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Goals for teaching: Towards a framework for examining motivation of graduating teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teacher motivation is an important field of research, especially in countries where teacher retention and quality have become prominent concerns. This paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding the stage appropriate *goals for teaching* of graduating teacher education students. Generated from empirical data and grounded in established literature (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 1987) the framework shows that both within-person and person-environment consequences inform goals for teaching. This framework makes a unique contribution to the field of teacher motivation, providing a tool to explore the content of teachers' goals, thus providing further insights into teacher motivation.

Keywords: teacher motivation, goals, goal content, graduating teachers

Introduction

Many factors motivate individuals to pursue a teaching career, including the desire for personal growth and continued learning, to have a positive impact on others' lives and contribute to society, and to attain stable, secure employment. Reasons such as these are

commonly articulated by teacher candidates and have been identified in recent research (for example, Chong & Low, 2009; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008) which has contributed to the emerging literature about teacher motivation. Education employers and researchers are interested in the factors that influence teachers' decisions to enter or leave the profession (Beltman & Wosnitza, 2008; Muller, Alliata, & Benninghoff, 2009) and the motivation of individuals who become teachers following a previous career (Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Currently, teacher motivation is an important field of research, particularly in countries such as Australia where issues such as teacher retention and quality have become prominent professional concerns (Watt & Richardson, 2008). It is hoped that ongoing research in this field will assist in the development of strategies to attract more teachers to the profession and to retain existing teachers. Furthermore, understanding the complexities of teacher motivation may provide insights into how to enhance teacher motivation more broadly.

This paper extends the current teacher motivation literature in two unique ways. First, it presents a study examining the goals for future teaching reported by graduating teachers. Focusing on goals enables insights into the motivating factors for future professional work, considering both self-focused and self-in-context focused purposes for teaching. Second, as there is no current consensus in the literature as to how to conceptualize teacher goals, a conceptual framework for understanding the content of goals is presented. The framework is generated from empirical data and grounded in a goal content approach (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 1987).

Teacher motivation

Teacher motivation research has conceptualised the reasons individuals choose to become teachers as intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Sinclair, 2008), and altruistic factors (Chong & Low, 2009). Intrinsic factors include desire for personal growth and extrinsic factors include material benefits and job security. Altruistic factors are generally described in terms of a desire to work with children and contribute to society (Chong & Low, 2009). Findings suggest that intrinsic and altruistic factors are the most frequently reported reasons for choosing teaching as a career (Chong & Low, 2009) and the ‘family friendly’ nature of the profession (Williams & Forgasz, 2009) has been attractive to career changers. Furthermore, studies have suggested teacher motivation is related to professional commitment, efficacy, organizational citizenship and participation in professional development (Morgan, Kitching, & O’Leary, 2007).

Teacher motivation has also been examined from particular theoretical perspectives. For example, Riley (2009), in a study focusing on attachment and student-teacher relationships, suggests that individuals may enter the teaching profession “partly motivated by an unconscious desire for corrective emotional experiences, through the formation of new attachments to their students” (p. 628). Such unconscious motivations to teach (Wright & Sherman, 1963) may be important in teacher motivation, although challenging to investigate. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) has been used by Spittle, Jackson and Casey (2009) to better understand the sources of motivation for becoming a physical education teacher. These sources include intrinsic motivation (related to interpersonal service), extrinsic motivation (related to sport and physical activity) and amotivation (the view that teaching seems easy). Self-determination theory has also been used to explore the relationship among

goal-orientation, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, achievement, and entrance scores of student teachers (Malmberg, 2006).

Using expectancy-value theory, Richardson and Watt (2006) found reasons for choosing teaching include intrinsic career values (interest in teaching), self-perceptions of ability, personal utility values (job security, family concerns), social utility values (contribute to society, enhance social equity, desire to work with children), prior experiences, perceptions of task demand and return, 'fallback career' possibilities and social influences. While these findings provide a sound grounding for understanding why individuals may choose to become teachers, further understandings need to be developed about how these factors impact on motivation at the beginning and during career. Indeed, this is the subject of ongoing longitudinal research (see for example Richardson & Watt, 2010; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

Teacher motivation and goals

Since the 1980s researchers have been interested in the goals individuals pursue in particular situations. Across fields of social science and psychology, goals have been defined in a variety of ways (Ferguson & Porter, 2009). For example, goals have been defined as "internal representations of desired states" (Austin & Vancouver, 1996, p. 338), as subjective representations of desired or undesired consequences (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 1987), and as cognitive representations "of a desired end point that impacts evaluations, emotions and behaviours" (Ferguson & Porter, 2009, p. 454). Goals reflect the purposes of behaviour and influence cognition, affect, and behaviour towards immediate tasks and long term desires. Goals influence how individuals organize processes of thinking, behaving, and emotional responses (Schutz, Crowder, & White, 2001) in everyday situations. Therefore, goals have a significant impact on motivation, engagement, and achievement and consequently, it is reasonable to expect that goals may also influence motivation and

engagement for particular careers, including teaching. Viewing teacher motivation from a goals perspective has the potential benefits of unveiling purposes that underpin cognitions, behaviours, and affect, both of the individual and the individual in the teaching/classroom context.

Teachers' achievement goals

Some research has focused on teachers' achievement goals (Butler, 2007; Retelsdorf, Butler, Streblow, & Schiefele, 2010), using mastery / performance distinctions to explain teacher and student-teacher goals (Malmberg, 2008). Butler (2007) identified four goal orientations including mastery (learning and developing professional competence), ability-approach (demonstrating superior teaching ability), ability-avoidance (avoiding demonstrating inferior teaching ability), and work-avoidance (getting through the day with minimal effort). Examining teachers' achievement goals has yielded important findings about teacher motivation, instructional practices, interest in teaching and burnout. However, the focus on particular pre-determined goals can reduce opportunities for other goals to emerge. A further limitation of an exclusive focus on achievement goals is that these represent relatively short term goals, and may reduce opportunities to understand teacher motivation more broadly, in the context not only of the work of the classroom, but also of broader life goals. Boekaerts, deKoning and Vedder (2006) argue that "researchers have focused too much on the pursuit of short-term performance against a single desired end state, namely, achievement" and that "achievement goals are but a fraction of the goals" operating in classrooms and should not be viewed as "isolated driving forces" (p. 34). Given the limitations of an exclusive achievement goal approach, there is a need to look beyond these to other goals that may be significant contributors to teacher motivation.

Beyond achievement goals

Research shows that other goals, such as social goals, future goals, and wellbeing goals influence achievement, adjustment or learning processes (Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Wentzel, 2000). These studies have also shown that individuals pursue multiple goals simultaneously and that goals are important for enhancing and sustaining motivation, as well as influencing behaviour, cognition, and affect. In the context of the teaching profession, it is reasonable to consider that teachers pursue goals that focus not only on themselves (intrapersonal goals such as wellbeing goals), but also goals that take account of the very social nature of teaching (interpersonal goals such as social goals), thus reflecting both the 'self' and the 'self-in-context'. The 'content' of teachers' goals, that is, the "desired or undesired consequence represented by a particular goal" (Ford, 1992, p. 83), provides insights into what teachers may be trying to accomplish and indeed their motivation for teaching, which in turn influences their behaviour and affect. The field of teacher motivation is yet to consider the content of teachers' goals (i.e. what are teachers' goals for teaching?) and how these may influence motivation, wellbeing, and career decisions. Understanding teachers' goals for teaching and the emphasis on particular goals at various career stages will contribute to the field.

Schutz, et al. (2001) investigate development of the goal to become a teacher and argue that such 'life task goals' provide "a personal context from which subgoals and goal orientation emerge, are defined, and are pursued" (p. 299). While the broad goal to become a teacher is influenced by a range of personal desires (altruistic motives, personal characteristics), experiences (teaching), and social influences (parenting, peer and family influences), it provides "reference points" (p. 306) enabling individuals to determine appropriate subgoals and guide self-regulation. In this sense, the reference points provided by life task goals influence subgoals in more specific situations and careers such as teaching.

Teachers' career goals, such as extrinsic goals to achieve promotion or professional learning goals to improve understanding of professional knowledge, and their relationship to teachers' learning have also been examined recently (Ng, 2010), with the finding that professional learning goals are associated with positive attitudes towards professional learning, use of adaptive learning and regulatory strategies. Using 'goals' as a theoretical framework in this instance enables examination of teachers' "career-related purposes" which are "crucial for understanding teachers' motivation to learn" (p. 398).

Goals have been valuable in other professional literature (for example medicine, nursing) to develop understandings about occupational engagement and career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009). Career motivation and life goals (for example, intimacy, affiliation, altruism, power, achievement and variation) have been found to influence career trajectories, such as fields of specialization of Swiss medical students (Buddeberg-Fischer, Klaghofer, Abel, & Buddeberg, 2006). Currently there is limited literature discussing how goals for teaching may have either a sustaining or limiting impact on teachers' careers.

Goals and professional issues

Teacher wellbeing and mental health have become professional issues as evidenced in programs focusing on teachers' mental health, such as the 'Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing at Work' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). Research from occupational literature has shown organizational goals are associated with low burnout, whereas wellbeing and job change goals are associated with higher burnout and lower work engagement (Hyvonen, Feldt, Salmela-Aro, Kinnunen, & Makikangas, 2009). These authors argue that research concerning the content of work-related goals and occupational health has received minimal attention. Similarly, there is limited research investigating how goals for teaching

may influence occupational health in teaching. While the purpose of this paper is not specifically to address these broader professional issues, the literature from other professions highlights the potential value of understanding goals for teaching. A conceptual framework to understand the content of goals for teaching is the first step.

The present study

The emerging research in goals and teacher motivation suggests that using goals to examine teacher motivation has three benefits. Firstly, as representations of desired or undesired consequences (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 1987), goals provide direction for cognition and behaviour. Secondly, goals can be self and self-in-context focused, accounting for the social nature of the teaching profession. Thirdly, goals can be may be 'stage appropriate' and therefore useful for understanding teacher motivation and career stages.

The present study explores the goals of preservice teachers who are at the point of graduation and intending to move into the profession as practicing teachers. Research questions included: What are graduating teachers' goals for their teaching (content) and why do they hold these goals (motive)? Are graduating teachers' goals related purely to the classroom or to the profession of teaching or do they include broader life goals? How do these goals relate to current understandings of goals, motivation, and teacher motivation?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of 218 graduating student teachers from two universities in Western Australia. Approval for the study was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee at each university and participants were volunteers who gave informed

consent to participate. Participants had completed either a four year Bachelor of Education degree or a one year post-graduate Diploma of Education. Most ($n=128$) participants were qualified to teach in primary schools (students aged 4-12), 66 participants were qualified to teach in secondary schools (students aged 12-18), and the remainder ($n=24$) were qualified for early childhood and special education. The researchers were known to participants. However, they had no responsibility for students' grades at the time of participation.

Survey

Participants completed a survey at the end of their teacher education program, either during class time or online. The face to face survey was administered by a researcher not involved in the participants' final classes. Participants could omit sections they did not want to complete or decline to complete the survey. The open ended questions on goals were part of a larger survey focusing on preparation, motivation, and efficacy of beginning teachers. In order to ascertain the broadest possible goals, open-ended questions were developed. Participants were asked "*Considering your future career as a teacher what are your three major goals? Please list these in order of importance. Why are these goals important to you?*" Although each participant could list up to three goals, 26 participants chose not to respond, 23 participants listed one goal, 37 participants listed two goals and 128 participants listed three goals. All goals were included in the analysis.

Data analysis

To analyse the responses, a coding system including broad goals was necessary to reflect the data. As indicated in both the literature and a first scan of the data, potential teachers have their own personal goals (such as to develop a career, to feel happy, satisfied and fulfilled), professional goals (such as to be part of a professional community, to contribute to curriculum improvement), and goals for their students (such as to provide positive learning

experiences, assist students in academic, social and emotional development). A coding system that focused on the content of teachers' goals, incorporating both self-focused goals, and self-in-context focused goals, was necessary.

Using a combination of inductive and deductive processes to examine the data, the comprehensive Ford and Nichols' (1987) Taxonomy of Human Goals provided the most appropriate system for identifying and categorizing goals emerging from the data. Ford and Nichols argue that the Taxonomy of Human Goals represents "classes of goals at a relatively abstract or 'decontextualised' level of analysis" (p. 294). Thus, some adaptations were required to 'contextualize' the goals as graduating teachers' goals for their future professional teaching. Furthermore, it had to be noted that participants were not employed as teachers at that time so their goals reflect desires in the anticipated future, or 'stage appropriate' goals. Like Ford and Nichols' taxonomy, the framework does not assume a hierarchical arrangement of goals and allows for the possibility that individuals pursue multiple goals simultaneously.

Coding processes

All responses to the open ended question were analysed iteratively through an inductive-deductive procedure using a collaborative process involving three researchers. Following an initial session developing the framework using both Ford and Nichols' taxonomy and a set of randomly selected responses from the data, two researchers independently coded 182 responses then discussed and further refined the categories. This process was repeated with a further 86 responses. The coding categories and 270 responses were then given to an independent researcher for coding. Responses were coded in single or multiple categories depending on the content of the statement. Inter-judge agreement (the percentage of

responses on which independent coding matched researcher coding) was 86%. Where disagreements occurred, responses were re-examined and coded by agreement. A final stage involved re-examination of the categories in the light of the Ford and Nichols (1987) taxonomy, and a review of definitions and data to produce the final set of categories, as shown in Table 1. Two researchers collaborated in this final stage. To further examine the categories of goals, descriptive statistics were calculated and frequencies compared using χ^2 .

Results

Goals for teaching framework

The iterative, inductive-deductive coding process resulted in the development of the Goals for Teaching Framework (see Table 1). The two main dimensions (desired *within-person consequences* and desired *person-environment consequences*) of the original taxonomy (Ford & Nichols, 1987) were utilized. Categories from the taxonomy that reflected the data were retained, and adaptations to ‘contextualize’ goals for teaching were made. Table 1 shows the two main dimensions, content goals in broad categories and sub-categories, with a definition of each and illustrative quotes from the data.

WITHIN PERSON CONSEQUENCES is the first main dimension of the framework and describes goals with a self-focus, including affective and cognitive goals.

1. **AFFECTIVE GOALS** represent desired feelings and emotions and include *physical wellbeing* and *emotional wellbeing*. Physical wellbeing includes looking after health and maintaining work life balance, for example, “to balance life and career” and to “look after my own health”. Emotional wellbeing includes enjoying teaching, “being

happy and fulfilled in my job” and maintaining enthusiasm and passion for teaching. As indicated in the review of the literature, the pursuit of such goals is relevant for numerous occupations, including teaching (Wiese, 2007). While Ford and Nichols included ‘physical wellbeing’ and ‘happiness’ in their taxonomy, our data show there are additional aspects of emotional wellbeing apart from happiness, and thus we have included happiness in the broader category of emotional wellbeing.

2. COGNITIVE GOALS refer to “different kinds of internal representations that people may want to construct or maintain” (Ford & Nichols, 1987, p. 296). These include *understanding* (to further understandings about education and “continue learning and growing as a teacher”), *positive self-evaluations* (developing confidence and being an ‘effective teacher’), and *intellectual creativity* (thinking creatively about learning experiences for students and stimulate own creativity through problem solving and reflective practice). These goals resonate with the mastery goal orientation examined in the achievement goal literature (Butler, 2007).

PERSON-ENVIRONMENT CONSEQUENCES is the second main dimension of the framework and has two main categories of social relationship goals and task goals.

1. SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP GOALS have the subcategories of self-assertive social relationship goals involving “maintenance or promotion of the self” (Ford & Nichols, 1987, p. 299), and integrative social relationship goals involving “maintenance or promotion of other people or the social groups of which one is a part” (Ford & Nichols, 1987, p. 299). Both goals are relevant to the highly social nature of teaching as individuals may strive for respect and positive regard in the community, as well as developing positive social relationships with and among students and colleagues.

These goals represent desired consequences at the classroom, school, community or professional level.

- ***Self-assertive social relationship goals*** include *resource acquisition*, through obtaining support, assistance, validation from others, through for example, being viewed as a ‘role model’. Resources acquisition is based on how the individual is perceived by others. *Superiority* however, involves being compared favourably to others, through for example achieving particular status in the teaching profession or to have “high standing in my teaching community”.
- ***Integrative social relationship goals*** include *belongingness goals* (to belong to a school/professional community), *resource provision* by giving approval, support or validation to others (peers and students), and *equity goals* through the promotion of social justice, fairness, catering for diversity in the classroom, and providing opportunities for specific groups of at-risk students. The participants in this study also described *altruism* as evidenced through “a liking for and desire to work with children and young people and a wish to serve society” (Chong & Low, 2009, p. 63). Altruism in this sense is a broader concept than equity as it refers to a desire to work with children and serve society. Although not part of Ford and Nichols’ original taxonomy, altruism is included in this framework with integrative social relationship goals as it involves social responsibility and, as shown in the literature, is a pertinent goal for teachers.

2. TASK GOALS describes goals representing “desired relationships between the individual and various *objects in the environment*” (including people) (Ford, 1992, p.

87) such as mastery (to improve performance), task creativity, management (organization), material gain, and safety. These task goals describe task-related activities in environments in a very general sense. In the specific context of teaching and this framework, task goals have been viewed as professionally oriented goals that are directly related to the task of becoming a professional educator. Goals for the graduating teachers included *career* goals such as to obtain a teaching position, *material gain* (increasing financial rewards), and *mastery* (of skills for a specific teaching related task).

Table 1: Goals for teaching - A conceptual framework

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Definitions</i>	<i>Participant statements</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>
Within person consequences (goals with a self focus)			41.1	302
<i>Affective goals</i>			14.0	103
Physical wellbeing	Looking after health. Maintaining work/life balance.	<i>“To balance life and career”, “to work without burning out because my health is important to me”</i>	2.5	18
Emotional wellbeing	Feeling positive about teaching, maintaining enthusiasm and passion. To enjoy teaching, be happy and fulfilled in work, to feel satisfied.	<i>“To be happy and fulfilled in my job”, “To enjoy and be satisfied with my work”, “To continue to be passionate about my career”</i>	11.6	85
<i>Cognitive goals</i>			27.1	199
Understanding	To further understandings about education, continue to gain knowledge and experience about teaching through practice and professional development (including further study).	<i>“To continue learning and growing as a teacher.”, “To be a life- long learner”, “To continue to learn and extend my knowledge through further study and professional development”</i>	12.3	90
Positive self-evaluations	Developing and/or maintaining a sense of self-confidence, pride and self-worth in the teaching profession. To think positively about self as a teacher, to do one’s best, be an effective teacher.	<i>“To be an inspiring teacher”, “To be an effective teacher to my students”, “To be a proficient teacher”, “to feel pride at my achievements”</i>	10.1	74
Intellectual creativity	To engage in ways of thinking creatively about teaching, interesting programming, lessons and approaches to teaching and learning. To stimulate own creativity and problem solving. To be reflective.	<i>“To try new things to maintain interest and excitement in my professional life”, “Be a creative teacher”, “To write engaging programmes”</i>	4.8	35
Person-environment consequences (goals with a social focus, self-in-context)			58.9	432
<i>Social relationship goals</i>			27.2	200
<i>Self-assertive social relationship goals</i>			2.6	19
Resource acquisition	To obtain validation, respect and approval from others (peers, students, parents).	<i>“To be a valued and respected staff member”, “To become a teacher who is recognised by peers as an excellent teacher”</i>	1.9	14
Superiority	To compare favourably to others, in terms of winning, status or success.	<i>“To have high standing in my teaching community”, “to gain status as a teacher”</i>	0.7	5
<i>Integrative social relationship goals</i>			24.7	181
Belongingness	Building and maintaining attachments/relationships with peers and students, belonging and contributing to a community (school and professional).	<i>“To feel part of a community and contribute something”, “Build relationships with other staff and teachers at schools”</i>	3.7	27
Resource provision	Giving approval, support, assistance, advice or validation to others through social interactions. Provision of effective learning experiences and classroom environment (includes cognitive and affective dimensions).	<i>“To provide interesting and engaging lessons for all students”, “To motivate and engage my students”, “To provide a happy, safe, caring learning environment”</i>	13.5	99
Equity	Promoting fairness, social justice, reciprocity or equality in classroom practices and community interactions.	<i>“Help each child reach their full potential”, “To ensure each student has what they need – equity”, “Cater for diversity”</i>	3.4	25
Altruism	A desire to make a difference/have a positive impact on the lives others. To make a positive contribution to society or a particular community.	<i>“To be personally responsible for changing my students' lives for the better”, “To enrich the lives of my students ... That’s what I got into teaching to do. I want to make a difference.”</i>	4.1	30

Task goals			31.6	232
Career	Gaining employment; gaining employment in a particular sector or context. Increasing employment status through promotion.	“To get a job”, “To work as a relief teacher for term 4”, “Get a teaching job in the Science field”, “To commence my Masters in Education”, “Have the opportunity for promotion”, “work my way up the ladder to become a Principal”	21.0	154
Material gain	Increasing the amount of money or tangible goods one has.	“to earn more money”, “to have financial stability”, “to secure a financial future for myself and my children”	4.6	34
Mastery	Mastery of skills for a specific teaching related task. Meeting a challenging standard of achievement or Improvement in specific teaching skill and knowledge.	“To become better at classroom management”, “To improve my assessment skills and methods”, “Improve my IT skills”,	6.0	44

Frequency of goals

Responses were also analysed to determine the frequencies of each domain, category and subcategory (as shown in Table 1) and whether there were significant differences in their occurrence. Graduating teachers revealed a range of goals and the frequencies are distributed fairly evenly across the framework. Overall, the sub-category that was mentioned most was *career goals* such as gaining employment ($n=154$; 21.0% of responses), followed by *resource provision* ($n=99$; 13.5% of responses), *cognitive understanding goals* ($n=90$; 12.3% of responses), *emotional well being* ($n=85$; 11.6% of responses), and positive self-evaluation ($n=74$; 10.1% of responses). With 30 nominations (4.1% of responses) *altruism*, which is newly included in this taxonomy, is only in the mid-range of nominations. The least nominated sub-category was *superiority* ($n=5$; 0.7% of responses). It would appear that in this sample, participants were aiming to attain employment where they would continue to gain knowledge as learners and professionals, and provide effective learning experiences for their students.

The broader dimensions and categories were compared for significant differences in frequency of nominations. To investigate frequency differences between these dimensions

and categories chi-square tests were applied. Consistent with their aim of being effective teachers for their students, the distribution of goals showed that the graduating teachers nominated significantly more *person-environment consequences* than *within person consequences* ($\chi^2(1, N = 734) = 23.03, p < .001$). With regard to the dimension of *within person consequences*, cognitive goals like understanding, positive self-evaluations and intellectual creativity were significantly more nominated than affective goals that focus on physical and emotional wellbeing ($\chi^2(1, N = 302) = 30.52, p < .001$). With regard to the dimension of person-environment consequences, there was no significant difference between nominations of social relationship goals and task goals ($\chi^2(1, N = 432) = 2.37, p = .124$), although the category of task goals did have the most nominations.

Discussion

Using the open-ended responses of graduating teachers, a *Goals for Teaching Framework* has been developed. The findings showed that graduating teachers have multiple goals for their future teaching careers. Consistent with their career stage of being graduating teachers, as indicated in Table 1, their goals focus on obtaining employment (career - 21%), providing support and effective learning experiences for their students (resource provision - 13.5%), continuing to further understandings about education (understanding - 12.3%), being happy, fulfilled and satisfied with work (emotional wellbeing – 11.6%), and developing confidence and self-worth in the teaching profession (positive self-evaluations – 10.1%).

The *Goals for Teaching Framework* was developed through collaborative, iterative, inductive-deductive processes generated both from the empirical data and from established

literature (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 1987). Use of an open-ended question (rather than a pre-determined set of goals) as the means of eliciting responses means the data represent the spontaneously articulated goals for teaching of graduating teachers. As such, the framework has the advantage of accurately reflecting anticipated within-person (self) and person-environment (self-in-context) desires of graduating teachers while being grounded in a broader, comprehensive taxonomy of human goals. As Ford (1992) argues, the Ford and Nichols taxonomy is “a potentially useful starting point for describing and classifying people’s goals in a succinct, efficient, and comprehensive manner” (p. 85). Thus, the *Goals for Teaching Framework* is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of possible goals, but rather to encompass the goals generated by the data. Given the small sample size and exploratory nature of the research, no attempt was made to determine whether certain types of goals were clustered together or whether each participant’s goals tended to be in one of the main dimensions or categories, or across different types of sub-categories. Such questions could be the focus of future studies.

The framework represents a starting point from which goals for teaching at various stages of teaching career can be understood. As represented in this paper, the framework shows the “stage appropriate” goals of graduating teachers, which may explain the emphasis on career goals such as finding employment. Given the dynamic nature of goals and the influence of context on goal pursuit, it can be expected that there would be variations of goals that emerge during particular professional life stages. It could be anticipated, for example, that goals such as management goals (“maintaining order, organization, or productivity in daily life tasks” (Ford, 1992, p. 89)) may feature more prominently for early career teachers than for teachers more advanced in their careers. Other researchers have found differences in concerns, motivation and self-efficacy at different stages of teachers’ careers, from preservice to retirement (Day, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). So while the

importance of career goals, such as to obtain employment, in these data is strongly reflective of the immediate needs of graduates, such goals may not be as prominent for teachers settled in the profession.

This framework, which is grounded in broader life goals, offers the potential for investigating goals across teacher career stages. The importance of person-environment goals and cognitive goals may also be stage appropriate. Furthermore, it can also be anticipated that as beginning teachers experience the ‘real world’ of teaching, that ‘reality’ may trigger other goals not yet illustrated in the framework. This is also underlined by the fact that some of Ford and Nichols’ (1987) categories such as individuality goals (to feel unique or different) and self-determination goals (to have the freedom to make choices) did not emerge in the data. A possible explanation may be that graduating teachers may wish to conform to the expectations of others early in their careers. Whether or not these goals may emerge for teachers later in their careers is yet to be investigated.

Avoidance goals also did not appear in participants’ responses in this study. Researchers argue that the approach/avoid distinction is fundamental to understanding goals (Elliot & Friedman, 2007) and indeed approach/avoidance dimensions are included in Ford and Nichols’ (1987) original taxonomy. This distinction has not been incorporated in the Goals for Teaching Framework primarily because avoidance goals (for example, to avoid negative perceptions from others) did not emerge in the data. This finding may reflect the optimism and enthusiasm of graduating teachers as they look forward to beginning their teaching careers and again emphasizes the “stage appropriate” nature of such goals. Exploring the extent to which avoidance goals are spontaneously articulated by teachers during their career is an issue for further research.

A number of authors have examined teachers' goals from an achievement goals perspective (Butler, 2007; Retelsdorf et al., 2010), using mastery / performance distinctions to explain the achievement goals teachers pursue in classrooms. It has been argued here that a focus on short-term achievement focused goals is limited (Boekaerts, deKoning & Vedder, 2006). The data of this study showed that teachers start their career with both broad goals with a 'self' (41.1%) and 'self-in-context' (58.9%) focus, as well as more specific task goals (31.6%) within the teaching profession. This is in line with Dowson and McInerney (2003) who stated that goals seen as a uni-dimensional cognitive construct may "oversimplify the processes associated with (students) motivation" (Dowson & McInerney, 2003, p. 94). Goals have the potential to be conceptualised as 'multi-dimensional' structures which include cognitive, affective, and behavioural components and the framework developed in this study is able to show this multidimensionality. Most goals mentioned by the beginning teachers were not achievement goals *per se*, but rather task goals and social relationship goals. Conceiving goals this way enables teacher motivation researchers to look beyond motivation as a solely cognitive process, and to consider the affective, behavioural, and social dimensions of motivation in the teaching context.

The nomination of social relationship goals (27.2%), in particular, integrative social relationship goals (24.7%) such as belongingness, resource provision, equity and altruism, suggests that the social dimensions of teaching are indeed important to teacher motivation. Watt and Richardson (2008) also identified social factors such as enhancing social equity, working with children to shape the future, and making a social contribution as motivations for choosing a teacher career among teacher education candidates. The desire for emotional wellbeing through teaching in this study (11.6%) reflects recent research concerning teacher emotions (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009) and wellbeing (Day & Gu, 2009) and suggests that emotional dimensions of teaching are worthy of attention. Research has investigated such

dimensions of teacher motivation and ‘unconscious motivation to teach’ (Wright & Sherman, 1963). For example, Riley’s (2009) finding that individuals may unconsciously choose a teaching career through desire to correct previous emotional experiences may be considered in further investigations of belongingness and resource acquisition goals.

The Goals for Teaching Framework provides a useful way in which to conceptualise motivation for teaching and understanding the underlying purposes for teachers’ future motivation in the profession. Teacher motivation research has examined the reasons individuals choose teaching as a career (Chong & Low, 2009; Richardson & Watt, 2010; Sinclair, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Such investigations have helped elucidate motivations for teaching and ongoing longitudinal research (see Richardson & Watt, 2010) will show the impact such motivations have on teachers’ career paths. Our participants were asked to consider their future career as a teacher and write their three major goals. The goals then may reflect both initial motivation for teaching, and initial motivation influenced by teacher education experiences. This focus on teacher motivation through goals for the anticipated future is, to the best of our knowledge, unique in the field. As goals are viewed as cognitive representations of desired end points (Ferguson & Porter, 2009) and subjective representations of desired or undesired consequences (Ford, 1992; Ford & Nichols, 2007), goals can have a powerful impact on behaviour and emotions. Viewing teacher motivation through the lens of such goals can offer new insights to the broader teacher motivation literature.

A further contribution made by the Goals for Teaching Framework is the consideration of both self and self-in-context goals. These data show graduating teachers articulate a desire to work in a particular context (geographical or demographic) or school sector (government, independent, Catholic) and so it is reasonable to consider that context has an impact on teacher motivation. Indeed, reasons teachers give for leaving the profession

include contextual demands such as workload and working with challenging groups of students. Similarly the altruistic desire to make a difference may sustain teacher motivation when that goal is realised. Context has been shown to have a powerful influence on student motivation in classrooms. Recently Richardson and Watt have argued for the need for research on teacher motivation in context to “determine how different workplace environments nurture or constrain teachers’ motivations” (2010, p. 167). The Goals for Teaching framework may contribute to this important ongoing work.

There are a number of limitations of this current study. First, the sample size is small and comprises exclusively graduating teachers as they complete their teacher education degree. This means that the goals represented are limited by the sample, their stage of career and their perhaps unrealistic views of future experiences. Extending the sample size and collecting data from early and mid-career teachers is part of our ongoing work. We anticipate that with a larger sample at various career stages we will be able to develop the Goals for Teaching Framework further by possible addition of goals and consideration of approach/avoidance dimensions of goals. There is also the possibility that, as graduating teachers, participants may have unconsciously responded to the questions in a manner they considered to be well regarded by the researchers. Measures were taken to limit this including voluntary anonymous responses. Finally, there are limitations of using open-ended survey items in data collection. A next step is validation of the framework through development of a survey instrument and use of focused interviews with teachers.

Conclusion

Teacher motivation is a critical field of emerging research (Richardson & Watt, 2010). While perspectives regarding intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives have been valuable in developing understandings about what motivates teachers and attracts individuals

to the teaching profession, these perspectives focus mainly on motivating factors related to individuals. Because motivation research more broadly has begun to take account of the contexts in which individuals participate, and teaching is an inherently social occupation, there is benefit in moving beyond individual motives better to understand the complexity of teacher motivation in context. This also applies to goals for teaching. A goal content perspective enables motivation to be conceptualised with regard to both the self (*within-person consequences*) and the self-in-context (*person-environment consequences*) which in the profession of teaching includes the classroom, school, and broader community.

The Goals for Teaching framework is a useful starting point for examining teachers' motivation and goals from a content perspective, including not only goals relevant to the school and classroom context but also those that reflect broader life desires. Such "life task goals" (Schutz et al., 2001) generate sub-goals and together these guide cognition and behaviour and can be used to understand current professional issues in teaching. Future longitudinal research may also elucidate the goals that are related to teacher retention and wellbeing as well as consider the interplay between self and context that leads to goal regulation.

Conceptualising teacher motivation in terms of self and self-in-context is important for understanding teacher attrition and wellbeing. Much of the teacher burnout and stress literature cites context-related reasons for teacher distress and attrition. Context must be considered when examining factors that contribute to teacher retention. Conceptualising teacher motivation to reflect both the self and the context may help elucidate some of the nuances of motivation in the teaching profession and contribute to greater understandings about how social interactions of the self-in-context can sustain motivation throughout professional careers.

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