

# Developing Resilience through Goal Setting Using Sandtray Approach: A Case Research of Academically Talented Trainee Teachers

<sup>1</sup>Chiam Sueh Li, <sup>2</sup>Noriah Mohd. Ishak

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Teacher Education, Batu Lintang Campus, Kuching, Sarawak

<sup>2</sup>Pusat PERMATApintar Negara Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Abstract:** - *Individuals with high resilience have the ability to adapt, bounce back or to thrive during transition despite adversity, particularly when they have clear goals in life. Gifted individuals have proven to be very committed in their work because they have clear goals that drives their tenacity to succeed in life. As such, they are expected to have high resilience. Nonetheless, because of their unique characteristics, this factor may not be their strength that will push their potentials to the fullest. This is a study that examined the use of sandtray therapy in enhancing resilience through goals setting among academically talented trainee teachers (n=5). The study employed a case study approach. The research participants were individual who were academically talented and were undergoing a teachers' training program in one of the teaching institute in Malaysia. The research participants underwent two experiential sandtray sessions. Carefully planned and selected miniatures were used. Specific themes were given in the therapy sessions in order to glean more information about the goal orientation of the research participants. The sandtray world was supplemented with reflections of the research participants. The findings show that the sandtray world enhanced self-awareness towards personal goals and increased his resilience. Implication towards the use of sandtray technique to explore resilience among academically talented learners are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** sandtray, resilience, goal oriented, academically talented, teacher trainee

## Introduction

Academically talented individuals are those who exhibit certain behaviours that indicate superior potential either as a result of task commitment or a synthesis of thinking skills (Renzulli & Reis, 1997; Sternberg, 2003). As such, academically talented individuals are also gifted intellectually. Gagne (1995) defines giftedness as aptitudes in at least one ability domain such as academic, technical, artistic, interpersonal and athletic that places the individual among the top 15 percent of his peers. Gagne (1995) in his model explained that this giftedness will develop into talent when the individuals are placed within a learning environment that will enhance their potentials. Within five percent of the school population can be considered as gifted and talented (Piiro, 1999;

Renzulli et al., 2002 in Siti Fatimah, Noriah, Melor & Rosadah, 2012), and this five percent are considered as academically talented within the school setting. Academically talented individuals have an inclination towards perfectionism, low self-esteem, having identity issues (Schroth & Heifer, 2009), low motivation, lack of confidence, high self-criticism, unable to identify own strengths, and depressed due to high expectations (Rorlinda, Noriah & Azizah, 2015; Rosadah, 2003). Besides that, due to rote learning practiced by high achieving schools, talented students lacked critical and creative thinking skills, have difficulty in adapting to new environment, and lack communication skills, which could impede them to develop well (Rosadah, 2003).

According to Connor-Davidson (2003), resilience is the ability to bounce back. Resilience has been used to describe clusters of strengths that are mobilized in the struggle with hardship (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). In this study resilience is defined as a dynamic process with the ability to bounce back, adapt, heal and even grow in adversity, by utilizing inner and outer resources. Some of the strengths seen as resilience are the skill of goal setting, self-awareness, adapting, handle stress, having social support and spirituality. Another strength is creativity which means using imagination and expressing oneself in art forms (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Why is it important to have resilient teacher trainees (TT)? TT who are resilient have a more open attitude towards life changes, high commitment and locus of control towards happening in life (Morales, 2016). Furthermore resilient TT see failure as an opportunity to be stronger, whereas stress and adversity are seen as part of life experience and happenings (Bemak, 2000). One of the element of giftedness as defined by Renzulli (2011) is the task commitment which is indicative of resilience to complete a task even when it is difficult. Therefore by setting goals and being goal oriented, the goals serve as a compass guiding the TT towards his dreams. The obstacles and adversity faced on the way to achieve his goals are seen as happenings in life. TT will find ways to overcome them and therefore are seen to have more resilient attitudes.

Sandtray session provides a therapeutic environment to express oneself creatively. Creativity and readiness in a therapeutic session helps the client to acquire the problem solving skill. Furthermore the therapeutic proses is client centred and enable the client to experience the locus of control (Dawson, 2011). ST is also useful in exploring one's value, career goals and develop professional identity (Felton, 2016; Sangganjanavanish & Magnuson, 2011). Therefore this study is looking into goal setting as a strategy to improve resilience so as to help in adapting and bouncing back from the challenges faced. Sandtray is used as a creative counselling approach to

increase resilience. The purpose of this study was to understand resilient attitude development through goal setting using sandtray approach.

## **Literature Review**

### **What is Sandtray Therapy?**

Homeyer and Sweeney (2017) defined sand tray therapy as "an expressive and projective mode of psychotherapy involving the unfolding and processing of intra- and interpersonal issues through the use of specific sandtray materials as a nonverbal medium of communication, led by client(s) and facilitated by a trained therapist" (p. 6). Sandtray therapy can be used within any existing theoretical framework (Boik, 2000; Lowenfeld, 1979). For sandtray, the scenes created by clients are generally view as representative rather than symbolic (Taylor, 2009); therefore in sandtray less emphasis is placed on interpretation (Homeyer & Sweeney, 2005, 2017). Sand tray are often use concurrently with talk therapy.

### **Materials for Sandtray**

The generally used sand tray is the 'standard' size tray which is 30 inches by 20 inches, with a depth of 3 inches (Homeyer & Sweeney, 2017). However, it possible to use range of shapes, sizes, and materials, including octagons, square, round, wood, and plastic (Homeyer & Sweeney, 2017). A rectangular tray facilitates dividing the sand tray scene into sections (p25). Trays are usually blue with half-filled dry or wet sand. The minatures serve as the language of expression for intra- and interpersonal communication. Miniatures are to be displayed according to categories, in an orderly and consistent manner.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This is qualitative case study. It is a multiple-cases design as one would consider multiple experiments, that is, to follow a replication design (Yin, 2009 p53), the selected research participants represent cases showing resilience developed through goal setting after a sandtray approach intervention. Case

studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Patton, 2014). According to Yin (2009, p19-20), there are at least four different applications. In this research case study is used to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions, and to illustrate certain topics within the evaluation in a descriptive mode. In this case the researchers are explaining development of resilience through goal setting by using sandtray approach. Furthermore, case study is appropriate to enlighten situation in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. Case study offers a means of in-depth understanding of a pattern or theme of a phenomenon under study (Yin, 2009). The qualitative approach of this study provided a suitable framework as it enabled the researcher to gather data from multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1988) such as group sharing, pictures, observation, journal, reflections and counselling reports.

### **Research Site**

The research was conducted in one of the teacher's training institute in Sarawak, Malaysia. In total Malaysia has 28 teacher training institute that train individuals who will serve the Malaysian primary schools around the country. Admission to the training institute is highly competitive and requires its candidate to achieve at least seven As in the core subjects offered in the Malaysian National Examination. As such, only academically talented individuals are accepted as trainee teachers. Three rooms suitable for the sandtray activity were selected at the institute and were used throughout the research. Each participant was given a table and comfortable chair for them to sit while doing the activity.

### **Sandtray Equipment**

The room was equipped with a sandtray filled with sand for each research participant. The tray chosen was a 30 by 20 inches wooden tray. (as shown in the photo). In addition, sets of sandtray kit with 350 miniatures of various categories were arranged neatly on tables placed at the end of the room to be

used simultaneously by all the research participants for the sandtray activity.

### **Research Participants**

In this case study, the five research participants were identified as academically talented based on the score they received for the Malaysian Certificate Examination that they took in their 11th grade. They were undergoing a teachers' training program in one of the teacher education institute in Malaysia when they were selected to participate in the study. They were new trainees in their first semester doing a Foundation Course for Primary Education Degree and majoring in the following studies; Islamic Education Studies (n=2), Chinese Language (n=2) and Mathematic (n=1). These teacher trainees were aged between 18 to 20 years old, from different ethnic group such as Melanau, Malay and Chinese. There were four females and one male. They were from different parts of Malaysia (Penang, Sibul, Sarikei), away from where they were studying and staying in the institute hostel. The research participants (using code P01, P04, P12, P15, P17) were selected using theoretical sampling that allows the researcher to collect data to generate understanding on the topic of study. It also allows the researcher to jointly collect codes and analyses data in order to develop better understanding on the goal setting that will improve the participants' resilience based on their progress after receiving sandtray intervention.

### **Facilitators**

The data collection using sandtray sessions were conducted by five facilitators. They were guidance and counselling teachers, with two to thirteen years of experience. They also have prior knowledge of sandtray. They attended a briefing and three days training workshop conducted by both the researchers on the usage of Module Suehli-Noriah Sandtray Approach in Improving Resilience (MST-SLN). MST-SL was built by both the researchers.

The facilitator provided each of the research participants a blue tray with sand. She invited the research participants to choose miniatures that

attracted them and place them in the tray to create a scene. This particular session required the research participants to arrange a scene portraying short term and long term goals by following the instruction given by the facilitator. The facilitator sat quietly and watched while the research participants created their scenes in the sand tray. She asked the research participants to let her know when they have completed their trays. The facilitator gave an instruction to start off the session, 'Arrange a scene with a timeline showing your long term and short term goals, challenges and personal strength in achieving your goals. You can use as many or as few miniatures you wanted to.' Within 30 minutes, the participants selected miniatures and constructed a detailed scene in the tray. Next the facilitator proceeded to invite the research participants to talk about their scene/world. Session-2 of goal setting was carried out within the same week with a different instruction, 'Arrange a scene with four quadrants using SWOT (Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat) analysis in achieving your goal in ten years to come.'

### **Instrument**

In this study two experiential sandtray sessions relevant to goal setting were conducted using MST-SLN. Some other data collection in this study were pictures of the sand world, video transcripts of the group sharing, field notes during direct observation, and other forms of documentation such as reflection, and counselling session reports.

### **Credibility of Data**

Credibility entails the internal validity of a qualitative study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In this study the credibility of the results was assured by several procedures. All the findings were triangulated with multiple data sources. The research participant's sandtray sessions were video recorded. In transcribing the video, the participant's sandtray process was not only recorded honestly, but also accurately and clearly (White, Oelke & Friesen, 2012). In assessing credibility, the research participants were asked to review all video

transcripts and sand world pictures to verify the narrative as it was developed for this report.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data collection and analysis were done concurrently. As suggested by Moore (2000), analysis and collection should become integrated so that the researcher can use what he deduced to inform in the next session or discussion. As the researcher went along, she produced analytical notes. She used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) to analyse the data, identified themes and issues by reading through all the sandtray session transcripts, the journals reflection, and field notes and see if anything was missing, or struck as significant or worth following up. Then the researcher went back to the transcripts, field notes and journals reflection and read through them all again. This was conducted many times to help absorb the essence of those sandtray group sharing. Then the data was segmented and categorized. The categories were kept flexible. The research participants' excerpts from the group sharing verbatim, sand world pictures, facilitators session reports, and observation notes fit into an existing category or formed a new category. This procedure was repeated with additional data from subsequent session and observation. After several iterations, the data was finally grouped into categories with themes and sub-themes.

### **Findings**

There were two general themes that emerged from the analysis and are discussed in the following section, (a) short term goals and (b) long term goals.

#### **Theme 1: Short Term Goals**

After arranging the world using miniatures in their respective sand tray, the research participants were invited to talk about their world. Each research participant was given 10 to 15 minutes to describe their world. The sharing sessions were video recorded and transcribed. Data analysis of the sandtray sessions presents a variation of short-term goals among the research participants such as campus life in teachers' education institute (TEI),

family, preparations for living and their career in the future. Table 1 presents the transcripts used to portray short-term TEI campus life goals of research participants P01, P04, P12, and P15. From the group-sharing transcripts, the researcher found most of the research participant’s short-term goals are related to daily life in TEI. The short-term goals

are used to direct the research participants’ self-resilience towards doing better in academic work. The short-term goals are; completing the course work well, managing time effectively, be diligent, try to relax when appropriate, equip self with various academic activities including sport, and always try to positively develop oneself.

**Table 1** Data excerpts illustrating the short-term goals relating to campus life in TEI of the research participants

Short Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Complete course work well	"And this ( <i>referring to the miniature used</i> ) means I can do my course work well, doing my revision."
Manage time effectively	"Err, this ( <i>referring to the hourglass</i> ) is my symbol, good at managing time, maybe in sport ( <i>pointing to basketball miniature</i> ), and my studies, my studies." "My short-term goals are ... able to manage time well in TEI". "... in order to achieve ( <i>the goal</i> ), I will continue ( <i>working</i> ) to distribute my time ..."
Diligent or scrape laziness	"Hmm ... ( <i>point to milk cow miniature</i> ) this cow ... this cow symbolizes I can be diligent in this TEI".
Find time to relax	"And, this symbol ( <i>yellow umbrella</i> ) shows I can also relax".
Equip self in many aspects:	
a) academic	"This one ( <i>referring to the miniature used</i> ) means, now I may not be able to catch up with my lessons here, maybe, maybe next semester when I feel more comfortable, I can catch up."
b) sports	"... can be good ... in, maybe sport ( <i>point to basketball miniature</i> ) ...". "To be a great player". "Short-term goal become a great player". "Which is erm, maybe can play various games, badminton, basketball ( <i>point to shuttlecock and basketball miniature</i> ) ..."
Self-development	"I can be a more confident and more friendly person with my friends". "... being a friendly person ..."

Aside from academic related goals, the participants also echoed their sentiments on developing short-term goals to help their families. This seemed to be important for trainees who came from low income group and saw the opportunity of being trained as a teacher to uproot the family from poverty. Table 2 presents the transcripts used to portray short-term family-related goals of research participant P17. From the group sharing transcripts, the researcher found that research participants also had short-term goals related to families such as:

**Table 2** Data excerpts illustrating the short-term goals relating to family of the research participant

Short Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Support my family	"My short-term goals are also graduating from TEI and also have a job so that I can support my family members."

Table 3 presents the transcripts used to portray short-term goals related to life and career preparation of research participant P01. From the group sharing transcripts, the researcher found that apart from the daily life of TEI and family, the research participants had other short-term goals that consisted of several different things at the same time.

**Table 3** Data excerpt illustrating the short-term goals relating to the life and career preparation of the research participants

Short Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Familiarize self with the children world	... to familiarize myself ... the children world.

Transcription analysis displays a variation of combined short-term goals. Most research participants have short-term goals comprising a

combination of few aspects related to life in TEI or a combination of life in TEI with their hope towards some family aspects. Table 4 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray short-term goals related to combinations of life in TEI, family, and dreams of research participants P12 and P15. According to research participant P12 she wants to be diligent, good in time management, involve in sports, and at the same time has time to relax. In addition, P12 hopes to be appreciated for what she has done.

**Table 4** Data excerpts illustrating the short-term goals relating to various aspects of TEI for participant P12

Short Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Holistic life at TEI	"... it symbolizes that I am good in managing time, maybe in sport ( <i>basketball miniature</i> ), and my studies. This cow ( <i>point to milk cow miniature</i> ) symbolizes I can be diligent in this TEI. And this umbrella ( <i>point to umbrella miniature</i> ), symbolizes at the same time I can also relax".
Appreciation	"Erm, this ( <i>point to pink lotus flower miniature</i> ) is, a ... erm ... a compliment to me, after achieving short-term goal."

Table 5 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray short-term goals of life in TEI preparing towards the teaching profession for research participants P15 and P17. Participant P15 wish to adapt to the TEI environment in order to be able to concentrate on her studies. She wants to manage her time well, and be more confident. At the same time P15 wants to improve herself and be friendly with friends, daring to interact, socialize and speak in public. Similar to research participant P15, participant P17 also want to improve himself so that he dare to interact and socialize.

**Table 5** Data excerpts illustrating the short-term goals relating to various aspects of TEI for research participants P15 and P17

Short Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Manage time	"My short-term goal is that I can manage time well ..."
Adapting	"This one ( <i>referring to the miniature used</i> ) means, now I may not be able to catch up with my lessons here, maybe, maybe next semester when I feel more comfortable, I can catch up."
Increase confidence and friendliness	"I can be a more confident and more friendly person with my friends". "... being a friendly person ..."
Courage	"... and the courage to interact, socialize and speak in public".

Table 6 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray short-term TEI campus life related goals aiming to equip herself with various skills for research participants P04. The P04 research participant wants to become a great player, who can play various types of games, badminton and basketball.

**Table 6** Data excerpt illustrating the short-term goals relating to various skills for research participant P04

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"... To be a great player". "... who can play various types of games, badminton, basketball ..."

## Theme 2: Long Term Goals

Table 7 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray long-term goals related to teaching profession for research participants P01, P04, P12, P15, and P17. The findings of the group sharing transcript analysis show the variation of the long-term goals of the research participants. However, a large number of the research participants long-term goals can be categorized as achieving their ambition and objectives of entering TEI, for example the participants hope to be able to graduate (P15, P17), be an excellent teacher (P15), and also becoming a teacher of quality, understanding, caring, good, cheerful and fun (P12), lastly versatile (P04).

**Table 7** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to teaching profession for research participants P01, P04, P12, P15, and P17

Long Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Achieve ambition and graduate	“(My goals) My long term goal is to graduate from the TEI and become excellent teacher”. “My short-term goal is to graduate from the TEI”. “This (referring to the miniature) is me”.
Become an outstanding teacher	"... My long-term goal is to graduate from TEI and be an excellent teacher". "... be a quality teacher, caring, loving and kind ...". "Long-term goals ... become versatile teachers". "Cheerful and happy".

Table 8 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray long term family related goals for research participant P01 and P17. From the group-sharing transcripts, the researcher found a family-themed long term goals of the research participants. Compared to short term family goals, long term family goals are more comprehensive and has long-term effect such as showing affection, appreciation and the desire to be with parents / families (P17). In addition long-term goals also include the desire to be an obedient child (P01).

**Table 8** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to family for research participants

Long Term Goal	Example of Transcript Excerpt
Love, appreciation and the desire to be with parents / families	"My long-term goal is to be able to live with family members in a place ... A place that will not be disturbed by others". "Butterflies (pointing to a blue butterfly miniature) I can afford to bless my family".
Be an obedient child	" Be an obedient child... parents and family. That is the long-term (goal) ".

Table 9 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray long-term goals relating to acquire property and wealth for research participants P01 and P15. Lastly, group sharing transcript analysis shows, participants also have long-term goals of acquiring property in the form of materials such as house and car (P15).

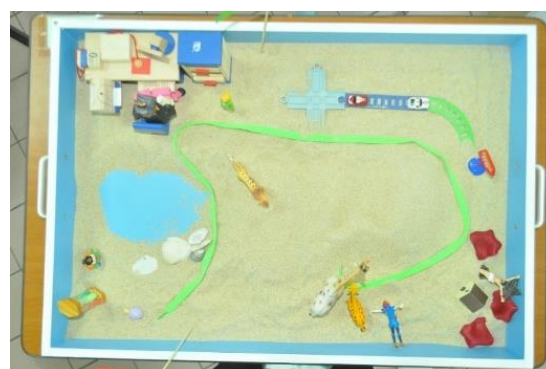
**Table 9** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to acquiring property and wealth for research participants

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"This (pointing to a treasure box) ... my treasure". (pointing to the yellow and red gems miniature located on the side of the treasure box). "... do not need much, enough with this one ..." "... when I graduate and got a job, I will buy a house and a car ..."

Findings from transcripts and sand tray analysis are further shown in the transcription tables, pictures and summary tables for cases mentioned in the previous long-term goals table. Transcript analysis shows that both P12 and P15 strongly assert their goal of becoming an outstanding teacher. Table 10, Figure 1 and Table 11 presents the transcripts, picture of the world and miniatures used to portray long-term goals related to becoming an outstanding teacher as highlighted by research participant P15.

**Table 10** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to excellence for research participant P15

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"And this (referring to the miniature used such as cupboard, phone, printer, computer, mouse, desk, chair) means I can do my course work well, do my revision, and I can graduate and get a job". "This (pointing to a female graduate miniature) is my long-term goal which is, I can graduate from my TEI here and become an excellent teacher."



**Figure 1** The long-term goal of research participant P15 in session-2

**Table 11** Summary of miniatures symbolising excellent teacher used by research participant P15

Miniature	Symbolising	Category
Closet	Course work	Home appliances
Telephone	Course work	Home appliances
Printer	Course work	Home appliances
Computer	Course work	Home appliances
Mouse	Course work	Home appliances
Desk	Course work	Home appliances
Chair	Course work	Home appliances
Lady graduate	Research participant	Human
	Excellent teacher	

Table 12, Figure 2 and Table 13 presents the transcripts, the picture of the world and miniatures used to portray long-term goals related being an outstanding teacher as highlighted by research participant P12. Transcript analysis shows that participant P12 also emphasized on the goal of becoming a quality teacher.

**Table 12** Data excerpt illustrating the long-term goals relating to quality teacher for research participant P12

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"This is a long-term goal...to become a quality teacher, with care and love ( <i>pointing to red and pink heart shape miniature with the word love on it</i> ). Hmm and ( <i>point to big tiger miniature</i> ) ... and cheerful, happy. "



**Figure 2** the long-term goal of becoming a quality teacher of research participant P12 in session-2

**Table 13** Summary of miniatures symbolising excellent teacher used by research participant P12

Miniature	Symbolising	Category
Red heart	Quality teacher	Mischellenous
Pink heart of 'Love	Caring teacher	Mischellenous
Tiger (large)	Cheerful and happy	Animal

The findings of group sharing analysis show a variation of the long-term goals of the research participants. Among the participants there is a long-term goal to equip themselves with skills, strength, luxury and friends. Table 14, Figure 3 and Table 15 presents the transcripts, the picture of the world and miniatures used to portray long-term goals relating to acquiring skills for research participant P04. The research participant P04 stated that her long-term goal was to become a versatile and skilled teacher in terms of sports, playing music instrument, carpentering and cooking.

**Table 14** Data excerpt illustrating the long-term goals relating to acquiring skills for research participant P04

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"Long-term goals, want to be a versatile teacher ( <i>point to superman miniature</i> ). Can cook ( <i>Smurth chef miniature</i> ), can play music ( <i>music player miniature</i> ), can play ... ( <i>Smurth man with hat and white shoes</i> )..." "Carpentry". "This one ( <i>pointing to Smurth with white hat</i> ) ... is a skilled teacher ... my long-term goals."



**Figure 3** the short and long-term goal of acquiring skills for research participant P04 in session-2

**Table 15** Summary of miniatures symbolising versatile and skilled teacher used by research participant P04

Miniature	Symbolising	Category
Superman	Versatile teacher	Fantasy
Smurth the chef	Versatile teacher (good chef)	Fantasy
Music player	Versatile teacher (good in music)	Fantasy
Smurth with hat and white shoes	Versatile teacher (athletic) Skilled teacher	Fantasy
Smurth	Versatile teacher (good in carpentry)	Fantasy





Table 16 presents the transcripts, and miniatures used to portray long-term goals of being appreciated for research participant P12. The findings of group-sharing analysis show some of the long-term goals of the research participants as an extension of their short-term goals, for example reinforcing and increase the number of short-term goals regarding acquire skills into long-term goals such as research participant P04 analyzed in Table 4.109 previously. Additionally, research participant P12 extend her short-term goal into long-term goals of being appreciated.

**Table 16** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to appreciation for research participant P12

Example of Transcript Excerpt
"These flowers ( <i>point to pink and purple flowers miniature</i> ), after retirement I receive flowers." "... .. flowers from my students".

Table 17 and Figure 4 presents the transcripts and miniatures used to portray long-term goals related to the family of research participant P17. The long-term goal of P17 focuses on family, wanting the whole family to come together. According to the research participant P17:

**Table 17** Data excerpts illustrating the long-term goals relating to family for research participant P17

Example of Transcript Excerpt	
"(The long-term goal) ... is to be with the family on a continuous basis. This are my parents, this is my sister." "With family members". "(I am) here ( <i>placing a new self-added miniature next to the parent miniature</i> ). "... I have a sister abroad, it's so far away, but when if we are already working, already grown up, we can come back here together." "(We) live here, in this building". "Yes, big house. Because ( <i>need to accomodate</i> ) everyone, want all family members to stay together. "	
	
Front view	Top view
Figure 4 Long-term goals related to family for research participant P17 in session-2	

**DISCUSSION**

In the early stages of the study most participants did not know what they wanted in life. They have no goal in life. Some do have goals but were blurred ones. However, the TT were able to set short and long term goals, challenges and strengths in achieving their life long goals. The goal is very important for those who want success. It defines clearly what to achieve within a specific time frame of short and long term. They related and used the forces inherent in their lives to overcome the challenges so that their short-term

and long-term goals were achieved. They have various internal and external forces as well as the challenges. According to Maltz (2001) in the human

body there is a system or internal mechanism that works to guide us to achieve the goals set. For that mechanism to work, it needs to have a target for it to achieve. Therefore, once the TT have set a specific goal that to be achieved, they will have the spirit and motivation of trying to achieve it. Self-confidence is also necessary to make sure one stay excited and motivated to achieve the goal. Showing connections between the daily activities and larger ideas and goals may provide a sense of motivation and perspective, for example doing well in course work and class presentation will enable the TT to graduate and equipped with the knowledge and skills to be excellent teachers.

Most of the short-term goals theme of the TT were related to daily life in TEI and family such as traveling with family members, and self-development. The TT have also set short-term goals that combined life in the institute with dreams towards their family. The long-term goals were achieving aspirations and goals being in the institute such as able to graduate, being outstanding, excellent, quality, attentive, caring, good, versatile, cheerful and fun teachers. Research often ties resilience to the theme of goals, especially as the nature of a goal can intercalate it with resilient qualities (Forrester, 2012). Past researches show there are two goals orientations, (a) mastery goals, and (b) performance goals. Mastery goals were set to achieve success and often have qualities that indicate a want of learning for the sake of learning, whereas performance goals were set to avoid failure (Elliot et al., 2001; Forrester, 2012; Witkow & Fuligini, 2007). The research participants TT have shown good improvement in their resilience after setting their goals using the sandtray approach. Many of their short and long term goals were mastery goals which were more challenging and showed higher degrees of perseverance when faced with adversity (Dweck, 1986; Elliot et al., 2001; Forrester, 2012). These mastery goals are resilience mechanisms and usable tools in helping them overcoming adversity (Cabrera & Padillo, 2004; Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Lopez & Sotillo, 2009).

The researcher thinks that the goals of the TT were influenced by their stage of life development. Developmental outcomes and resilience are highly related concepts (Svetina 2014). According to Erickson (1968), adolescents at the stage of identity versus role confusion development are trying to solve the conflicts of life at this stage by finding their identity which identifies their career and resolving the issue of 'who I am' is a key focus. This is portrayed through the TT identifying themselves as a teacher trainee struggling with course work, adapting to campus life and going through a journey to be an outstanding, excellence teacher who is caring, loving and understanding. The TT may also experience identity crisis as a result of the transition

from childhood to adulthood. Crisis at this stage may also be brought about by expectations from themselves and people around them, for example their parents (Svetina 2014). This can be seen through the TT hoping to fulfill the expectation of their parents, to be acknowledged and appreciated as a teacher in the future. In addition, the TT have also entered the stage of early adulthood, 'intimacy versus isolation', where they try to resolve the conflicts of life by seeking harmony and sense of belonging with the people around them. At the young adult stage, people tend to seek companionship and love. This is portrayed in their goals of having a life partner and happy family.

### **Implication towards Counseling Services and Conclusion**

Sandtray as a tool to facilitate personal growth has been used for more than five decades. Although it started as merely a tool to facilitate discussion in counselling session, it is now being used as an approach to help clients who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally. The use of sandtray allows the counsellor to examine what is beneath the mind of an individual and what is being kept in the subconscious mind. It allows the counsellor to help the client explore and gain insight on things that happened before in their life, things that they are experiencing now and things that they hope to happen in the future.

Gifted individuals or even academically talented individuals are so engrossed with their cognitive development that they forgot to grow holistically. In order to grow and push their potentials to the fullest, they need to realize what has been holding them back, what has work before and what kind of help they might need in the future that would aspire them to be more resilient towards their life challenges. Sometimes just by understanding where they are in their present life, these gifted individuals can plan their life better, and by objectifying the subjective part of their subconscious mind through the use of the miniatures in the sandtray activities, they are able to see their struggle with psychological issues like perfectionism, the need to be the tall poppy, issues of being a small fish in a big pond or even the

big fish in the small pond that leads to underachievement. We must always remember that “quality teachers beget quality students”. As such, these academically talented teacher trainees need to train to help gifted and talented students harness their potentials. The findings of this study indicated that sandtray therapy might be useful for working with academically talented individuals. Goal setting and commitment in completing constructing their trays and creatively expressing themselves could enhance ones’ resilience.

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