bickers (2016) points out, such focus on the importance of a
single individual is not conducive to supporting the development of a sound system of
education, “Australia needs to rethink its “lone teacher in front of a classroom” mentality if it

169
wants a more internationally competitive education system…”


Mentoring built on a mutually beneficial relationship is probably more sustainable than one built on only one way feedback. In this regard, the Department of Education, Victoria (2010) found that,

The reality in many schools today is that while assigned mentors may know more than new teachers about certain areas, such as school procedure or classroom management, the new teacher may sometimes know more than the mentor about new teaching strategies. If the school assumes the mentor always knows best, even about teaching strategies, innovative new teachers might quickly experience the mentor relationship as an oppressive one (p. 14).

A good starting point for training mentors in how to provide feedback to ECTs may be the AITSL web-site, which provides some online training and guidance for mentor teachers (http://www.toolkitaitsl.edu.au/category/coaching-mentoring). It may also be worthwhile for the CEOWA exploring a partnership with the CUWA in which the Professional Supervision Unit could be utilized to the greater advantage of mentors. This general notion of establishing partnerships was presented by the Australian Federal Government’s Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group in their 2014 report Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers, as being important for training mentors in the dispensing of feedback to ECTs,

The most effective professional experience is not only aligned and developed with course work but also supervised by effective teachers in collaboration with providers. International benchmarking of best practice has identified that staff leading and supervising professional experience in schools should be exemplary teachers who have undertaken focused training for their roles (p. 52).
The development of a targeted feedback training program for mentors is likely to improve the relationship between a mentor and an ECT. Several CUWA participants and ECTs observed that some mentors struggled initiating conversations around feedback, noting,

The mentoring had sort of dropped off I think at my school it’s not the official school thing that they do! Um… the beginning of the year my Head of Year was my mentor but he didn’t feel quite comfortable about that and he felt that in second term I should choose someone else. So, I chose someone else but it is kind of up to me to chase that up and find the time and I really haven’t done that. {Beginning Teacher 2}

… we sit next to each other – my mentor sits next to me, but most of the time we’re like ships apart we rarely see each other. When he’s there, I say “what can I do here?” We have a chat, it’s nothing formal. {Beginning Teacher 3}

Did not receive a lot [of mentoring]. {CUWA Participant 4}

Providing feedback in the area of teaching and learning is normally the main area of concern for a mentor, based on their professional knowledge and experience. The issue from a mentee perspective, however, seems to be that it is not the message communicated by the mentor that is important, rather, it is the manner in which the feedback is delivered that helps to cement any relationship. As one participant remarked, “A mentor needs to be willing to mentor” {CUWA Participant 10}.


A system-wide approach to mentoring would obviate the need for each school to design its own mentoring program. Mentoring principles do not differ significantly, they simply need to be adapted for context. A system-based approach would free up time in schools to concentrate on implementation rather than development of a program. The 163 CEOWA schools all devising their own mentoring principles and creating their own mentoring framework seems counterproductive to the mentoring enterprise. The introduction of a system-wide mentor training program could also better inform mentors about access to
system-based ECT initiatives and provide strategies for mentors similar to those discussed in
the literature review, such as focused feedback and Learning Walks, that help ECTs to settle
into the profession. A system-based approach could also ensure that standards and
expectations are met and ad hoc ventures deterred. Insights from one ECT’s experience based
on focus group interview responses (Appendix N) of mentoring are illuminating in this
regard,

I think it’s definitely like, if you are going to have a mentor program, that
mentor needs to be trained in like what they need to look out for. My mentor
is really great, he’s been really helpful, he’s been teaching for four years, so
he’s still in the same boat, he teaches the same way that I do... not everyone
can be a mentor I don’t think. You need to think about what they’re
experiencing rather than “look if you need anything come and see me, if not
I don’t want to hear about it. \{Beginning Teacher 3\}

There are many benefits of having system-wide mentoring guidelines, including,

- Inculcating the necessary ethos for teaching in Catholic schools;
- Producing commonality across the system which facilitates mobility;
- Creating and providing mentor-training programs;
- Catering for system-wide Religious Education Accreditation requirements;
- Supporting mandatory participation in a revised CEOWA ECT program;
- Tying mentoring to the APST, which might assist with permanency;
- Establishing a framework procedures for a school mentoring program;
- Resourcing school-based mentoring coordinators.

Apart from the above points, a system-wide mentoring training program also has
implications for leadership training. The “Early Career Teacher Program”, coordinated by the
CEOWA, forms the introductory pathway for ECTs to enter the system Leadership Program
as shown in Figure 5.1 (CEOWA, 2014). The Early Career Teacher Program was a
compulsory program for ECTs conducted over their first two years of teaching. Schools
received monetary support for releasing ECTs from school as part of their initial professional
development. The recognition of the aspirations for leadership by ECTs (Table 4.9, question
theme 3) demonstrated the importance of the establishment of the CEOWA Early Career Teacher Program as the basis for its leadership programs in 2014. Regrettably, the CEOWA ceased the ECT program at the end of the 2016 school year, as it reviews the delivery of this and other leadership programs during 2017. On the basis of findings from the present research, the reinstitution of this or a similar program for ECTs would be highly beneficial.

![Diagram of CEOWA leadership program pathway]

*Figure 5.1. ECTs CEOWA leadership program pathway.*
(Retrieved from CEOWA, 2014).

The inherent lack of a system-wide mentoring framework for Catholic Education in Western Australia creates a challenge for many principals and mentoring coordinators in schools. Understandably then, many school leaders do not possess the necessary training and understanding of the principles of mentoring, as reflected in principal comments,
Nice to have a Framework… would be a great guide to develop your school context. To have a framework would be a great guide for a start. {Principal 3}

Yes [regarding a framework], because ultimately these graduates with experience are going to move across the system and you’d like a level playing field and you would like to at least think they have received at least similar mentoring in their previous school to evaluate them. {Principal 4}

Systems component and then at the school do this in context. {Principal 5}

This school does have a specific policy pertaining to Beginning Teachers. Why reinvent the wheel? Let CEOWA create a generic style policy that all schools can adopt. {Principal 13}

I believe mentoring programs should be school driven. Each school has a unique context. However, I also believe that the system should acknowledge more, the importance of mentoring in our schools and the time and personnel required to do this well. {Principal 14}

The development of a system-wide mentoring framework for CEOWA schools might begin with the key components as suggested by Salazar, Lowenstein and Brill (2010) and Whitaker and Fiore (2013):

- The creation of the roles of system and school-based mentoring co-ordinators;
- The development of a mentor-training program; and
- The facilitation of new school-based mentoring models and programs for schools.

From here, a system-wide mentoring framework may move in the direction promulgated by many researchers over decades, including Knowles (1980), McNally and Oberski (2003), Corrigan and Loughran (2008), McNally and Blake (2008, 2012), Hudson (2010a), Jensen and Reichel (2011), and Bartlett-Bragg (2015). Distilling the composite insights of these researchers indicates that integration of the following fundamentals of mentoring would subsequently assist the implementation of a system-wide framework for mentoring,

- Structured mentor feedback;
- Self-directed and collaborative learning;
- The influence of a mentor’s positive attributes; and
- The use of technology to assist the mentoring process.
It is encouraging that such fundamentals have been recognised by principals in the present study as being integral to establishing a mentoring program. Focus group interviews yielded the following observations,

... the Beginning Teacher and this teacher have discussed the particular aspect of teaching that will be focused upon. For example, this week, she was focusing on how effective the Beginning Teacher's questioning was in relation to extending the wait time between the question and the answer. \{Principal 13\}

We've got two new graduates and probably the same next year, I'm just lucky I've got some good leaders who are happy to be mentors to these people. \{Principal 6\}

Time, structured meetings, a mentor teacher. I believe there is a need to train mentor teachers on how to mentor. \{Principal 14\}

I believe that the best professional learning comes from working closely with excellent mentor teachers at school. These teachers should be trained in how best to work effectively with graduate teachers especially in terms of identifying areas that need improvement. This can be supplemented with some PD [Professional Development] from the system. \{Principal 13\}

... one of the other things with the mentoring it seems like the mentoring goes for a couple of years or goes for a year and then stops. The one thing sometimes that you wish that was there was the networking between the people getting mentored. So that over time they almost become in control of their own personal growth and professional growth and keep those lines of communication open. So, it's no longer people mentoring them they are then sharing those experiences amongst themselves. \{Principal 12\}

You do need to have mentors with high EQ. You must make time for the process to occur. This is a budgetary issue. If you know you want the mentor teacher or teacher leader to spend regular times with the Beginning Teachers, then do the math's and make generous allowances in your annual budget. \{Principal 13\}

It will be interesting to see now as my school has been fortunate enough to access those video regional conference facilities, so it will be interesting to see how that may be able to piggy back up on that PD using the technology. \{Principal 6\}

Nowadays, yes there is that tyranny of distance but that can be cut down in lots of ways like through email and through how we can communicate quickly though that and questions can be answered through say 50 people in a number of seconds. \{Principal 12\}
The instigation of a system-wide coordinator, working with a school mentor teacher and mentoring coordinator, could assist in the interpretation of the system-wide framework and the establishment of school-based mentoring programs, as two principals suggested in focus group interviews (Appendix J),

I believe that the best professional learning comes from working closely with excellent mentor teachers at school. These teachers should be trained in how best to work effectively with graduate teachers especially in terms of identifying areas that need improvement. This can be supplemented with some PD [Professional Development] from the system. \{Principal 1\}

I believe mentoring programs should be school driven. Each school has a unique context. However, I also believe that the system should acknowledge more the importance of mentoring in our schools and the time and personnel required to do this well. \{Principal 2\}

The training of mentors in how to use the APST to improve teaching, together with the use of an online emotional agility tools, such as a Myers-Briggs instrument (Lawrence, 2011), might further aid a mentoring co-ordinator and leaders in the selection of mentors. This might be undertaken by assisting with feedback training in areas such as individual goal-setting; group professional learning communities; and Instructional Learning Walks. Training in such skills could assist a school mentoring coordinator to nurture an ECT’s emotional and cognitive resilience in a range of individual, group and school community settings. The benefit of utilizing a specialized emotional agility tool was described by David (2016) as being desirable,

The way we navigate our inner world - our everyday thoughts, emotions, experiences, and self-stories - is the most important determinant of our life success. It drives our actions, careers, relationships, happiness, health; everything (p. 2).

A model based on the discussion above is presented in Figure 5.2. It is envisaged that the model could be appealed to for creating the position of a system-based mentoring
Figure 5.2. Structure for developing a system-based mentoring coordinator’s role.

coordinator/s to support principals, other school leaders and school-based coordinators in the task of delivering an effective mentoring program.

**Principle 6: Facilitating a School-based Mentoring Approach.**

The establishment of the role of school-based mentoring coordinator is important for a number of reasons in that it,

- Signals the importance of mentoring in the school;
- Creates a locally contextualised position;
- Gives gravitas to the incumbent holding the position;
- Establishes a person to whom mentors can turn for assistance/advice;
- Provides a contact point at the school for a system-based mentoring coordinator;
- Relieves the principal and other leaders of the immediate responsibility for the schools’ mentoring program

The need for establishing such a position is supported by the following comments from focus group interviews (Appendix J),
It has to be school-based because of context within which they are working. Every school has their own context even though we are all in the same boat it has to be within context in which they are working. {Principal 2}

Additional to the work of this mentor teacher, we use another key teacher. She has one day out of her own class every Thursday and she goes into each of our Beginning Teachers’ classrooms. She co-teaches with them. Generally, the Beginning Teacher & this teacher have discussed the particular aspect of teaching that will be focused upon. {Principal 13}

I just went and asked after the second Beginning Teacher’s meeting and asked for a mentor. I’m pretty sure I was the only one out of 20 of us who hasn’t got one. They were trying to get it up and going, but because there were so many new staff it was difficult to have a leadership member in charge of all of them. So, I just went and asked the lady “do you want to be my mentor?” {Beginning Teacher 1}

We have just had a new staff member start, so IT [Information Technology] is a big thing if you don’t get that sorted straight away, like for accessing absentees… simple things. You need procedures in place so you can set these things up so they can access email, you can get onto the internet and access the principal blog… they are simple things but it should be just a process where you can just do it and tick it off. {Principal 2}

Similar sentiments are also found in the literature. As far back as 1975 Stenhouse (in Swann, 2009) later observed of his earlier work, “Stenhouse (1975), for example, in a discussion of the role of the teacher … goes on to add ‘highly desirable’ the ‘readiness to allow other teachers to observe one’s work … and to discuss it with them on an open and honest basis” (p. 99). Moyle (2015) wrote, “When coaching and mentoring approaches to school improvement are valued they are embedded into performance and school development policies. This means that performance development plans are explicitly linked to coaching and mentoring and school improvement” (p. 2). Moyle’s words find support in those of Aspland (2016), who stated,

Research shows that graduates feel ready and prepared to teach but, when they enter the classrooms, they encounter loneliness and isolation; a lack of emotional, expert support and resources; and disillusioning school cultures (Retrieved from the ABC website http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-04/aspland-we-cant-afford-to-ignore-the-teacher-exodus/7139130)
Finally, Swann (2009) also commented from her own study’s findings that a sense of security, in part, “...came from the school-wide mentoring system which ensured that every member of staff, including administrators, cleaning and kitchen staff, teaching assistants and the head-teacher herself had someone to turn to, in complete confidence, to talk to about any issue arising in their work” (p. 84).

A significant observation from the study is that the principal and deputies are important in the mentoring process, although not necessarily in the role of ECT mentor. Principals and deputies may be perceived as being either too distant from the actual classroom situation or, by their position in the school, be perceived as being intimidatory. The desirability of the physical proximity of the ECT to a mentor other than a key leader is articulated in the following comments from primary teacher focus group interviews (Appendix M & N),

So being able to go to her [A Senior Teacher] as our mentor, rather than the principal, has been really good because she knows a little more about those kids and what it’s like to be in the room with those kids. {Beginning Teacher 4}

With me my mentor is my head of year as well and I’ve actually found it a bit difficult because there is some kind of politics that goes on in our particular office and so he’s kind of had to put out fires as well as being my mentor ... I kind of think it’s better to have a peer or just a teacher not principal or a head of year. {Beginning Teacher 1}

Mine is also a deputy principal hence I’ve had 2 sessions over a year and it doesn’t work. {Beginning Teacher 2}

Secondary teachers expressed a similar sentiment. In three out of the four focus group interviews and in the March open-ended survey questions (Appendices K, M & N), several secondary Beginning Teachers experienced tension with certain mentors who held positions of leadership. Such tension between some ECTs and their mentors became evident as some ECTs commented:
Could definitely be improved! They need to choose mentors who are not in positions of leadership and who have time to help us and give us practical advice. {Participant 1}

Yes, because the majority of the mentors are heads of learning or deputies and have no time for us. {Participant 2}

By having mentors who volunteer to do the role, rather than just delegating senior staff as mentors, as they do not have enough time to follow up on it. {Participant 3}.

In cases such as these, where leaders were also mentors, the benefits of mentoring may be negated. This was also the finding of Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce and Hunter (2010) who indicated, by way of example, “In one notable case all three teachers were new to the school, two were new graduates and the principal was newly appointed in the role and unable to be a satisfactory mentor to the new teachers” (p. 35). The role of leaders as mentors might be best suited to undertaking tasks such as the co-ordination, training and selection of mentors, as advocated by Boogren (2015),

When supporting Beginning Teachers, school leaders must provide more than a back-to-basic school orientation or a randomly selected partnership with an experienced teacher. In light of the complexities of the mentoring role, school leaders must carefully select mentors, support them as they develop relationships with mentees, and give them concrete guidance about the type of support they are expected to offer new teachers (p. 13).

A nexus can be noted with regard to school-based mentoring and future leadership aspirations. Currently, the responsibility for selection of ECTs to apply for a leadership program after their first two years of teaching rests with the principal. Procedures associated with this task are time-consuming for both the principal and their leadership team. As such, it has been suggested that the default position could manifest as a simple and unsatisfactory tick-the-box exercise (Yukovic, 2015). One suggestion to assist with the identification of an ECT’s leadership potential might be the establishment of a system-trained but school-based mentoring coordinator. Such an approach might ensure uniformity of standards across the
system, which are seen as desirable given that teachers move from school-to-school within
the system. Part of the coordinator’s role might be to identify and mentor future leader
aspirants and make recommendations to the leadership team. It has also been suggested that
the creation of a school-based mentoring coordinator position might improve the liaison and
relationship between mentors, university supervisors and principals (Gudwin & Wallace,
2010; Lieberman, Hansen & Gless, 2012).

The importance of resourcing the role of the mentoring coordinator cannot be
underestimated, nor can the importance of the training or the leadership responsibility that
encapsulates this role, as was recognized by MacCallum, Beltman, Coffey, Cooper and Jarvis
(2014), who wrote, “When establishing mentoring programs agencies and organisations need
to ensure that there is sufficient ongoing funding for continuity of the coordinator role” (p.
32). Their observations find support in the work of Sunde and Ulrik (2014) who contented
that, “school leaders choose practical solutions when selecting mentors, but their choices
could also implicitly reveal what they think of mentoring. School leaders are central when it
comes to securing quality mentoring and close teamwork in a school” (pp. 296-7).

The introduction of the role of a mentoring coordinator who would assist a principal
assigning a mentor to a mentee in a school and overseeing the transition of an ECT as part of
a school-based mentoring program, might also prevent mentoring relationships from
disappearing or deteriorating. A mentoring relationship may disappear when a mentor leaves
the school. Unless there is a procedure in place for sourcing a replacement mentor, the ECT
may be left without any experienced peer support. Also, when a relationship between
mentor and mentee is fracturing, a school-based mentoring coordinator may be able to assist
in mediating between both parties. In a study of youth mentoring in Western Australia,
MacCallum, Beltman, Coffey and Cooper (2014) found the role of a coordinator, together
with the careful screening for the matching of a mentor with a mentee, as a significant factor in relationship durability,

In all programs mentors went through a comprehensive screening process to check their suitability for the program, and also for program staff to get to know them better...Mentors and mentees were purposively matched using available information on interests, experience, cultural connections, approach and availability (pp. 22-3).

The insights of MacCallum, Beltman, Coffey and Cooper (2014), in discussing the successful creation of a mentoring coordinator of youth programs, support the idea of creating such a role in a school environment.

An example of a successful school-based mentoring program, in-situ at the researcher’s own school, involves clear articulation of the roles identified in the mentoring process, namely those of principal, mentor, mentee and mentoring co-ordinator (Figure 5.3).

![Diagram showing the roles of principal, mentor, mentee, and mentoring co-ordinator.]

*Figure 5.3.* Positioning of the school mentoring coordinator at the researcher’s school.

At the researcher’s present school, the role of mentoring coordinator was created to enable liaison with both mentor and an ECT in the planning of relevant professional development outcomes that assist the on-going process of teacher registration and permanency. Such a
strategy finds support in the work of the Department of Education, Victoria (2014) which reported that,

One of the mentor’s roles is to guide and support the Beginning Teacher through the registration process, rather than evaluate, judge or assess their performance against the standards. Mentors may however, help the Beginning Teacher to recognise how they’re progressing in relation to the standards and help them to know when they’re ready to submit their application for registration as a Proficient Teacher (p. 2).

Envisaging the mentoring coordinator working with leaders, ECTs and mentors as the catalyst in attending to the teacher registration process may assist any queries a mentee or mentor may have during the transition from graduate to proficient teacher. The question of permanency raised by some ECTs related to being employed on temporary contracts.

Mentoring at the school level may also have a role in helping ECTs with career prospects. The uncertainty for Beginning Teachers employed on a temporary rather than a permanent contract was a potential source of tension between ECTs and principals as responses to focus group interviews indicated (Appendix M). Presently, a principal chooses to employ an ECT on a temporary contract, normally for one to two reasons: A legal obligation to protect the position of teachers on maternity/paternity leave for often up to five years; and a short-term general leave provision such as long-service and extended sick leave, which is at the discretion of the current employer (CEOWA, 2015).

Many ECTs who accept positions in schools would be employed on a temporary contract due to the above-mentioned reasons, unless they accepted a permanent teaching position, in which case they would still be subject to a one-year probationary period (CECWA, 2015). Potentially, the lack of permanency that results from a temporary contract can affect ECTs outside of school, such as when applying for a bank home loan. At the school level, the lack of permanency can alter an ECTs future career aspirations. This notion was elaborated further by Ewing in Yukovic (2015) who stated, “Often, they start off in
casual, temporary or short-term contracts and sometimes they’re OK to do that for a while, but if it’s long term, they can get quite disillusioned” (pp. 29-30)

Perhaps, the creation in Catholic schools of the role of a trained system mentoring coordinator as an advocate, à la Figure 5.4, would foster the important discussion about permanency between the school-based mentoring coordinator; a mentor; ECT; principal and CEOWA. The lack of feedback provided to some ECTs in this area was described in a discouraged tone by one ECT after six months of teaching in a country school, “Yep we have to apply for our jobs again” {Participant 3}. It must be acknowledged that not all ECTs may see a temporary position as disadvantageous. Some may view it as a wonderful opportunity to gain a permanent position through exhibiting their competency. Further investigation, is warranted to explore the impact of permanent and temporary positions on the psyche of ECTs and whether this arrangement affects them remaining in or leaving the teaching profession.

In summary, a well planned school-based mentoring program greatly assists the transition for a Post-Internship (Pre-Service) teachers in becoming a Beginning Teacher, in the building of staff relationships, and having easy access to resources and policies. Ideally, the whole workplace transition might be further enhanced through the creation of a mentoring liaison officer (Figure 5.4) independently employed by the Catholic Archbishop of Perth, through an educational agency such as the Catholic Institute of Western Australia. Such a person could work collaboratively to co-ordinate mentor training programs between the CUWA, CEOWA, system mentoring coordinator and the individual school-based mentoring coordinator (Figure 5.4). The importance of a mentoring training was described by Salazar, Lowenstein and Brill (2010) in the following way,

Mentor development is also an opportunity for continued alignment of program goals. As we make adjustments for the curriculum for our teacher candidates, we need to provide mentor teachers with a parallel curriculum (pp. 47-50).
Collaboration could occur in the sharing of human, curricula and financial resources with regard to the training of mentors.

**Figure 5.4.** Role of a system-wide mentoring liaison officer.

**Principle 7: Interfacing with Teacher Education Institutions.**

Numerous models already exist endorsing the benefits of establishing a collaborative university/school-based approach to developing a mentoring program. Among the more popular are, first, the Queensland Education Department, which utilizes a mentoring training program, offered through the Queensland University of Technology. The program provides course credit for the teachers training as mentors (DET QLD, 2017). Second, the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) mentoring program for Catholic schools in America is coordinated by the University of Notre Dame (USA) and educates pre-service teachers to staff Catholic schools. Thirdly, the New Teacher Centre (USA) co-ordinates mentoring programs and prepares leaders in coordinating mentoring for Beginning Teachers. Bartlett-Bragg (2015) described how she believed that a hybrid model was essential for conceptualizing and implementing the principles of mentoring, declaring, “Many organisations are tackling the continuous knowledge acquisition and changing environment with a mix of strategies that are seeing performance management and professional development blending into a form of
mentoring (yet to be officially labelled) that merges all the approaches above into an ecosystem of engagement and shared knowledge” (p. 3).

Scope exists for greater liaison between teacher education providers and schools. One peak body identified as the Deans for Impact, consisting of Deans of Eighteen Colleges of Education across the USA, contends that, “If we could really take control of the profession and increase the rigour such that teachers are effective from Day 1, I think that will prove to the public at large that this is an investment worth making and one worth increasing” (Westervelt, 2015). The present research has shown that the position advocated by Deans for Impact in the USA may be applicable to CEOWA Post-Internship (Pre-Service) teachers and educational institutions working together. Such a move may be beneficial for several reasons. First, is the assistance provided to some Beginning Teachers with a competent mentor, which leads to the ECT developing into a professional willing to stay in the profession. Training such mentors could be facilitated through the universities. Second, is the role-modelling of best teacher practice by the mentor, through meeting regularly and sharing ideas that assist the development of their student. A mentoring-the-mentor model could be developed by universities. Finally, a school mentoring program may assist the achievement of school improvement goals, support for which can be found in the broader mentoring literature (Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), 2004; Boreen et al., 2009; Butler, Dickinson & Pittard, 2003; Dobbins, Mitchell & Murray, 1998; Freeman-Loftis, 2011; & Nakamura et al., 2009). Support of each other - school and university and vice versa – is in many ways the raison d’être of Catholic education and ought to be given serious consideration.

As argued by Westervelt (2015), the position taken by Deans for Impact (USA) highlighted the essential communication required between those responsible for teacher
training (CUWA, in the present research) and the students’ future employer (CEO[WA], in the present research). One principal in the focus group expressed the following opinion,

There should be a link between say CEO[WA], universities and schools so you’ve got the best possible chance of getting the best people to want to apply… If you have that coordinator so you start early at university, CEO[WA] supports it in whichever way it can. \textit{(Principal 7)}

A CEOWA mentoring coordinator developing liaisons between schools and university teacher education institutions might prove advantageous for both organisations.

For schools because they can secure expert advice regarding the development of a mentoring program; and for universities who can be certain that they will be sending their new graduates to mentor-resourced schools.

\textbf{Principle 8: Mentoring and Religious Education.}

The Vatican document, \textit{Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith}, clearly establishes the role and place of Religious Education and in the vocation to teach in a Catholic School:

\begin{quote}
(24.) ...The Lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the Church by living, in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school... To this lay person, as a member of this community, the family and the Church entrust the school’s educational endeavor...
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
(37.) The work of a lay educator has an undeniably professional aspect; but it cannot be reduced to professionalism alone. Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a super-natural Christian vocation. The life of the Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession... (Sacred Congregation, 1982).
\end{quote}

All teachers in Catholic primary schools (where there are no specialist Religious Education specialists) are expected to teach in the area of Religious Education. Accordingly, all primary ECTs from their first day of teaching are expected to teach confidently in all learning areas, including in the mandated Religious Education learning area. It was identified from the study, however, that most primary ECTs received minimal feedback in the area of
Religious Education (Table 4.15). Perhaps, the reason why some mentors were unwilling to provide feedback to ECTs in Religious Education, might be explained by the findings of a report that 81% of all Catholic teachers are not practicing Catholics (Curry, 2016). Such a lack of knowledge about Religious Education and understanding of Catholic Church teaching was also noted in a Pastoral Letter prepared by the Bishops of NSW and ACT, called *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads* (2007). Their finding indicated that further investigation was specifically required to assist the vocation of ECTs.

Some areas identified in the literature (Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE), 2004; Boreen et al., 2009; Freeman-Loftis, 2011; Hudson, 2010a; Jensen, Hunter, Sonnemann & Burns, 2012; & Nakamura et al., 2009) that might assist mentors in improving feedback to ECTs, are also applicable in the area of Religious Education,

- Peer observation and collaboration
- Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning
- Student surveys and feedback
- Self-assessment
- Parent surveys and feedback
- External observation
- Familiarity with content knowledge
- Possibly the most important of all – mentor enthusiasm in the area of Religious Education

The importance of mentoring ECTs in Religious Education and Faith Issues more generally was highlighted by principals’ comments extracted via focus group interview questions (Appendix J):

> I believe that we must take real care of our Beginning Teachers. It is absolutely essential that we carefully monitor their development as a teacher in their first three years. If they are working in a Catholic school, they need to be encouraged to understand the importance of being a part of a Catholic parish. Development of their people skills… particularly how to speak positively and with confidence to parents and home/life balance. We want these teachers to be well rounded people with interests away from school.

*{Principal 12}*
I had three promotional positions last year, a Head of Staff, a Deputy Principal- I got two people, but for our Religious Education coordinator we get none, none! {Secondary Principal 1}

Although CUWA students who are desirous of teaching in a Catholic school do complete academic units in the area of Religious Education, there appears to be some confusion regarding the school expectations vis-à-vis parish life,

I understand better how a Catholic school is operated to develop new and effective teaching strategies by developing relationships with my mentor, students, parents and staff. Learning from each experience through valuable feedback… I also went to my first Mass ever where it was run by two of the older parishioners of the parish so it was already consecrated bread, it was very interesting like where's the priest and it was my first Sunday in the country and it was like where was the priest and its like he doesn't turn up today, he was elsewhere {CUWA, Participant 1}.

Utilizing an online forum for a discussion of teaching Religious Education might also be beneficial for the sharing of teaching ideas in Religious Education with ECTs. Sharing of programing ideas, resources, assessment and reporting strategies and faith matters, may be topics of common concern.

**Principle 9: Mentoring in the City vis-à-vis the Country.**

Study results clearly corroborated the literature that mentoring ECTs in country areas is more challenging than in the city (Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce and Hunter, 2010; Trinidad, Broadley, Terry, Boyd, Lock, Byrne, Sharplin & Ledger, 2012). The significance of location on an ECTs general development has been raised by McNally et al. (2004), who stated that, “Differences in teaching context extend to different towns and schools as well. New teachers themselves are aware of this and of how it could affect their acceptance...” (p. 8). Clune (2013) also alluded to the effect of location from his former role as retired Western Australian Catholic principal. He specifically remarked on the notable
difference experienced by ECTs embarking on a career in a country Catholic School in Western Australia, stating,

Teachers in rural schools are often in transit – Early Career Teachers who could not gain an offer of employment in urban schools but who will transfer to metropolitan schools as soon as possible... Whilst these are people of dedication and expertise who strive on behalf of their pupils they are, largely, temporarily committed since the staff of the rural school is transient (p. 3).

The 2016 Gratten Institute study (Goss, Sonnemann, Chisholm & Nelson) reported that country students undertaking NAPLAN testing were two years behind city students, stating, “Policymakers wanting to support educationally disadvantaged students can target them geographically, with regional and rural areas most in need” (p. 37).

The previously mooted adoption of a system-wide mentor-training program and mentoring coordinator position for each Catholic School, might help alleviate some of the concerns raised by the Gratten findings. It has been shown that specialised coaching for all ECTs in the implementation of teaching strategies, is known to greatly improve student learning (Goss, Hunter, Romances & Parsonage, 2015). The identification and honing of such strategies with ECTs would normally be the responsibility of a mentor, however, where no mentor is available, an ECTs’ teaching is likely to suffer. In this regard, Dunne and Villani (2007) proffered,

When teachers know what they are teaching, why they are teaching it in particular ways for particular groups of students, what they would do differently (or keep) the next time and why, these teachers are intentional (deliberate) about their practice. Effective mentors are deliberate in their use of various coaching approaches to enhance new teachers’ intentionality and help them move toward becoming excellent teachers (pp. 56-7).

Unfortunately, there seems to be a paucity of mentors in country regions. Consequently, sound theoretically-based mentoring initiatives are difficult to implement. Principals have utilized various strategies in an attempt to boost the number of teachers and
hence mentors to country areas. One principal, frustrated with attrition problems encountered in her regional school commented in the focus group interview (Appendix J) “I keep running out of mentors because they leave – especially in the country.” (Principal 1).

Technology might also be harnessed in the service of providing more accessible mentoring opportunities. Technology initiatives might enable ECTs, especially in the country, to access the services of a trained mentor (Trinidad & Broadly, 2010). Strategies may resemble what the Western Australian Department of Education employs to reach children in isolated areas, namely, the program offered by the School of Isolated and Distance Education (http://www.side.wa.edu.au/index.php). A similar initiative for the training of mentors might be envisaged, whereby in the absence of an in-situ mentor, trained mentors elsewhere are available to an ECT via web-based video-linking.

**Principle 10: Generating Employment Security.**

Clearly, there is no direct correlation between being the recipient of a mentoring program and achieving greater employment security. Neither is that the intention of a mentoring program. Nevertheless, the skills that are acquired by participation in a mentoring program may hold ECTs in good stead for when they do apply for teaching positions. The finding that nearly half of the ECTs received minimal feedback from mentors and/or principals regarding the APST and negotiating permanency (Survey, Q17, Appendix L) was significant, as this may have impacted the relationship that some ECTs had with their mentor and/or principal.

Although some ECTs received feedback in regard to the Proficient Stage of the APST as a Key Performance Indicator for their ongoing employment, 54% of ECTs reported no such feedback (Survey, Q17, Appendix L). Several comments from ECTs in the city August focus group interviews (Appendix N) revealed some confusion in their understanding of
permanency and a possible lack of clarity in how leaders use the APST to provide feedback on permanency as was indicated by the following participant comments,

With the whole transition process, like being registered and stuff – I’ve been to a PD [Professional Development] about the mentor transition process and when you officially start that process and what you need to collect, but do you know officially when we have to have that done by? {Beginning Teacher 8}

What is that? Is permanency ongoing? Yes? {Beginning Teacher 1}

My principal called four all of us in and said we have two permanent positions going and I have to tell you that because I have to advertise it. I don’t want you to get a fright when you see your position being advertised. So, we have to reapply, there’s a temporary and there’s two permanent positions, so just depends who gets it. {Beginning Teacher 1}

Mine is temporary, but I have to go for another interview as well. That’s weird! {Beginning Teacher 9}

One possible solution to alleviate the confusion caused by insufficient leader/mentor information to ECTs regarding the APST and permanency conditions was suggested in the focus group interview by a principal (Appendix J): “I believe that an APST-type program needs to be adopted by ALL schools. In fact, AITSL should direct all appraisal programs” (Principal 13). AITSL Beginning Teacher online workshops and online feedback exemplar tools for leaders and teachers are currently in the process of being designed, with some having already been released, such as The My Induction Application (AITSL, 2017). In the future, AITSL provision of resources such as this one may lead to those involved in mentoring having a clearer understanding of the APST requirements for Beginning Teachers. There is an obvious need to clarify the continuing employment situation for ECTs. Ongoing concerns and apprehensions about future employment create the sort of uncertainty that may lead to despondency and ultimately result in the ECT leaving the profession.
Summary of Major Conclusions

Throughout this chapter, the perceptions of CUWA, ECTs and principals examined the transition from Post-Internship (Pre-Service) teacher, to ECT, to proficient teacher. An interpretation of data motivated by Table 5.1 enables conclusions to be drawn. These are now presented in summary form:

Conclusion 1. Mentors eased the transition from Internship to Early Career Teacher.

Conclusion 2. The guarantee of a mentor may not alleviate every problem faced by an ECT, but their input is invaluable.

Conclusion 3. The key characteristics of a mentor, namely, empathy and teaching knowledge, were attributes that could significantly assist the future aspirations of an ECT.

Conclusion 4. As an ECT’s career progressed from novice to proficient teacher, the feedback provided to them became less significant.

Conclusion 5. The importance of feedback to the vocation of both post-internship teachers and ECTs, indicated further investigation was specifically required in the Religious Education learning area.

Conclusion 6. Nearly half of ECTs received no feedback from mentors and or/principals regarding the prospect of ongoing permanency.

Conclusion 7. There is a strong urgency to develop a system-based training program for both ECTs and mentors.

Conclusion 8. The majority of principals recognised the importance of mentoring through the recommendation of a system-wide framework.

Conclusion 9. Leaders are important in the mentoring process, however, not necessarily in the role of an ECT’s mentor.

Conclusion 10. The mentoring of Beginning Teachers in regional areas is influenced, among other things, by the experiences of the principal. Their influence in the mentoring process can impact ECTs in both lifestyle and educational choices.
A Proposed Mentoring Framework

The importance of mentoring ECTs as identified in the literature, together with the findings of the present study relating to the subsidiary questions (as discussed in the previous chapter), segues well to recommending the development of a system-wide mentoring framework to be used by all Catholic schools. Buchanan, Raffaele, Glozier and Kanagaratnam (2016) suggested that the benefits of a formal mentoring framework are, “… making sure that both parties have a shared agreement about their roles in the relationship and identifying potential goals and challenges” (p. 26). The provision of such a framework would ensure that: school leadership has the necessary system-based support to implement local school-based mentoring programs; the use of terminology and understanding of roles is common; ECTs are provided with the necessary emotional support and formal feedback to progress with their achievement of the APST; and system-wide training is provided for mentors.

Numerous models of mentoring have been advocated, with some of the most popular ones having been introduced in Chapter Two. On the basis of the mixed method research that has been conducted, and utilizing a grounded theory approach, a framework can now be proposed which is being named in this thesis the Borromeo Mentoring Framework (BMF). The BMF is so named to acknowledge the life of Catholic Saint, scholar and mentor, Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), who demonstrated the values of knowledge, humility, eagerness, teaching and prayer (Atwood, 2012; Guissano, 2015). These values assisted the Church in reforms that involved the mentoring of catechists, teachers and priests, in a period of great change in the church, the Catholic Reformation of the 16th century. During this time of great renewal, St Charles Borromeo pondered:

If teaching and preaching is your job, then study diligently and apply yourself to whatever is necessary for doing the job well. Be sure that you first preach by the way you live. If you do not, people will notice that you say one thing, but live otherwise, and your words will bring only cynical laughter and a derisive shake of the head (Atwood, 2012, p. 215).
His writings on Catholic education are still relevant for ECTs and Catholic teachers today. As such, as the implementation of BMF is designed to equip mentors and mentees with the skills required to enhance the education of children in Catholic schools.

The BMF is considered to be appropriate for furthering dialogue about mentoring in Catholic schools as it remains cognizant of the faith imperative that underpins the Catholic education system. It is also a comprehensive framework in that it is an evidence-based framework having been created on the basis of the findings from the present research. The BMF is pertinent to the present study as it has the potential to assist mentors to provide effective feedback to ECTs in many areas, including: individual teacher self-reflection; collaborative partner teaching and observation; Religious Education teaching; and participating in whole staff learning opportunities. The BMF preempts the role of a system-wide coordinator's responsible for framework oversight and liaison with CEOWA, CUWA staff, principals, ECTs and mentors. The BMF is now described in detail.

**The Borromeo Mentoring Framework**

Based on the current research, a new system-wide framework is now proposed to assist with transition of ECTs in Catholic Schools in Western Australia. This Framework is termed the Borromeo Mentoring Framework (BMF) and is created on six inter-related and dynamic foundations:

1. Personal Formation and The Vocation to Teach in a Catholic School.
2. Catholic Church Influences on current Mentoring Teachers.
3. Current Influences affecting the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers in Catholic Education.
4. Implementing a System-based Approach to Mentoring.
5. Influences on Mentoring Beginning Teachers from a Catholic Education Context.
6. Implementing a School-based approach to a Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program.
Each of these foundations is now considered separately, after which a model is presented to show how integration of all six conceived.

1. Personal Formation and The Vocation to Teach in a Catholic School.

The aim of developing the vocation of all teachers has been expounded by both Eisner (1983) and Palmer (2007). Eisner (1983), described in relation to teaching experiences that, “… when one receives from students the kind of glow that says you have touched my life, satisfactions flow that exceed whatever it is that sabbaticals and vacations can provide” (p. 12). His further comment interfaces well with the whole thrust of mentoring as developed in this thesis,

It is well past the time that schools create the organisational structure in which teachers and administrators can reflect on their activities as a regular part of their jobs, not simply within the scope of an in-service education program. Staff development needs to be a continuing part of what it means to be a teacher… (p. 12).

Parker (2007) reflected on how effective teaching was influenced by the individual identity and integrity of the teacher. He raised an important connection between mentoring and the development of a personal vocation in stating, “… the mainstay of my vocation, to trust the calling of my vocation, to trust the calling of my soul, a trust that deepened when I was able to decode this early experience of being mentored” (p. 23). In the work of both Eisner and Palmer are found the principles that ought to underlie the teaching profession, namely, satisfaction, organisational support, a calling to care, effective mentoring. Such attributes augur well with the Catholic education ethos which sees all of these as being crucial but adds the caveat that they need to be empowered by God (The Sacred Congregation, 1997, The Catholic School). The development of a mentoring relationship underpins the central premise that an individual’s vocation and expectations to teach in a Catholic school are facilitated by a mentoring role-model. Such a mentor provides
opportunities that support an ECTs vocation by establishing a relationship based on openness; questioning; inventiveness; persistence; emotional stability; generosity and empathy (Swann, Peacock, Hart & Drummond, 2010). The mentor of ECTs, in a Catholic School, is a mentor in both education and faith development.

2. Catholic Church Influences on current Mentoring Teachers.

The Catholic Education System in Western Australia, through its two arms the CEOWA and CUWA, plays a major role in training pre-service and ECTs in the ethic that underpins Catholic education. The recognition and importance of this ethic in the teaching vocation has been proclaimed since Vatican II in 1962, in numerous Church and Papal documents, such as Canon Law, Pastoral Letters and Papal Encyclicals. Some of the relevant documents state,

The content of Religious Education: must be linked with the real-life experiences of the generation to which it is addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and questionings, struggles and hopes. (John Paul II, 1979, Catechesi Tradendae, 49).

This way [the way traced out by Christ himself] cannot, then, be foreign to those who evangelise. Travelling along it, they will experience the challenge of education in all its urgency. (The Sacred Congregation, 1997, The Catholic School, 21).

The person is the starting point, always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God. (Paul VI, 1975, Evangeli Nuntiandi, 20).

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. (Francis I, 2015, Laudato Si; 211).
The contribution of the role of the Church through documents such as those mentioned above, may enable the system and school-based mentoring coordinators to plan, together with principals, professional development opportunities to grow a culture of learning within the ethical framework of Catholic education. Sergiovanni (1984) defined school culture as, “...the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one school from another... School culture includes values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of parents, students, teachers, and others conceived as a group or community.” (p. 11). He further added that a school culture, “provides a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators, and others as they work” (p. 12). Sedgwick (2008) agrees, stating in relation to school-based mentoring that,

… there was strong support for basing classroom practice on what research tells us works. The challenge is to create a school based culture which not only sets high expectations for its students but accepts that students and teachers need both, in their own ways, to be learners (https://insights.unimelb.edu.au/vol3/5_Sedgwick.html).

A robust system of mentoring within a given school can help to foster a sense of “meaning and significance” by reinforcing to ECTs that they are important and that those around them care about their future.

3. Current Influences affecting the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers in Catholic Education.

This study has identified numerous influences that affect how smoothly an ECT transitions into a Catholic school. The major factors discussed included city/country differences; lack of clarity of and familiarity with required documentation; the availability and competency of mentors; the support received from the school and the system; the “readiness” of graduates in terms of training received; the commitment of principles and other school leaders to the enterprise of mentoring; and the budgets available to support
training of mentors. It is only when such factors are seriously considered and catered for that a program supporting ECTs has any chance of securing maximal effect.

The current ECT program, until its cessation at the end of 2016, was coordinated by the CEOWA leadership team as part of the introduction for the system-wide leadership pathway. A recommendation is to have any future ECT and Mentor training programs under the umbrella of the BMF and coordinated by the system-wide mentoring coordinator/s and mentoring liaison officer (Figure 5.4). This may see some existing program areas currently operated separately by the CEOWA such as the System-wide Orientation Program to Teach in a Catholic school, and the CUWA Professional Supervision Unit (or similar) program under the BMF umbrella.

4. Implementing a System-based Approach to Mentoring.

The study has shown that participants from all three cohorts have indicated a desire for coordinated system-based input. Such input, has the advantage of creating a broadly-based mentoring framework that then does not need to be created by each school individually. This would save leaders a great deal of time and effort, as well as ensure that attention is given to key aspects in devising a school-based mentoring program. System-based mentoring coordinators would then be in a position deliver a consistent mentoring Professional Development package to individual schools.

A knowledge of the system, State and Federal requirements is essential for system-wide mentoring coordinators in the training of school-based mentoring coordinators and leaders in providing structured feedback to ECTs. The appointment of system-wise mentoring coordinator/s might lead to the creation of system-wide guidelines for supplying
school-based coordinator/s with resources in areas such as Providing Effective Feedback; the APST; Religious Education Accreditation requirements; and TRBWA registration.

The urgency of providing effective feedback to ECTs was highlighted by Meloney and Earp (2015), who stated,

Feedback is formally administered to Early Career Teachers weekly, although this can change depending on the progress they’re making. It can also come from a variety of areas, including unscheduled ‘pop-in’ observations. (p. 2).

The fact that some mentors did not provide feedback to ECTs in Religious Education (Table 4.15), may have reflected their own current lack of knowledge about Religious Education, the state of their own faith life, or their understanding of Catholic Church teaching (Bishops of NSW and ACT, 2007). The importance of Religious Education for both ECTs and mentors was highlighted by Lovat (1989), who stated with reference to Fowler’s theory of the stages of Faith development,

...faith is something that grows as a person grows…Good R.E. [Religious Education], then, requires more than goodwill and enthusiasm: it requires a keen sensitivity to the nature of growth and an inviolable respect for human freedom (p. 44).

The power of mentoring ECTs with regard to teaching Religious Education has been described by Harris (1991):

...the Holy Spirit is waiting to be summoned by teachers who are willing to take care, take steps, take form, take time and take risks. Outcomes can never be guaranteed, but the power of imagination is such that if it emerges from our lives, a fire is enkindled and begins to bum… A profound vocation, the vocation to teaching; a profound vocation, the vocation to religious imagination. For it can lead to incarnation, to revelation, and to the grace of power. And these in tum can lead to the re-creation of the world (p. 181).

The providing system-based support in the important areas noted above will likely strengthen Catholic education as a whole. It will show individuals that the system cares about them by providing the necessary support for helping them to engage in their vocation in an
effective manner. The BMF provides an integrated mechanism by which such support can be realized.

5. Influences on Mentoring Beginning Teachers from a Catholic Education Context.

The study has shown that the major influences on an ECT’s transition to a Catholic school environment are the principal, school leaders, mentors (extrinsic factors) and the ECT’s own resilience (intrinsic factor). Support from these sources reduces an ECT’s sense of, alienation and inadequacy. As Woolfolk (1987) observed,

Teaching can be a lonely endeavour, Behind the classroom door, teachers are generally expected to solve their own problems. Even if help is available, teachers are given little time during the day to consult or plan with their colleagues...Beginning Teachers all over the world share many of the same concerns. Many teachers also experience what has been called “reality shock” when they take their first job and confront the “harsh and rude reality of classroom life (pp. 9, 12).

In influencing an ECT’s sense of emotional well-being the BMF conceives of service learning modules. Service learning is an opportunity to deepen a sense of vocation to teach in a Catholic School and for ECTs to meet ECTs from other Catholic schools experiencing similar emotions to theirs. This point surfaced in the CUWA focus group interviews (Appendix H) where one intern commented on the value of a faith retreat,

There was one thing I know that A, B and I found and we went down to south and did a retreat there was a mix of ECE, Primary and Secondary teachers and we went down there just to basically learn how to run a retreat and just to have a bit of a getaway which was nice. But it was really good to know other people at the uni that you wouldn't necessarily have had the chance to meet them unless you'd went on this.

The research of Hackett and Lavery (2010) similarly found, after an analysis of service learning journals from pre-service teaching students at CUWA, that the experience of Christian service-learning offered a, “deeper appreciation of their teacher vocation through leadership, service, and retreat opportunities” (p. 7). The power of mentoring ECTs in their
vocation to teach has been powerfully described by Harris (1991), who stated, “...the Holy Spirit is waiting to be summoned by teachers who are willing to take care, take steps, take form, take time and take risks. Outcomes can never be guaranteed, but the power of imagination is such that if it emerges from our lives, a fire is enkindled and begins to burn...” (p. 181). The influences present in a Catholic school context ought to be such that ECTs can flourish in their vocation and profession. The BMF provides the framework to support such an ethos.

6. Implementing a School-based approach to a Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program.

As has been argued throughout this thesis, funded school-based mentoring coordinators would be valuable school assets. In summary, the reasons for this are that they would:

- Receive specialist mentoring training and system-wide Mentoring Coordinator Accreditation;
- Secure on-going training to remain cognizant of the most recent developments in mentoring strategies;
- Be seen more broadly as specialists in the area of mentoring;
- Signal the importance of ECT mentoring;
- Relieve the principal of the immediate responsibility of providing an ECT mentoring program;
- Provide to the principal a school’s mentoring progress report through each school’s current ASIP and QCS documentation;
- Be responsible for creating a school-based mentoring program based on a system-wide mentoring framework which would be provided to them;
- Be the contact person for the system-based mentoring coordinator;
- Act as back-up people for other schools who may, for whatever reason, lose their coordinator;
• Help address teacher attrition by offering a positive early experience for Beginning Teachers;
• advance their own careers by being sought after by schools looking for trained mentoring coordinators.

The establishment of a school-based mentoring coordinator overseeing ECT mentoring in Accreditation to Teach Religious Education in a Catholic School, also finds support in the BMF. Such a responsibility would ensure that this first learning area (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009) in Catholic schools is being taught in a competent and confident fashion. As the present research has shown, this is the area in which ECTs seems to struggle. Establishing the importance of this learning area via on-going mentoring resourcing would likely lead to an ongoing commitment to ensuring Religious Education and Faith Issues are kept at the forefront of Catholic education.

**BMF Foundations Summary**

Conceptualising the BMF as a modified Brofenbrenner (2016) concentric circle model enables the BMF to be presented in a visual and integrated fashion (Figure 5.5). The benefit of such a model was recognized by Rodriguez and Fitzpatrick (2014) who stated,

> Many transition researchers have made use of Brofenbrenner’s ecological systems theory to aid understandings of transitions...A systems approach can offer a space to juxtapose, for example, human development in context with socio-cultural theory and sociologies of childhood (p. 109).

A further advantage of a Bronfenbrenner-type conceptualisation is that most of the components of the six foundations can be turned into stand-alone modules for the training of school-based mentoring coordinators and through them, school-based mentors. The completion of these modules can lead to earning recognised system-based Mentoring Coordinator Accreditation. The importance of “mentoring our mentors” has been stressed by Whitaker and Fiore (2013),

203
Mentor teachers must understand what the role requires of them, and they must be willing to accept the myriad responsibilities that go along with mentoring...Whether we're talking about a buddy teacher, a support teacher, a cooperating teacher, or a mentor, one thing is clear. Mentor teachers, to be most effective and contribute positively to a new teacher's development, must receive some type of formal training...we cannot assume that a teacher who performs well with children will be adept at teaching adults. Therefore, we need to start mentoring our mentors (pp. 139-140).

Mentoring is about more then helping and training others, it is also about the well-being of those who provide such support. Only those who see themselves as being competent and effective in their support role will feel a sense of professional and personal satisfaction. Mentors indeed need mentoring.
Figure 5.5. Borromeo Mentoring Framework: The main components of a wholistic and integrated mentoring framework for the Catholic education context. (See over for Legend)
Legend for BMF as shown in Figure

In summary form, and presented for ease of reference, the following key roles are envisaged in the creation of the BMF,

**Mentoring Liaison Officer**

An appointed officer/s in charge of creating and providing modules for the ECT and mentoring programs. Their role is to liaise between CUWA and CEOWA and develop mentoring modules for mentors (which can be contextualized for individual school use).

**System-based Mentoring Coordinator**

The person/s employed by CEOWA to solicit relevant mentoring system-resources and programs of best-practice in CEOWA schools and support school in the program development.

**Principals and Leaders**

The person/s designated by the Archbishop of Perth or Bishops of Western Australia and employed by the CEOWA and individual school board to lead a school and provide mentoring oversight.
School Mentoring Coordinator

The person nominated by each school’s principal to act as an advocate liaising between the system-based mentoring coordinator, the school principals, the mentors and mentees. In time, incumbents will have to hold Mentoring Coordinator Accreditation.

Mentor and ECTs (mentees)

The relationship between a more experienced teacher, commonly referred to as the mentor, and a younger inexperienced new employee, called the mentee or protégé. The role of the mentor has been described as one involving counseling, coaching, educating, inspiring, enriching, leading and advising the less experienced person (Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts, 2009; Nakamura, Shernoff & Hooker, 2009). Mentees (ECTs and pre-service interns) are encouraged to be active learners, be more aware of the learning needs of their children and be able to reflect with their mentor about how they can improve their educational practices (AITSL, 2012: Boreen, Johnson, Niday & Potts, 2009).

Summary of Chapter Five

The Chapter has presented the principles identified in the data relating to specific subsidiary questions in each of the three cohorts involved in the study (Table 5.1), and presented the conclusions that formed the recommendation for a system-wide mentoring framework, The Borromeo Mentoring Framework (BMF) which has as its cornerstones six foundations:

1. Personal Formation and The Vocation to Teach in a Catholic School.
2. Catholic Church Influences on current Mentoring Teachers.
3. Current Influences affecting the Mentoring of Beginning Teachers in Catholic Education.
4. Implementing a System-based Approach to Mentoring.
5. Influences on Mentoring Beginning Teachers from a Catholic Education Context.
6. Implementing a School-based approach to a Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program.

The final Chapter will explore the key Conclusions and Recommendations raised in this study and suggest how the creation and implementation of the BMF mentoring program
might benefit leaders, mentors and ECTs currently working in Catholic Schools in Western Australia.