The Field Experience Journal

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Cover: ***The Man in the Maze***

       The Man in the Maze has been adopted by many groups of people because of its symbolism of life's cycles and eternal motion, and also of the choices we are confronted with. The right choices lead us to a point of harmony with all things, no matter how hard or long the road taken.

       The O'odham began employing the man-in-the-maze pattern in their basketry in the early 1900s. The motif has come to serve as an icon for the O'odham people. The human-like figure is the O'odham Elder Brother, I'itoi.

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Submission Guidelines:

1. Manuscripts should be no more than 15 pages of narrative (excluding references, tables, and appendices), using the latest APA style, and double-spaced on one side of 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with justified margins.

2. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically via email attachment to kim.creasy@sru.edu containing name, position, place of employment, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and a 2-3 sentence description of background and experience for each author. The title of the article should also appear on page 1 of the manuscript, but do not include the author(s) name(s).

3. Pages should be numbered consecutively including the bibliography, but the author's name should not appear on the manuscript itself.

4. Charts or illustrative material will be accepted if space permits. Such materials must be camera-ready. Photographs will usually not be used unless they are black and white and of high quality.

5. Authors are expected to take full responsibility for the accuracy of the content in their articles, including references, quotations, tables, and figures. The editor reserves the right to edit articles accepted for publication.

6. Authors of manuscripts accepted for publication are expected to make a presentation about their article at the next National Student Teaching Supervision Conference.

7. There is no remuneration for articles accepted for publication, but each author will be mailed a complimentary copy of the journal. There is no fee for the review of the manuscript.

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From the Editor

Dear Readers of *The Field Experience Journal:*

The first submission included in this edition of *The Field Experience Journal* comes from Luciana Braga and Emily Jones. Their submission recognizes the need for movement experiences in preschool programs. In "Preparing Teacher Candidates for Preschool Physical Education", the authors describe a strategy for teacher candidates to plan, deliver, and evaluate movement-based experiences for children in this age group.

"Supervising Outside of the Textbox" by Kathryn Dirkin and Raymond Francis provides insight as to the changes in educational technology and the applications of these changes to the supervision process as well as professional growth and development.

Lisa Lucas and Karen Johnson, in their article, "Enhancing Professional Practice: Creating a Culture of Collaboration among Educators" describe the results of a pilot program where pre-service teachers, university faculty, administrators, and cooperating teachers explored the benefits of talking about planning and instruction in a professional learning community.

"Transitioning from Traditional Face-to-Face Course Instruction to a Blended Format" is a case study provided by Darlene McDonough. This study describes the transitioning process of one professor in moving from traditional methods of instruction to a blended lesson format. Detailed is this selection is the process of analyzing course evaluations to improve the course design and student achievement.

This edition's final article titled: "Reflecting on Reflecting: ESOL Teacher Candidate Views of Video Recording" by Timothy Micek examines the recommendations of a group of teacher candidates, after being videotaped and critiqued, on this assignment.

Finally, my thanks to those who have contributed their manuscripts for our consideration and to our reviewers for their time and expertise.

Kim L. Creasy

Preparing Teacher Candidates for Preschool Physical Education

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Abstract

Preschool programs are in full expansion throughout the U.S. Consequently, there has been greater attention paid to the quality of preschool programs and the training of personnel responsible for designing and delivering instruction. Movement experiences have been suggested to be one of the primary needs of preschool-aged children, yet little is known about how professionals are trained to design and implement developmentally appropriate movement experiences for preschoolers. The purpose of this paper is to describe a strategy used to prepare teacher candidates to plan, deliver, and evaluate movement-based learning experiences for children within this age group. The paper includes: (a) a description of the unique characteristics of the preschool learners and their learning environment; (b) recommendations for planning and implementing early childhood movement experiences; and (c) a description of a university-based course that combines theoretical content and field experiences to prepare teacher candidates to deliver appropriate movement lessons to preschooler.

Keywords: *preschool; movement-based learning; field experience; teacher training*

Preparing Teacher Candidates for Preschool Physical Education

Over the past ten years many states have increased their investment in preschool programs. Data from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) indicate that 39 states provided funding for preschool programs in 2010-2011; which accounted for the approximate 75 percent of 4-year old and 50 percent of 3-year old children nationwide enrolled in private or public preschools (2011). The expansion of preschools in the U.S. has resulted in an intensified focus on the training of quality preschool teachers who "base their practice on sound knowledge and understanding of young children's characteristics and needs" (National Association for the Education of the Young Children [NAEYC], 2009, p. 11). The NIERR Quality Standards Checklist for funded-preschool programs has recently placed an emphasis on teacher qualifications asserting that "better education and preparation for teachers can improve the interactions between children and teachers, which in turn affects children learning" (NIERR, 2008, p.24). Along these lines, national standards for early childhood professional preparation explains that young children benefit most from well-planned, developmentally appropriate, and meaningful practices that both support and challenge them (NAYEC, 2009). Preschool-aged children have unique characteristics that distinguish them from older children. They think, feel, move, and communicate in unique ways that must be fully understood by the adults that surround them and are responsible for providing them with learning experiences.

One of the major needs of preschool children is movement. Children use movement to express feelings and ideas, to manipulate objects, and to learn about the world (Sanders, 2002). Research indicates that physical activity is linked with biological and psychological development during the preschool years and that movement plays a critical role in children's growth and maturation (McCall & Craft, 2000; Timmons, Naylor, & Pfeiffer, 2007). Likewise, early childhood

is associated with the fundamental movement phase of motor development. It is in this phase that children acquire the fundamental movement skills that will serve as the foundation for learning more complex skills and engaging in a physically active lifestyle (National Association for Sports and Physical Education [NASPE], 2000). Therefore, it is crucial that preschool-aged children receive movement-based learning experiences that are intentional, developmentally appropriate, and delivered by professionals who have the knowledge and training to accommodate for the unique needs of this age group.

Although many physical education teacher education (PETE) programs in the U.S. offer preschool through grade 12 certification, little is known about how physical education (PE) majors are prepared to teach and design movement experiences to preschoolers. According to Marston (2001) "early childhood programs should be developed with the needs and interests of the young children in mind rather than the too common practice of just extending the lower elementary activities into the Pre-K classes" (p. 6). In this sense, it is important that teacher preparation programs provide teacher candidates (TCs) with opportunities to develop an understanding of the unique characteristics of preschool children as well as the instructional strategies that best fit this age group. A suggested practice for teacher preparation in both early childhood education and physical education is the inclusion of field experiences (NAEYC, 2009; You, 2011). Such experiences aim to provide TCs with "real world" opportunities to apply the content learned in their methods classes, to explore the teaching career, and to smoothly transition from student to teacher.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a methods course designed to prepare TCs to plan and deliver movement-based learning experiences for preschool-aged children. The following sections will include: (a) a description of the unique characteristics of the preschool learner and

their learning environment; (b) recommendations for planning and implementing preschool movement experiences; and (c) a description of an undergraduate course designed to prepare TCs to deliver preschool physical and movement education.

Unique Characteristics of Preschool-Aged Learners

Preschool-aged learners have unique physical, cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics that make them different from older children (Piaget, 1997). At this point in their cognitive development, children are thought to be at the pre-operational stage where they are not yet able to think logically or abstractly and can only handle a few items in their memory at a time (Berk, 2007). This stage also characterizes preschoolers as egocentric and incapable of thinking beyond their own point of view. Nevertheless, preschoolers have extraordinary imaginations and are constantly increasing their ability to communicate verbally and through gestures (Gallahue, Ozmun, & Goodway, 2012). From a social-emotional perspective, preschool-aged children are in the process of developing autonomy and initiative; both of which are evident through their curiosity, active behavior, and self and environment exploration. Typically children within this stage progress from independent, self-directed play to cooperative, interactive play which elicits greater self-awareness and a consciousness of right from wrong (Gallahue et al., 2012). Physical maturation and motor-skill development are also in full force during this stage. Early childhood represents a critical period for youngsters to develop fundamental motor skills (e.g., running, skipping, galloping, jumping) and object control skills (e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, and striking) that will further mature into complex movement patterns (Payne & Isaacs, 2008). Through exploratory play and guided motor stimulation, movement patterns and the manipulation of body and objects develop into more controlled movement forms (Stork & Sanders, 2008).

Because preschool learners exhibit such unique characteristics from older children (Piaget, 1997), it is important to consider how learning environments are designed to support and facilitate development, growth, and maturation. Several features of effective learning environments for preschoolers have been recommended. One feature of such environments is the availability of materials that stimulate children to

explore, manipulate, create, and construct meaning of their experiences. Developmentally appropriate equipment and materials allow children to interact with their surrounding and learn by doing (Malley, 1991). Hohmann and Weikart (1999) state that "through their experiences in such active learning settings, children develop a strong sense of their own ability to affect and understand their world, a capacity which will serve them well throughout their lives" (p. 37). Another recommended feature of preschool environments is that learning experiences are playful and creatively designed to capture the imagination and intrigue of the child. Play is an important facilitator of preschoolers' development and provides a primary mode by which they learn about their body, develop language, and interact with their environment and others (Gallahue et al., 2012). A final characteristic of the environment is that it provides a physically and emotionally safe setting that allows children to take risks and express their feelings and ideas. Preschool-aged children feel secure in environments that are organized, have consistent routines, and established rules that provide opportunities for them to learn and take responsibilities for their actions (NASPE, 2000).

Toward the important end of providing meaningful, safe, and appropriate learning experiences for preschool-aged children, "we must understand what those experiences should include and how they can be presented" (Sanders, 1994, p. 26). Professionals who interact with this age group need to have a firm understanding of the unique characteristics of the learner and features of suitable learning environments in order to employ strategies and approaches that will promote maximum learning and development for preschoolers (NAEYC, 2009).

Motor Skills and Physical Activity of Preschoolers

Although it was once believed that preschool-aged children were very active, recent research indicates that many are not achieving the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day (Tucker, 2008). Similarly, alarming trends of overweight and obesity in early childhood have re-focused attention on the importance of physical activity in this age group (Ogden & Carroll, 2010). Physical activity guidelines for children under the age of 5 have been developed

by NASPE with a focus on providing guidance to parents, caregivers, and teachers of infants and young children about physical activity capabilities and needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (NASPE, 2002). Specifically, the guidelines recommend preschoolers accumulate at least 60 minutes of structured and/or unstructured physical activity per day (NASPE, 2002).

While preschool PE requirements vary among states, various national organizations and entities (e.g., NAEYC, NASPE, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) have recommended that daycares and public and private preschools offer some form of gross motor and physical activity programming. According to NASPE (2002) such programs should encourage preschoolers to "develop competence in fundamental motor skills that will serve as the building blocks for future motor skillfulness and physical activity" (p. 15). Appropriate practices identified for early childhood movement-based programming include: (a) learning of fundamental movement skills; (b) establishment of learning environments that promote active participation; (c) incorporation of cognitive, emotional, and social domains into movement experiences; (d) purposeful planned movement experiences; and (e) engaged teachers who facilitate and guide the learning process (NASPE, 2000).

Daycare facilities have been identified as venues that could "support and encourage an active lifestyle among very young children" (Eastman, 1997, p. 161) by incorporating daily gross motor physical activities into outdoor and indoor playtime. Research indicates that greater levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity in preschoolers have been associated with the number of college-educated teachers employed by daycare facilities (Dowda, Pate, Trost, Almeida, & Sirard, 2004), the presence of activity-friendly equipment (Hannon & Brown, 2008), and the number of field trips taken by preschoolers (Dowda et al., 2004). Contrary evidence however suggests that even children who attended daycare facilities offering two, 1-hour outdoor playtimes per day, only

engaged in 32 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day (Dowda et al., 2004). Findings such as these support the need for teachers and daycare providers to be trained and knowledgeable in the design and implementation of developmentally appropriate movement experiences for preschoolers (e.g., structured vs. unstructured play, movement exploration, guided discovery, etc.) to assist not only in the accumulation of the recommended minutes of health-enhancing physical activity, but also complement the learning and exploration of motor and body control skills.

Teacher training programs aim to provide TCs with experiences that assist in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to plan and implement developmentally appropriate instruction. In this sense, field experiences make up a critical component of teacher training because they provide TCs with opportunities to (a) develop the teaching competencies necessary to produce student learning, (b) explore teaching as a career, (c) apply theory into practice, and (d) progressively transition from student to teacher (Retalllick & Miller, 2010). In PETE, Ayers and Housner (2008) reported the number programs that offer field experiences increased from 33% to 98% from 1996 to 2008. These experiences are typically linked to methods courses and provide TCs opportunities "to apply theory to practice and receive appropriate feedback from faculty, cooperating teachers, peers and children allows for individual growth and ultimately, growth within the profession" (Collier & Herbert, 2004, p. 110). Although most U.S. PETE programs offer field experiences for TCs in elementary and secondary school settings (Ayers & Housner, 2008), little is known about field-based learning in preschool settings. In fact, because preschool PE is sporadically required within public and private daycare and school settings, many PETE programs do not specifically address the issue of preschool PE, movement, or early motor skill

development as different from elementary-aged learners (Pica, 2008). To address this discrepancy in teacher training, a strategy employed by a PETE program is described.

A Strategy to Prepare Teachers for Preschool Physical Education

A PETE program at a mid-Atlantic university offers a required one credit hour course that is designed to prepare TCs to teach PE to preschool-aged children. The course is offered every semester and meets twice a week for one hour and twenty minutes. Across the first 6 weeks of the course, TCs engage in face-to-face meetings with course instructor that focus on the unique characteristics of preschoolers and strategies to structure learning environments for this age group. For the remaining 10 weeks of the semester, TCs participate in field experiences that involve planning and delivering movement-based instruction to preschool-aged children within three different settings and contexts. The ultimate goal of the course is to introduce TCs to the unique needs and characteristics of preschoolers and provide future PE teachers hands-on experiences developing early childhood movement programming. The instructional content and learning experiences were designed around three course outcomes, including that TCs would: (a) identify and describe the characteristics (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional) of the preschool-aged mover; (b) exhibit the ability to engage in planning, implementation, and evaluation of developmentally appropriate movement experiences for preschoolers; and (c) develop reflective teaching practices in aim to analyze and evaluate teaching of preschoolers (see Table 1). The following sections overview the content and learning experiences designed to meet the outcomes of the course.

Table 1

Preschool Physical Education Methods Course Outcomes, Content, and Learning Experiences

Course Outcomes	Course Content	Learning Experiences
Learner characteristics	• Preschoolers motor development • Characteristics of preschool learners • Appropriate practices for preschool movement experiences	• Class lectures and discussion • Related readings • Observation of preschool PE videos • Observation of preschoolers in authentic environments
Plan, deliver, and evaluate movement instruction	• Guidance in lesson planning and delivery • Class management strategies • Communicating with young children	• Weekly lesson plans • Field experiences • Peer observations
Reflective teaching practices	• Self-reflection practices • Professional dispositions	• Weekly post-lesson reflections • Regular debriefing sessions with supervisors

Learner Characteristics

During the 6 weeks of face-to-face instruction, TCs are exposed to the body of knowledge related to preschool-aged children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics through course lectures, discussions, and outside of class readings. Various instructional strategies are employed to engage TCs in the course content, including large and small group discussion, evaluation of case studies, and video analysis of preschool PE lesson design and delivery. The guidelines and recommendations for movement-based instruction for preschoolers including the NASPE Appropriate Practices and NAEYC recommendations are presented to TCs.

During the fifth and sixth weeks of the course TCs become acquainted with the field experience facilities, available equipment, and the professional dispositions expected in their interactions with the children and public/private school personnel. Among the activities planned

for these weeks include a visit to a public school to observe a lesson taught by the course instructor and by two TCs from the previous cohort assigned to be their peer mentors, equipment inventory, safety inspection of teaching facilities, and a review of the field experience guidelines.

Multi-Component Field Experience

Throughout the remaining 10 weeks of the course, TCs engage in a multi-component preschool PE field experience that involves multiple environments, settings, age-groups, and instructional roles (You & McCullick, 2001). Having multiple experiences for TCs to plan, deliver, and engage with preschool movers allows for greater interactions with children in authentic settings and provides TCs opportunities to apply theory to practice through the practicing of their pedagogical skills (You, 2001). The three components of the preschool PE field experience include planning and delivering movement-based experiences for (a) 2-3 year olds enrolled in a community-based daycare, (b) 3-5 year olds enrolled in a private preschool, and (c) 3-5 years old enrolled in public preschool (see Table 2). Each component of the field experience is unique and presents TCs with different opportunities to gain a better understanding of the particular traits and needs of preschool learners, build their teaching skills, and reflect on their growth as professionals.

2-3 year old private daycare. The first component of the field experience challenges TCs to learn how to select and use the appropriate equipment to create safe, inviting, and developmentally appropriate movement environments for early childhood learners. The environments encourage experimentation and exploration of movement possibilities within a supervised play and guided discovery setting. Interactions with children as young as 2-3 years of age allows TCs to observe and encounter the developmental characteristics and stages of early

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childhood. Additionally, TCs are forced to develop communication strategies to guide the 2-3's through the movement-based environments.

At the beginning of the field experience, TCs are placed into groups and provided a schedule that delineates the type of movement environment they are responsible for planning, designing, preparing, and guiding children through. The three types environments include: manipulative activities, locomotor activities, and obstacle courses; and are intended to stimulate the children's exploration and experimentation of different movement challenges. The TCs must develop written plans for their assigned environmental design, which are reviewed and approved by the course instructor prior to delivery. The learning environments are set up by the TCs who are expected to select appropriate equipment that will ensure safety and establish a creative and inviting environment for the children.

On a weekly basis, approximately ten 2-3 year old children enrolled at a local private daycare facility are transported to a gymnasium on the university's campus to engage in one hour of movement-based experiences. When the children arrive at the university facility, they are welcomed by the TCs and invited to select the environment they wish to explore. Throughout the hour, the role of TCs consists of ensuring safety, inviting and prompting children to participate, and engaging learners with the equipment and inherent tasks/challenges of the environment. The course instructor supervises this practicum and provides TCs with assistance during set-up and movement experiences.

3-5 year old private preschoolers. The second component of the field experience provides TCs with opportunities to plan and deliver movement-based instructional episodes to preschool learners within a controlled university-based setting. Teacher candidates design short (5-7 minutes) instructional episodes that provide developmentally appropriate tasks and challenges

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focusing on a specific fundamental movement or object control skill. The instructional stations provide TCs opportunities to practice team-teaching of fundamental skills using age-appropriate equipment, cues, prompts, and feedback. Interactions with the 3-5 year old children in this setting allows TCs to observe, encounter, and respond to the developmental characteristics of the children, along with the managerial and communication skills needed to effectively teach small groups (3-4) of preschool-aged children.

At the beginning of the field experience, TCs are placed into small groups (3-4) and provided a schedule that outlines the fundamental movement or object control skill (e.g., jumping, rolling, throwing, catching, kicking) that their group is responsible for planning, designing, and delivering to the preschoolers across the 10-week practicum. Teacher candidates are also provided with a schedule of weekly themes for the 1-hour movement session (e.g., circus, seasons, on the farm, under the sea, etc.). The TC groups plan instructional episodes that focus on a specific movement skill, while incorporating the spirit and creativity of the week's theme. Teacher candidates submit written plans for their instructional episode to the course instructor, who provides feedback related to task design, challenges, instructional cues, and assessment/evaluation strategies.

Once a week, approximately 15 children enrolled in a private preschool are transported to a gymnasium on the university's campus to receive 1-hour of movement-based instruction. When the children arrive at the university facility, they are welcomed by the course instructor who introduces the theme of the day, and distributes learners to instructional stations. Throughout the hour, the children engage in six 5-7 minute team-taught skill stations. The role of the TCs during the field experience includes delivering instruction, extending tasks and challenges as appropriate,

ensuring safety, and evaluating motor skills and proficiencies. The course instructor supervises this practicum and assists TCs with managerial tasks and station set up.

   3-5 year old public preschoolers. The third component of the preschool PE field experience affords TCs with the experience of planning and delivering preschool movement-based instructional episodes in a public school setting. Inherent challenges of planning and delivering movement-based instruction in public schools (e.g., limited equipment, limited space, multipurpose instructional areas, etc.) make this component of the field experience authentic and unique. Teacher candidates design instructional episodes (8-12 minutes) that provide developmentally appropriate tasks and challenges and revolve around fundamental skills and the weekly theme. Planning and delivering the instructional episodes provide TCs opportunities to practice their pedagogical skills teaching to larger groups (6-7) of preschoolers without the assistance of a peer instructor.

   Across the 10-week practicum, each TC group travels to the public school one time to deliver movement instruction to the preschool learners. Each TC is responsible for planning and implementing an 8-10 minute skill development station of their choice. Criteria for the skill station include tasks, extensions, and challenges that revolve around the assigned weekly theme. Teacher candidates submit written plans for feedback to the course instructor, a public school preschool teacher, and two upperclassmen peer-mentors.

   Upon arrival to the school, the TCs use the schools PE equipment to set up the skill stations and prepare for the arrival of the children. When the children arrive to the multi-purpose room, they are welcomed by the peer-mentors who introduce the theme of the day and distribute learners to instructional stations. Across a 45 minute period, the children engage in four 8-10 minute instructional episodes taught by the TCs. When the class period expires, the children are dismissed

and another class of preschoolers arrives to engage in the movement-based instruction. The role

of the TCs consists of delivering instruction, extending tasks and challenges, and ensuring safety

of the children. The public school preschool teacher and the peer-mentors supervise this practicum

and assist TCs with managerial tasks and station set up.

Table 2

Signature Features and Benefits of the Multi-Component Preschool PE Field Experience

Field Experience Component	Signature Features	Key Benefits
2-3 year olds	• University-setting • Exploratory learning of environments • 1:1 Teacher-student ratio • Controlled/predictable setting • PETE instructor supervises	• Gain understanding of toddler traits • Create movement-based learning environments • Enhance communication skills
3-5 year olds	• University-setting • Instruction-based skills stations • 1:1 Teacher-student ratio • Controlled/predictable setting • PETE instructor supervises	• Practice teaching fundamental movement skills • Develop class management skills • Gain confidence in teaching ability
3-5 year olds	• Public school-setting • Instruction-based skills stations • 1:6 Teacher-to-student ratio • Less controlled setting • Public school teachers supervise	• Gain understanding of public-school setting • Adaptation to unpredictable setting • Opportunity for peer-mentorship

Reflective Teaching Practices

Self-reflective practices have long been emphasized in education as a medium by which

teachers establish a more complete understanding of their own decision-making processes and the

resultant actions taken (Meeteer, 2011). It is well documented that reflection is critical for teacher

growth and that PETE faculty need to nurture this skill with TCs (Byra, 1996; Tsangaridou &

O'Sullivan, 1994). Throughout the 10-week field experience, TCs complete weekly written post-

lesson reflections and engage in face-to-face debriefing sessions with course supervisors. The

reflection exercises are designed to prompt a critical examination of lesson preparation, execution, and impact on learners. Teacher candidates submit electronic responses to three instructor-designed prompts which require reflection upon their lesson's assets, stumbling blocks, and the contributions of the field experience to their professional growth. The primary goal of the reflections is to have TCs think critically and articulate how their learners interacted with the content, lesson delivery, equipment, facilities, and other children, and ultimately generate action steps for improving various aspects of their planning or delivery. Likewise, following each field experience component TCs engage in debriefing sessions with the field experience supervisors. These sessions provide opportunities for TCs to receive immediate feedback about their teaching and allow them to express perceptions and concerns related to their performance and learners.

Evaluation of Course Effectiveness

At the end of each semester TCs enrolled in the preschool PE methods course complete a standardized, web-based questionnaire to assess student satisfaction of the course and provide feedback related to the quality of instruction. Sample of assessed variables include course organization, teacher-instructor interactions, and course contribution to knowledge and skills acquisition. Course evaluation data were analyzed from four cohorts of TCs ($N= 64$) to measure course effectiveness. On a five-point scale results indicated a mean rating of 4.7 regarding course organization; 4.7 related to the acquisition of new skills; and 4.5 regarding overall satisfaction with the course. Examination of anonymous TC comments reveled that the field experience with preschool children contributed to learning what it takes to develop motor skills in young children. Additionally, TC reported that the course contributed to their gaining of skills that will allow them to plan and deliver effective movement-based experiences to preschool children, communicate with preschoolers, and use creativity to capture children's imagination.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Acknowledging the expansion of preschool programs over the past decade (Blank, 2010) and the importance of teacher training to ensure movement experiences are carefully selected and planned by qualified individuals (Carson, 2001), this paper has provided an overview of a strategy designed to prepare PETE TCs to do just that. Lessons learned and recommendations for delivering a multi-component field experience are provided using the three NAEYC guiding principles. First, the field experience should be well planned and sequenced (NAEYC, 2009). Findings from this strategy emphasize that the use of a multi-component field experience requires diligent organization and planning efforts to ensure placement sites, agreements with schools or daycare facilities, and experience schedules correspond with one another. Further, it is recommended that the components be linked and sequenced in such a way that TCs are able to recognize the inherent similarities of teaching preschoolers, while appreciating the differences in settings, age-groups, and instructional roles. Second, the field experience should be supported by faculty and other supervisors (NAEYC, 2009). Establishing effective supervision protocols and strategies for each of the three components is an important, yet challenging task. Coordinating supervisors that may include public school teachers or peer-mentors to evaluate and provide lesson planning and delivery feedback, complete systematic observation of instruction, or engage in post-lesson debriefing sessions (Paese, 1989) requires clear communication and compliance from all parties. Whichever supervisory strategies are employed it is recommended that there is uniformity across the field experience components, that a system for reporting to the course instructor is in place, and that responsibilities are understood and adhered to. Finally, field experiences should be selected to expose students to a variety of settings (NAEYC, 2009). The use of private and public organizations across the field experience has the advantage of allowing TCs to interact with the

inherent variation in administration, facilities, resources, and student demographics (i.e., cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds) of each setting. Exposing TCs to such a variety of children and contexts will force them to create and maintain environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for all learners (NAEYC, 2009).

Luciana Braga is a doctoral student and graduate assistant in the College of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences at West Virginia University. She is the current instructor of the preschool methods course described in this paper and she has taught P-12 physical education for several years at an international school.

Dr. Emily Jones is an Assistant Professor in the College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences at West Virginia University. She teaches undergraduate preschool and elementary physical education methods courses and directly supervises the embedded field experiences.

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Supervising Outside of the Textbox

Kathryn Dirkin and Raymond Francis

20

The world of education is currently undergoing a second revolution. Digital technologies such as computers, mobile devices, digital media creation and distribution tools, video games and social networking sites are transforming how we think about schooling and learning (p.18)...The longer schools stay out of the technology discussion, the more that education, traditionally viewed as a public good with equal access for all, will be up for sale to those who can afford access to specialized services (Collins & Halverson, 2010, p.19).

It is imperative that new teachers are comfortable with the many facets of technology. This includes understanding how technology can be used for their own professional growth and development. Pre-service teachers, who are keeping up with the changes in educational technology, are working outside of the "textbox" and the supervision process needs to be able to capture the many dimensions of their work. Using technology in the supervision process will not only model uses of technology to support professional growth it will align with recent changes in the teacher evaluation process. For example, Teachscape now offers a video capturing, sharing, and scoring system that utilizes Charlotte Danielson's framework for teacher evaluation (Schaffhauser, 2012). The Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning company developed software called Power Walkthrough that can be used on any mobile device (Waters, 2011).

Technology can support the supervision process at every stage. It facilitates information gathering and analysis, collaboration, immediate feedback, self-reflection, and artifact creation. It also provides a multimedia format for showcasing one's professional growth and development. In terms of data collection Haughton and Keil (2009) found that custom designed assessment forms for use on mobile devices "provided more accurate and comprehensive assessment of the student teaching experience, facilitating fair and consistent assessments across programs." (p. 282) The

benefits of video based reflection are well documented (Welsch & Devlin, 2006). In a comparison study of observation based debriefing (OBD) and video elicited reflection (VER) for preservice teachers Sewell (2009) found that in the case of the VER meetings students had ownership over the artifact of their teaching and dominated the reflective commentary. Whereas, in the OBD situation the supervisor played a dominant role in the reflective commentary. Video based technology has now moved on to the use of videoconferencing technologies for student teacher observations. In a study focused on using videoconferencing technology for pre-service teacher practicum supervision, researchers found it to be an effective method of supervision. (Dymond, Renzaglia, Halle, Chadsey, & Bentz, 2008). Scheeler, McKinnon and Stout (2011) found that using webcams and bluetooth earpieces to provide immediate feedback helped to increase specific teaching behaviors.

There are some drawbacks to using technology. In the study by Dymond et. al. (2008) they noted that implementation was complicated by poor Internet connections as well as setting up and operating the equipment. Furthermore, the Polycom unit they used was very costly (Dymond, et. al, 2008). In the study by Haughton and Keil (2009) the participants felt that the electronic assessments interfered with communication and some were frustrated by their use. However, supervisors and cooperating teachers need to work through their frustrations with new technologies. In a study of value beliefs, abilities, and intentional uses of technology in classrooms, Anderson, Groulx, and Maninger (2011) found that value beliefs significantly influenced preservice teachers intentions to use technology. Mentors and supervisors need to model effective uses of technology as well as positive attitudes.

In this paper there is an emphasis on mobile devices in the supervision process. There are many reasons for focusing on these technologies. They are leading the pack in terms of being

easily accessible. A recent PEW study finds that almost half of adults are smartphone users (Smith, 2012) and the number of people who own a tablet is increasing (Rainie, 2012). The 2012 Horizon Report for K12 and for Colleges and Universities also noted that mobile devices are on the edge of widespread adoption in both the K12 setting (Johnson, Adams, and Cummings, 2012) and the institutional setting (Johnson, Adams, and Cummings, 2012). Thus, students, cooperating teachers, and supervisors are more likely to have access to a mobile device and there will be increased expectations that they will be used for learning. Their portability also makes them easier to use in the field. Technologies such as Evernote can be used and accessed from any device whether it is a smartphone, iPad, iPod Touch, tablet or computer. Furthermore it can be used offline and then synced with an account when the device has access to the Internet.

In an effort to facilitate their integration into the teaching supervision process we are presenting each technology within the basic clinical supervision model. We are also focusing on applications, commonly referred to as apps that are not specific to the supervision process. There are apps such as those produced by eCove that are free and built specifically for observing teachers. We would argue that using more flexible apps supports preservice teachers in becoming more fluid users of technology. At the end of the paper we will address the limitations and important considerations when using any new technology.

Collecting Classroom Data

An important step in the supervision process is data collection. These observations need to be recorded without judgment. Technologies that facilitate the recording of observations in multiple formats provide teachers the opportunity support their written notes with images, video, and audio from the field. Applications designed for use on a mobile device and computer not only collect data in various media formats but they also make it easier to share the evidence you have

collected whether it be with the student teacher or your computer at home. Digital data is also easier to analyze for patterns and trends in performance. Finally, technology provides opportunities for remote supervision with immediate feedback. In this section we will focus on mobile apps that you can take into the field.

Tool: Evernote

Evernote is an application that works on both the PC and Mac platforms as well as most mobile devices. It makes it easy to save and organize files and web pages into your Evernote notebook. You can also take snapshots, record your location via GPS, or create an audio recording. These artifacts are kept as notes ,which can be labeled and annotated. You do not need to have Internet access to use Evernote. You can add to a notebook offline and then sync your account when you are online so that the artifacts and notes are available on your home computer via a web browser. Notebooks can be made public so that others can view your work. You can also invite individual users via email. Evernote is also accumulating third party apps to integrate into their suite of tools. They now own Skitch, which lets users mark-up digital images taken with a mobile device. Skitch also has a blur tool that will let preservice students blur the faces of children to protect their privacy.

Donald Norman notes that well designed innovations build on our knowledge of the world (Norman, 2002). Digital notebooks are designed to build on our knowledge of the traditional notebook. However, imagine you are writing notes in your notebook but now you can take a picture and automatically "paste" it on your note page. You can record a conversation in your notes and "tape" it to another page of notes. These notes can be searched. They can also be easily published for others to see. Supervisors and mentor teachers can take snapshots of the classroom, student groups, the pre-service teacher, and their interactions. He or she could also record classroom

discussions and then go back and add annotations in the text box of a note. If you are on a computer you can use a table or check boxes to record data.

It is important to note that media files will take up more space. If you find that you need more storage space then the maximum allowed with a free account you can purchase the premium account. When recording audio it is important to be aware of any background noise as well as proximity to your source so that you can create a clearer audio recording.

Tool: Dropbox

Collecting artifacts of student work is necessary for demonstrating growth. Dropbox can be used by downloading the software to your computer, accessing the application through a browser, or using the app for Android and Apple devices. Dropbox is basically a cloud-based storage service. You can upload files such as a document, video, or image and access it from anywhere. Dropbox will also let you share your folders and files with anyone. Students can upload large files such as videos or smaller files like lesson plans. It is important to note that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits an individual from uploading documents with information such as a student's social security number to cloud-based tools like Dropbox.

Tool: Google Forms

Documenting and analyzing data collected during student teaching observations is an important aspect of providing valuable feedback. Traditionally paper based forms are used for collecting data in the form of anecdotal notes and checklists. However, there are some issues associated with the paper based forms (Haughton & Keil, 2009). Haughton and Keil (2009) note that manual data entry increases the chance of error and that often times there are multiple versions of a form necessitating more standardization. Finally, the authors note that paper based forms inhibit an overall analysis of all student evaluations. Online forms can be easily updated, archived,

and analyzed. A popular (and free) source for online surveys is Google Forms. Google Forms is part of Google Documents. It is basically an online survey construction tool that saves the information to an electronic spreadsheet. Google forms can be accessed from a mobile device as well as any computer with a web browser. An interesting feature of Google Forms is its ability to show a "summary of responses". This feature will provide an analysis of the data in the form of bar charts, pie charts etc. The type of chart will depend on the question format. If you find the analysis tools and formulas in a Google spreadsheet limiting, then you can export the data into Excel for further analysis.

While Evernote provides a digital version of the traditional notebook, making it easier to group data in multiple formats, providing a richer picture of the student teacher's progress, Google Forms brings something else to the digital table. It makes it easier to record, track, and analyze individual student data. For example, you might want to record whether a desired behavior was evident, emerging, or not evident. You could create a form consisting of multiple choice questions and record your observations on your smartphone or iPad. A common feature in a smartphone is to enlarge a field whenever text is being entered so it is easier to see forms in the small screen of a phone.

Another type of Google form could record all observable instructional practices. In this case you would build your survey using check boxes to record all of the observed instructional practices or questioning techniques. In any survey you can combine question format types.

Tool: Mobile Devices

A common practice for many student teachers is to record their teaching in order to review and reflect on the lesson. Mobile devices are a cost effective option for recording classroom video. The term mobile device not only refers to smartphones but it also includes equipment like iPads and iPod Touches. After the first generation of iPads they became equipped with cameras. The number of people with smartphones continues to grow each year. While many cameras or mobile devices may not be able to zoom they do take high quality video footage. This footage can also be easily compressed and emailed or uploaded. Their accessibility and usability make up for their lack of versatility. Alternatively, mobile devices are much cheaper. They have the capacity to record video and video conference. Video conferencing involves two-way interaction via video and audio. They will suffer the same issues in terms of audio recording.

Just as students would set up their cameras on a tripod to film a classroom teaching sequence, students can use a flexible gripping stand or tablet stand and prop up their mobile devices to film an entire classroom, small group, or one on one interactions. A field placement instructor can actually watch a lesson being taught by the student in realtime using apps such as Skype or Facetime. The mobile device may even be less intrusive than a camera on a tripod. As noted in the study by Dymond et. al. (2008) prior to shooting any video it is best to test the equipment especially in the correct setting (whole group, small group, one on one instruction). Users should check both the audio and video quality. During the testing phase it is important to make sure the camera is not placed near an object producing white noise such as a fan or fountain. Once students have recorded their video they can email it to a supervisor or upload it to a protected storage location.

Enhancing Pre-Conference Experiences

Tool: Mobile Devices

Video recording can also be used to record reflections for the purpose of demonstrating growth and as preparation for both the student and the supervisor during the conference stage. In this case the student produces a "talking head" video recording. The content of the video will demonstrate an analysis of their teaching progress. Mobile devices are especially convenient because students can shoot, store, edit, and transfer the video on their phone or other mobile device. Apple products can use apps such as iMovie or Splice to edit videos. Students can send their videos to YouTube, iTunes University, or Google Plus to share with a select group of users. Students can also upload the video to a password protected blog to share and store their videos. Since this is only a talking head video of the preservice teacher, you will not have the same security considerations that you would with video shot in a K12 classroom. This doesn't mean that privacy ceases to be an issue. At Central Michigan University, using a university website, students upload their videos to a university owned server which then will email a secure link that can be shared with the student and the instructor.

Video annotation tools (VAT) are growing in popularity at teacher education institutions (Rich & Hannafin, 2009). There are some issues related to the use of free VAT tools. There is the possibility that support will be discontinued or updates will not be made once support for the program dissolves. Furthermore, the application may rely on a web-based video hosting service, which has implications for privacy and security. There are cost-based programs that provide continued support and are integrated with current teacher evaluation frameworks such as the Teachscape products. Due to the large number of privacy issues surrounding the use of video it is recommended that colleges and universities invest in a secure video hosting environment.

Tool: Blogs

Blogs are essentially online journals. Although the tool has been repurposed to serve as a classroom website, author studies etc. The benefit of the blog is that it provides a central storage location to help students organize and present their reflections. This will make it easier to go back and review their reflections to help establish learning goals. It also provides opportunities for students, mentor teachers, and supervisors to have conversations around the teaching experience. Students can post their reflection videos along with a commentary. Mentor teachers and supervisors can then post comments on the post. Each post can also be tagged as belonging to a certain category such as Language Arts, planning, reflection etc. All posts can then be sorted by category. More importantly blogs can be password protected. Open source eportfolio software like Mahara lets users draw from their own digital archive and attach files, including video, to a journal/blog entry. These entries can then be published as a page that is only accessible to specific groups or individuals.

As a reflection tool blogs can really be used prior to the conference so that students can compose their own evaluation of the experience independent of feedback from a supervisor. It can also be used as a post-conference tool, providing opportunities for students to reflect on their progress using digital artifacts to provide evidence and support their analysis.

Improving Conferencing

Conferencing with students about their progress and development involves a back and forth conversation. However, sometimes it is difficult for supervisors to meet with multiple students in diverse locations. Technology can provide tools for real-time communication. Skype is an application that allows users to communicate in real-time using video, audio, and/or text. Skype will also let users share their desktop with their skype contacts when they are engaged in a call. Third party applications also exist that will record the video and/or audio conference. Thus students

or instructors can archive these conversations and refer back to them to create a more formal instructional improvement plan.

Another important goal of the conference is to help the students take on the role of the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1987) and establish goals for improvement. Having the capacity to mark-up classroom images using drawing tools lets students and supervisors focus in on a single contextual factor and then come back to that same scene and focus on another element.

We have already mentioned that mobile devices are useful tools for collecting digital video artifacts. They can also take still images or "capture" a still image from a video. (On Apple devices you can create a still from the screen display by pressing the power button and the home button consecutively.) Still images can then be easily marked up and annotated before or during your conference using apps such as Skitch. The same image can be "marked-up" multiple times allowing users to focus on a different element in the context of teaching. Skitch also exports to Evernote so students can add text or audio as an extended annotation.

Follow-up from the Post-Conference

Once students have met with their supervisors in a face-to-face or Skype video conference format then they may want to create an instructional improvement plan. Google docs is a great resource for creating collaborative documents. Teacher education supervisors can create a template they use to create a customized improvement plan. The instructor can share the file with the student so that supervisors, coordinating teachers, and pre-service teachers can then work on the document collaboratively. Google docs is more than just a writing tool for multiple users. It will also provide access to the document's history. Supervisor can see when changes were made and where they occurred in the document. They can attach comments that appear on the side of the document.

Images as evidence from the classroom can be uploaded to support the achievement of various goals.

Limitations and Additional Considerations

This article has focused mostly on free and low cost tools. (This does not include the cost of a mobile device.) Unfortunately, free services generally have limitations and additional considerations. When relying on third party apps one must consider the additional privacy and security implications. You have no control over the protection of private data. Furthermore, some third party apps retain certain rights regarding files uploaded to their services. Due to these privacy concerns it is our recommendation that an early purchase would include equipment and software that would support students and instructors in terms of being able to upload, store, and share video files. At Central Michigan University they have a service called Chipcast that uses a web-based interface so that students or instructors can upload and compress videos that can be shared via email or inserted into course modules. The software behind Chipcast can be easily up-dated and even exchanged to reflect changes in needs or software advances.

If you have additional funds you can purchase solutions that circumvent many of these obstacles. Unfortunately, many schools do not have access to the funds to support a high-tech approach to pre-service teacher supervision. Thus, we have focused on free or low cost solutions that utilize technologies that are virtually ubiquitous.

Summary

The supervision of student teachers is a dynamic and intensive process. The use of handheld, or mobile, technology, in combination with other available free, or very low cost applications provides faculty, students, and classroom teachers with the opportunity to greatly enhance the process. Some of the outstanding enhancements offered through the use of technology

include increasing communication between everyone, increasing the speed of communication, increasing the opportunity for classroom observations, improving both the type of feedback and the amount of feedback provided to students, and the ease at which classroom data is collected and shared.

We must be flexible and forward thinking when it comes to the preparation of our future classroom teachers. And, it is through the use of available mobile and hand-held technologies that we will be able to improve communication, feedback, and eventually improve the overall quality of the student teaching experience.

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Enhancing Professional Practice:

Creating a Culture of Collaboration among Educators

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Introduction

A scholarly community that focuses on issues of teaching and learning is a Professional Learning Community (PLC). There are many articles and books written about collaboration and the benefit of PLCs, but most focus on teachers and administrators who are currently employed in schools. This article focuses on pre-service teachers in collaboration with university faculty, administrators, and cooperating teachers in a PLC that focused on lesson planning, instruction, and the power of being a reflective practitioner.

Two professors collaborated with a local elementary school that was less than a mile from the university. The elementary school hosted student teachers and practicum students for several years and a strong relationship existed between the university supervisor (one of the professors who received the grant) and the building principal and cooperating teachers. The authors formed a PLC as a professional forum for pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers, and administrators to bring to life the components of successful teaching practice and to foster professional discourse among practitioners. This article describes the results of this pilot program where pre-service teachers, in collaboration with university faculty, administrators, and cooperating teachers, explored the benefits of making time to talk about planning and instruction in a professional

learning community in order foster a culture of mentoring, intentionally including educators at all phases of their career path to collaborate with multiple perspectives.

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2007) provided the structure to shape the professional conversations during the PLC; a sub-goal was to clarify the four components of Danielson's framework. Utilizing this framework provided the members of the PLC an opportunity to clarify and reach consensus as to what constitutes good teaching. Danielson's Framework for Teaching is a research-based set of components of instruction, grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. The Framework may be used for many purposes, but for our purposes, it was the foundation for professional conversations among practitioners as we sought to enhance their skill in the complex task of teaching and help them become more thoughtful practitioners. The Danielson Framework is also used as the foundation for Pennsylvania's teacher evaluation system as well as the student teacher evaluation process. Clarifying the components of the framework laid the groundwork for future discussions and benefited all participants.

Research Question

Our research focus was to measure the participants' satisfaction and perceived usefulness of collaboratively planning and reflecting as a group on lesson plans. There is sometimes a culture of isolationism in education, and lesson plans are not normally created in consultation with others.

Definitions

This research project involved pre-service teachers (both student teachers and practicum students), cooperating teachers, an elementary principal, and university professors. Student teachers are senior education majors who spend the last semester of their undergraduate studies placed in a classroom for fifteen weeks. In the elementary classroom, they are working closely

with a classroom teacher, known as the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher's role is to model best practices in planning, teaching, and assessment and gradually allow the student teacher to assume the role of teacher, while providing feedback to help the student teacher improve. The university assigns a professor to supervise this semester-long process, that role is known as the university supervisor. Lastly, the education majors who are juniors are spending seventy-five hours in classrooms prior to student teaching while taking a course called reading practicum. Those students, who will be student teaching one semester later, are referred to in this article, as practicum students.

Professional Learning Communities

We chose a PLC venue for our study deliberately. In the typical student teaching semester, student teachers meet once a week with their assigned university supervisor on the university campus; the cooperating teachers and administrators from the hosting elementary school are normally not included. Developing meaningful relationships and dialogue in seminar settings comprised of just student teachers and a university supervisor can be somewhat challenging. Typically, virtually all involved experienced these two distinct settings as separate entities. We also realized that practicum students rarely had an opportunity to collaborate with student teachers, a role they would soon be serving. Integrating all of the various stakeholders was an attempt to form a connectedness among educators and enhance relationships and collaboration.

The concept of bringing together educators to form a professional learning community is not new. Sergiovanni (1992) stated that, "The idea of a school as a learning community suggests a kind of connectedness among members that resembles what is found in a family neighborhood, or some other closely knit group, where bonds tend to be familial or even sacred" (p. 47).

Professional learning communities emerged in part from learning organizations. As

schools began to build collaborative work cultures, the term learning organizations came to be known as professional learning communities in schools (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006).

DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2008) define a professional learning community as one where educators are committed to working collaboratively in a continuous process of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better student results. Professional learning communities work with an understanding that the key to improved learning for all students is continuous learning for educators.

The emphasis on continuous learning is a concept in which we believe, and therefore wished to transfer these values to our pre-service teachers.

Isolation and the Need for Collaboration

This PLC was a means to foster time for collaboration and reduce isolationism. DuFour and Burnette (2002) concurred that isolation in classrooms is alive and well due to lack of time, incompatible schedules, personal routines, and deeply rooted traditions. Teachers who work in isolation often differ in their perceptions of what constitutes best instructional practices (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Levine and Lezotte (1995) agreed that teachers could not thrive isolated from their colleagues and denied access to fresh ideas and insights. What is needed is a culture of collaboration. A collaborative culture results from a systematic effort to engage staff in ongoing, daily, job-embedded professional growth in an environment purposefully designed to ensure collaboration. Additionally, working together in a PLC requires a new set of teacher skills and attitudes that may not be part of teachers' current repertoire since teachers have been accustomed to working more in isolation and with much autonomy.

Hirsh (2003) defined collaboration as professional development that improves the learning of all students, and provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) concurred that collaboration is essential for personal learning. Both agreed there is a ceiling effect to how much can be learned when teachers keep to themselves. Richard (2003) reported that many teachers expressed concern that they felt isolated from peers, and search elsewhere to find community for their own growth and development, and to find support. Reform networks, school-university partnerships, and a variety of consortia and coalitions outside their own school community provide those supports.

Another purpose of our PLC was to establish that the university seeks to collaborate with the school district, not simply place students in available classrooms. Often cooperating teachers and teacher candidates perceive the university/school interface as fragmented and disconnected. Although strong relationships existed between the university and the school site, there is always room for improvement. This particular site was chosen to participate due to the positive culture and climate. The quality of the cooperating teachers and leadership of the principal all factor into the positive culture.

Our intent was to establish that the practice of teaching is never over. Those who are in the legal and medical professions often describe their experience in terms of "practice". It is quite common to hear the phrase; "I have been practicing medicine for 20 years." The term "practice teaching," is usually used in reference to the time when they were student teaching during their senior year of college. Some student teachers perceive this as a time in which they are expected to learn everything there is to know about teaching. Teachers are often expected to arrive in the classroom knowing everything they need to know in order to be good teachers. This creates a school culture that tends to prevent teachers from admitting in a group of their peers that perhaps

there is a problem or condition they cannot solve by themselves—one that may require outside expertise (Troen & Boles, 2011). The PLC was an opportunity to have educators at various stages of their career work together to create engaging lessons by incorporating innovations into existing lessons.

Methods and Procedure

Participants: There were fifteen participants in the PLC including five student teachers all assigned to the same elementary school, four cooperating teachers, as well as the principal of the elementary school, and three practicum students who were completing their 75 hour field experience course and were scheduled to student teach the following semester. The researchers leading the PLC were the university supervisor for these student teachers and the Coordinator of Field Experiences for the department. The PLC provided an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to participate in a collaborative community of educators whose focus is to enhance professional practice.

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for teaching is the framework for the evaluation instrument that is used by administrators and supervisor to evaluate pre-service and tenured teachers. Clarifying the components of the framework laid the groundwork for future discussions. The PLC began by clarifying the components of Danielson's Framework.

The *Framework for Teaching* is a research-based set of components of instruction, aligned to the INTASC standards, and grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. In this framework, the complex activity of teaching is clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility: planning and preparation (Domain 1), classroom environment (Domain 2), instruction (Domain 3), and professional responsibilities (Domain 4). Levels of teaching performance (rubrics) describe each component and provide a roadmap for improvement of teaching. The *Framework* provides the foundation for professional conversations among

practitioners as they seek to enhance their skill in the complex task of teaching. Promoting more thoughtful, reflective practitioners was one of the primary intentions of this PLC.

Next participants divided into two groups. Each group collaborated on co-creating a lesson plan that would later be taught by the student teachers in this group. The rich discussions and multiple perspectives regarding how to creatively meet the learning objectives enabled the groups to begin to form a collaborative learning community.

Halfway through the PLC sessions, the collaboratively planned lessons were taught by the student teachers and were observed by several members of the PLC, and videotaped by the university supervisor. The administrator participant observed the lessons that were collaboratively planned, offered focused feedback in a debriefing session, and observed a subsequent lesson to gauge if the feedback given was applied. Coincidentally, the district Science Supervisor was on site during one of the lessons and joined the group who had just taught a Science lesson. The informal debriefing that took place immediately after the lesson added yet another perspective, that of a curriculum supervisor who specialized in the content that was taught. The debriefing was collegial but extremely focused on specific feedback. One participant commented that, "The opportunity to deconstruct a lesson immediately after implementation with multiple perspectives was something that should be more a part of every teacher's normal workday."

Following the lessons, more formal debriefing took place in a larger group setting, concerning the four domains of Charlotte Danielson's Framework. Participants had opportunities to discuss the successes and challenges of the lessons with one another, and reflect on ways to improve instruction in the future, in a truly collaborative way.

The last PLC session focused on professionalism and took place at a local restaurant in our community. Together the participants gathered and discussed what it means to be a professional

in the field of education. The conversation in this public venue seemed to generate a more honest, reflective discussion about professionalism. The administrator perspective was shared, as well as the teachers' viewpoints. Both groups seemed to better appreciate the challenges in their different roles because of the conversation. The teacher candidates listened intently, gleaning new insights about what it actually means to be an educator in the public eye.

Data Collection and Analysis

At the completion of the semester and the PLC meetings, surveys were distributed to the participants, with variations for each group of people involved. Many of the questions were identical, however, there were several questions that were worded differently for teachers compared with pre-service teachers (see Appendix A). As this was a pilot, this was the first use of these surveys. Twelve surveys were returned. The surveys were read and the open-ended responses were coded for common themes in each answer for each group of people involved (teachers, student teachers, practicum students). The Likert scale questions were tallied to find out how many responses were given at each level.

Results and Implications

We asked the student teachers and the practicum students to describe how participation in the PLC impacted them. The student teachers' remarks all centered on professionalism and collaboration. They noted how this process opened them to the benefits of collaborating with multiple people when planning lessons, something that they can implement as they start their teaching careers. Similarly, the practicum students focused on the opportunity to collaboratively plan and hear the ideas that multiple educators and students had for planning one lesson.

We asked all participants to name two aspects of the PLC that were the most helpful. For the pre-service teachers, the most common response was the collaboration with a variety of

professionals involved in the PLC to help plan and debrief. Their comments indicated that they found the experiences and ideas that the classroom teachers shared during planning to be a valuable asset. For the classroom teachers and principal, the time for collaboration with their colleagues, as well as with the group of pre-service teachers was noted as the most helpful aspect of the PLC.

Since all of the pre-service teachers (student teachers and practicum students) were enrolled in a teacher certification program, we were curious to see how much overlap existed between what they learned in their coursework and what they learned as a participant in the PLC. The responses on this survey question focused on three areas: the collaboration with colleagues for planning, the Danielson domains, and being a professional in the community.

When asked to rate the usefulness of this experience compared with their other teacher education experiences at our institution, four pre-service teachers rated it the highest ("5"), extremely useful, one of the best, while three chose the next highest ("4"), more useful than most. The strong rankings provide evidence that this type of activity was valued by the pre-service teachers who participated and is something that should be considered in new program development.

When asked how likely would they be to participate in this type of a PLC in the future, all twelve (100%) chose the highest response in the 1 to 5 scale, which was "absolutely". This was very encouraging to see since this was our first attempt at this kind of experience. Teachers, students teachers, the principal, and the practicum students all have multiple demands on their time, and spending additional hours in the evening to participate in this PLC was more than any of them were required to do. Knowing that they would absolutely participate in this kind of PLC in the future was positive and promising for the future of the profession.

We asked the teachers and the principal to rate the usefulness of this experience compared with how they usually plan their lessons. On a scale of one to five, three chose the highest ("5"), extremely useful, one of the best, one person chose the next highest ("4") more useful than most, and one did not respond.

We also asked the teachers/principal how likely they would be to recommend participation in a PLC to a colleague. All five chose the highest, ("5"), absolutely. Again, while we doubted whether the time spent would be valuable, the teachers and principal indicated through their survey results as well as anecdotal notes, that they valued the time spent on this PLC.

Since this was a first attempt at a PLC for these researchers, we included a survey question that was attempting to find out how things could have been better. We asked how the PLC could have been designed differently. The feedback from all participants included excellent ideas to include for the next PLC, and all ideas involved spending more time together. Four participants suggested more meetings to allow for more collaboration and feedback, three participants suggested having cross-grade level planning sessions, one participant suggested scheduling the meetings when there are no other conflicts at school (report cards, parent-teacher conferences, etc.), one suggested that each person bring a lesson idea to share and get feedback, and one person suggested that the teachers and university faculty meet first to decide on lesson topics, and then bring the teacher candidates to the next meeting, once lesson topics have been decided.

Discussion

Many lessons were learned throughout the research project. Most importantly, the highlight throughout the survey responses was the *power of collaboration*. Educators, known for working in isolation, when given the opportunity to collaborate, seem always to yearn for more time to

share ideas and strategies. It was interesting that the classroom teachers seemed to value the opportunity to collaborate the most. One teacher commented, "The collaboration time with our student teachers and our colleagues was extremely valuable. We were able to delve deep into the social studies standards for kindergarten and develop a lesson and an assessment for the lesson. The time also allowed me to build a professional relationship with my student teacher". Another commented, "It allowed our "team" to bounce ideas off one another and working together to create in-depth lessons. We were able to bounce ideas off one another and working together, we came up with great lessons. It was also beneficial to work so closely with all of the student teachers. I think it helped our professional relationship and the collaboration was great!"

The pre-service teachers found that having multiple perspectives to develop and receive feedback on their lesson plans very helpful. One pre-service teacher made a comment, "I found it helpful to have the opportunity to collaborate with both teachers and student teachers while planning our 3rd grade science lesson. I also found it helpful to be in an environment where I could have professional conversations with a variety of educators." Another participant added, "Being able to talk with actual teachers, professionals, other field students, and a Principal really made this experience feel important and educational."

Another lesson learned was the need to approach the topic of *professionalism* in a different way. There seems to be a need for more explicit candid discussions regarding professionalism in our pre-service course work. Two of the pre-service teachers were impacted the most by the PLC in the area of professionalism. One practicum student noted, "…the last session where we discussed aspects of professionalism in the community was extremely beneficial. I never really thought about how much goes into the role of being a teacher outside of the classroom and I am definitely better prepared for what is to come." This was an unexpected finding.

The perceptions from the other field courses the researchers taught was that pre-service teachers feel this topic seems to be discussed too frequently and they seem to feel that the topic is redundant. It is possible that there were many opportunities in earlier field classes where aspects of professionalism were discussed without the label of "professionalism" and the students had not made the connection at the time. Certainly, student teaching is not the first time students have discussed professionalism. However, the format of our discussion, especially the location seemed to give this topic a new relevance. We discussed professionalism at a local restaurant in the community. The group shared a bite to eat and discussed professional dispositions and professionalism with a focus on being an educator in the public eye.

The knowledge of *Danielson's domains* was used as a model for lesson development. A best practice outcome that resulted from the workshops was that revisiting the Domains for classroom teachers helped them delve deeper into the Danielson framework, which will not only benefit themselves as teachers but also as mentors for our student teachers.

Another best practice outcome was a heightened awareness regarding *reflection.* Increasing the awareness of the power of reflection was a key emphasis that was purposefully designed as part of the workshops. The ability to systematically reflect on one's teaching is an ability that is learned through experience and time. Very few pre-service teachers are capable of critical reflection at the beginning of their teaching career. Helping pre-service teachers become reflective practitioners by affording them the opportunity to view and monitor their progress on videotape instead of having to rely solely on the perceptions of their university supervisor or cooperating teacher could accelerate their ability to analyze, reflect and refine practice.

Limitations Found in the Study

One limitation of this study that is important to share is that the school participants (cooperating teachers and principal) were not chosen randomly. We purposely chose to pilot this with teachers who have hosted student teachers from our institution in the past. It is not known how forthcoming other principals and cooperating teachers would have been to volunteer for this pilot project if they had never experienced any working relationship with faculty supervising student teachers from our institution. In addition, the scope of our research question was somewhat limited. Both researchers feel participation in a PLC should always be optional, and we realize some PLC models are mandated. Our beliefs enabled us to include participants who chose to participate, which most likely impacts their satisfaction and perception of the usefulness of the PLC.

Implications for Future Research

One aspect of a learning community that we did not pursue was an online PLC. The report by the STEM Teachers in Professional Learning Communities (2011) utilized this model. The typical model for a STEM PLC evolved from a group of teachers working in the same school or across districts, with teams meeting face-to-face in afterschool, summer, or weekend workshops to virtual PLCs where they rarely, if ever, met in person. These online features support goals of PLCs in new and creative ways (e.g., sharing and analyzing student work through online files, observing other teachers' videotaped or live streaming lessons, and commenting in real time or through asynchronous discussion groups). Given the rapidly evolving nature of online PLCs, the research base in this area is limited. The authors have recently formed a new Technology PLC that is a hybrid in which the PLC participants meet on-line and in person.

Conclusion

The participants in this PLC found the experience meaningful and would participate again. Bringing together the range of professionals and pre-professionals to collaboratively plan provided a unique opportunity for all participants that we hope to replicate in the future. This research project was an investment that yielded considerable rewards for multiple stakeholders. The intent was to create a culture of reflective practitioners to foster a culture of mentoring among professionals at all levels. This research project fulfilled that intention.

Creating a PLC can be time consuming, but that does not mean educators should reject the concept or allow individuals to opt out. If they are to be treated as professionals, educators must work together to develop their collective capacity and reap the rewards of collaboration. The research suggests that we should begin PLCs earlier in teachers' professional careers so they realize the value of collaboration.

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Appendix A

Professional Learning Community Survey for Pre-service Teachers

1. Specifically what are two aspects of the PLC that you found most helpful?

2. How could the PLC have been designed differently?

3. How has participation in this PLC impacted you?

4. What aspects of the PLC would you highlight in a job interview?

5. How has your knowledge of Danielson's Four Domains impacted your lesson planning?

6. What did you learn from this experience that was not included in any of your courses or field work?

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how likely would you be to participate in this kind of a Professional Learning Community in the future?

1	2	3	4	5
Not	Not	neutral	likely	absolutely
At all	very likely			

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how likely would you be to recommend this kind of a Professional Learning Community to an upcoming student teacher or practicum student for next year?

1	2	3	4	5
Not	Not	neutral	likely	absolutely
At all	very likely			

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how would you rate the usefulness of this experience compared with your other teacher education experiences at WCU?

1	2	3	4	5
the least	barely	neutral	more useful	extremely
useful	useful		than most	useful, one of the best

10. What feedback do you have for the researchers about the PLC?

Other comments?

Appendix B

Professional Learning Community Survey for Cooperating Teachers

1. Specifically what are two aspects of the PLC that you found most helpful?

2. How could the PLC have been designed differently?

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how likely would you be to participate in this kind of a Professional Learning Community in the future?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At all	Not very likely	neutral	likely	absolutely

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how likely would you be to recommend this kind of a Professional Learning Community to an upcoming student teacher or colleague?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At all	Not very likely	neutral	likely	absolutely

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, how would you rate the usefulness of this experience compared with how you usually plan your lessons.

1	2	3	4	5
the least useful	barely useful	neutral	more useful than most	extremely useful, one of the best

6. What feedback do you have for the researchers about the PLC?

Other comments?

A Case Study:

Transitioning From Traditional Face-to-Face Course Instruction to a Blended Format

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Abstract

This case study briefly describes the journey that one professor took in transitioning from face-to-face course instruction to a blended model at the graduate level. The blended lesson format was based on the 14 Learner-Centered Psychological Principles developed (1993) and revised by the American Psychological Association Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs (1997). The professor developed a student survey specifically to evaluate the blended course in areas not included in the university's evaluation. After the first and second semesters, data from the professor's course evaluations as well as the student surveys were used to improve the blended course design and implementation for the third semester. The professor comments on the challenges and the advantages of the blended format for both the professor and students including the impact on student achievement.

The challenge, as a new faculty member, was to combine best practices in a standards-based learner-centered curriculum and concepts of educational administration using the blended approach in the teaching of graduate students. The blended approach combines face to face and

online distance learning as the method of instructional delivery. An instructor needed a minimum level of technological skills and the belief that the new wave of the future for teaching and learning for all learners, Pre-Kindergarten through higher education including doctorial coursework, needed to include the use of technology. It was a tall order to read the texts for the three courses, develop the syllabus for each course, learn how use Moodle for interaction with the learners, and get all the information for the courses into the blended technology format in three weeks.

The Task

The Educational Leadership Program had piloted the blended format the year before for some of the courses in the School Building Leadership Program. One reason for piloting the blended format was to reach a larger group of students who would be interested in this format because of the distance they lived and worked from the University. It was hoped that knowing that they would only need to physically attend class three times a semester would be more attractive. A second reason was to attract another group of students who because of their busy schedules would be willing to take courses that would allow them to participate asynchronously, at times and places convenient to them. The courses in the pilot proved to be successful in several ways.   The use of the blended course format had increased enrollment, decreased dropout rate, increased active engagement by students through participation in the weekly threaded discussions, and produced an increase in student achievement than when the courses were offered face to face. As a result, the challenge was to redesign the rest of the courses that would be taught in the School Building Leadership and District Leadership Programs into the blended format.

The Research

The instructional process in the Educational Leadership Program is composed of three steps: instructional planning, instructional delivery, and assessment of learning. This instructional

process is based on student-centered learning research. Our belief is that there is a direct alignment between the written, taught, and assessment curriculum (Glatthorn 2000). Preparation for instruction begins with the end in mind; the standard that the student is expected to learn and understand that will be assessed. The following steps modeled after Wiggins' and McTighe's Understanding By Design Model (2005) included: stage 1) identify desired outcomes and results, stage 2) determine what constitutes acceptable evidence of competency in the outcomes and results (assessment), and Stage 3) plan instructional strategies and learning experiences that bring student learning to these competency levels. Students are provided clear expectations as to how to demonstrate their learning through rubrics. A number of authentic, project-based assessments are also presented in each syllabus. Students choose one of these assessments based on their prior knowledge and current educational and professional experiences to show their understandings of major course concepts.

The American Psychological Association Task Force on Psychology of Education along with the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory developed 12 Learner-Centered Psychological Principles. This document included guidelines for school redesign and reform (1993). The principles were divided into four categories: 1) Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors; 2) Motivational and Affective Factors; 3) Developmental and Social Factors; and 4) Individual Differences Factors. The American Psychological Association Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs (1997) revised the 1993 principles to the Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A framework for school reform and redesign. The revision included

Cognitive/Metacognitive Factors	Nature of the learning process-intentional

	Goals of the learning process-create meaning
	Construction of knowledge: connect new to known
	Strategic thinking: higher order skills
	Context of learning: environmental factors
Motivational/Affective Factors	Motivational and emotional influences: emotional state, beliefs, interests, goals
	Intrinsic motivation: creativity, higher order skills, curiosity, interest, choice, control
	Effects of motivation on effort, external effort, guided practice
Developmental/Social Factors	Developmental influence on learning, differential development in physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains
	Social influences: social interactions, interpersonal relations, communication
Individual Differences Factors	Individual differences: different strategies, approaches, capacities based on prior experiences and heredity
	Diversity in linguistics, culture, background (1997)
	Standards and assessment regarding procedure and process (1997)

Figure 1

two additional elements in the category of Individual Differences: 1) diversity focusing on differences in linguistics, culture, social background and 2) standards and assessment centering on high standards, diagnostic data, and procedure and outcome assessments of the learner and the process. The table contains a summary of the 14 Learner-Centered Principles in each of the four categories. Laird (2003) indicates that blended courses transform the why, when, where, how, and what of learning that occurs in the 21st century. The courses are characterized by interactions between the learner and peers as well as the learner and instructor that can occur with any learner at a convenient time and place, with compatible equipment (Govindasamy, 2002). According to Lindsay (2004), blended courses improve communication and interactions between learners and the professor and between learners and learners. Active engagement with the content material is also increased because all learners are required to respond to the discussion question in some way (Sand, 2002). Research from the Teaching Learning Center, (2011) indicates threaded discussion

used in the blended format increases adult learning because the discussion is interactive and is how most adults learn best. It is interactive and participatory. Included are opportunities for learners to analyze alternative ways of thinking and acting while assisting learners in exploring their own experiences so they can become better critical thinkers. Learners who have difficulty attending the traditional weekly classroom instruction can have their needs met by the blended course since it meets only three times a semester.

At the University, the blended format has transformed traditional instruction into on-line learning experiences based on the 14 Learner-Centered Psychological Principles with three face to face meetings during the semester. Instructional delivery contains multimedia presentations, simulations, videos, audio sequences, text commentaries, small group activities, and student contributions to the threaded weekly discussions. Based on research, hands-on learning experiences actively engage learners and impact the amount of knowledge gained when compared to lecture and chalk talk of the traditional classroom. This provides the instructor the opportunity to be very creative and opens up the world of virtual field trips in the delivery of instruction. In this way, the learner has the ability to collect and organize digital content material and resources as well as electronic textbooks on laptops in place of physical textbooks. This decreases the cost of textbooks and eliminates the transporting the large textbooks for the learners and the instructor. According to the Teaching Learning Center, (2011), blended courses support self-directed learning by providing individualized, self-paced activities. The learner is proactive and takes the initiative in the learning. The learner has greater motivation which makes it more purposeful. As a result, there is a greater retention of new knowledge which increases the ability to apply the learning to new situations. Research indicates that the greater the expertise of the student in the area of the technology usage, the higher the student attainment of knowledge and the more motivated the

student is to participate in a blended course (Black, 2002). Black asserts that learners acquire more knowledge in blended formats, write better papers, produce higher quality projects, and are able to participate in more meaningful conversation on the subject being taught.

According to the research, there are some disadvantages or pitfalls to avoid when designing and implementing a blended course. Katela, Garnham, and Aycock (2005) state one challenge for an instructor is to insure they have a working knowledge of the technology that will be used to provide instruction. This may be a learning curve that is different for each instructor. The development of the course should be conducted slowly to insure it is done accurately. The more accurate the online materials are, including the syllabus and resources, the less frustration there will be for the learners. Since this is a change from the traditional way of providing instruction, instructors need to commit to spending the time to redesign and transform their traditional lessons to the technological format. It is also important for the instructor to set aside time to read and provide feedback to learners on a regular basis. There will be learners who do not participate as directed in the threaded weekly discussions and will attempt to complete the entire course the last week of the semester. Carefully established due dates for assignments need to be determined and adhered to. The situation will then be avoided. The connection between the online assignments and the face to face class activities is crucial to avoid the 'course and a half syndrome' that can develop if the two parts of the course are not carefully aligned when designing the course. Course creation needs to focus on instructional design and delivery using technology. It is not just a matter of transferring the traditional lecture mode of delivery of content into the online tool. What is required is a rethinking the design of the course as well as adopting a new approach to teaching that will make the blended format a success. Course goals and objectives which include online learning activities make the learning more learner-centered with greater learner active engagement.

Learning to facilitate online discussions and providing more project-based assessments of student learning are challenges that instructors face in the creation and implementation of blended courses (Teaching Learning Center, 2011).

It is important that learners thinking about participating in the blended format are interviewed to determine that they are independent learners with the level of technology skills to be successful and have well developed study habits as well as time management skills. All these are needed for learner success in a blended course (Katela, Garnham, and Aycock, 2005).

The Process

The first steps taken were to review the traditional course syllabus for each course that needed to be transformed into the blended format. Also reviewed, were blended courses that had been changed from the traditional format the previous year. Research was conducted to determine the most important characteristics of a blended course. Based on the data gathered, the following were determined to be crucial: 1) making connections to the 14 Learner-Centered Principles as determined by the American Psychological Association Work Group Board (1997), 2) using the lesson plan format model of understanding by design created by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), 3) integrating the online course content with the face to face components of the blended course (Katela, Garnham, and Aycock, 2005), 4) keeping the course plans and the technology simple (Katela, Garnham, and Aycock, 2005), 5) developing a way to effectively and efficiently monitor the design and online communications to ensure they are productive and effective (Lindsay, 2004), and 6) using the format of threaded discussion to provide timely feedback from the instructor while allowing learners to provide feedback to each other through required online responses (Lindsay, 2004).

Several individual tutoring sessions on the use of Moodle, the University's online teaching tool, were needed. After developing the syllabus for each course, which included the sequence of assignments for each week, the information was put on Moodle. The students were divided into three groups-Group A, Group B, and Group C, according to the student's home location. The purpose was to assign a group each week to answer the discussion question and the other two groups to respond to the first group's answers. The assignments were posted on Saturday of each week. The first group's answers were due by midnight of the following Wednesday. The second and third groups' responses were due by midnight the following Saturday. The group assignments and due dates were included with each discussion question to eliminate any confusion. The dates of the face to face meetings were included in the syllabus. It was determined that the first meeting would be the first day of class to discuss the syllabus, the course requirements, and the assessment system as well as introduce the course content by activating prior knowledge. The second meeting would be a class half way through the semester when a follow-up to the weekly threaded discussions would take place and any concerns or issues regarding the blended format would be addressed. Experts in the field would be invited to share their expertise in the application of the course concepts. The last meeting would be the class of the semester where the students would present their final projects with a whole class presentation in a variety of formats.

The use of the online teaching tool, Moodle, would be demonstrated and the students would be given an opportunity to practice how to use it.   In the syllabus, three project assignments were included with due dates and each grading rubric. Some courses included small group projects. The small group project members were the same as the groups assigned for the discussion questions but they had the opportunity to choose their group project based on interest, experience, and prior knowledge during the first class. Opportunities were provided during the first and second

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classes to meet as groups in person to organize the assignment. It is believed that the wave of the future is working on group projects using technology as group members will be no longer working at the same location but at multiple locations. This form of collaboration and communication is an important skill to develop in students. Other project-based assessments require the analysis of data to solve work association problem where the student prepares solution options in form of short and long term actions plans. Any additional resources were placed on Moodle either as websites, multimedia presentations, simulations, videos, audio sequences, or text commentaries.

The Results

In the Educational Leadership program, students were immersed in the new information where the new information is connected to known to make meaning from experience and information. Demonstrations were conducted using explicit action, giving a visual or auditory representation of the new learning while being clear about what students are expected to know, be able to do, or value using various skills and strategies. Every lesson started and ended with a focus on the expected learning. Students were encouraged to reach for the highest level of performance. Rubrics were provided when large tasks were assigned and anchor charts were used to define high quality work. Students were given the responsibility for their own learning as well as opportunities to use the new knowledge when choices of how to demonstrate their understanding were provided through various means of authentic activities and projects -based assessments related to real life experiences based on interests and intrinsic motivation. Project-based assessments were used since learners need time and opportunity to use, employ, and practice their developing control of new concepts in functional, realistic, non-artificial ways. It is important to keep contexts authentic and provide many practice opportunities to use the new information. Students began with near transfer practice by using their understanding of new concepts in the weekly threaded discussions. They

moved to far transfer practice as students gained confidence with the new skill or knowledge by using the course concepts in project-based assessments. Opportunities that involved whole group, small group, and individual practice were included.

Differentiation of instruction occurred when students were given the opportunity to choose from a variety of assessments which was a way to demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge they gained during the course. The blended format of the courses encouraged interaction of all students on a weekly basis as they responded to discussion questions based on their prior knowledge and understanding of the new information. Learners received "feedback" from exchanges with more knowledgeable "others." The knowledgeable "others" included their peers as well as the instructor. Students were given realistic continuous feedback that was specific about the strengths and weaknesses of the weekly threaded discussions as well as the project-based assessments that included next steps for learning. This helped to expand student knowledge and application of the course concepts.

The additional assessments, three research papers for each blended course that included a presentation of the last paper during the final class, were graded using a rubric. The three assessments and the rubrics to determined student acquisition of knowledge were assigned during the first class. The papers and the presentations of the students participating in the blended courses were of higher quality than the students participating in the traditional face to face courses.

The university has a standard procedure that students use to evaluate each professor at the end of the semester. Students complete a five point Liker scale for each course of 50 questions that focus on six areas. A narrative section is also available for students to write additional comments. Not all questions pertain to the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of a blended course. Data was collected from the instructor's evaluation at the end of the 2010 fall semester to

help reflect on the design, implementation, and assessment of the blended courses from a total of 16 students. The following information helped to guide the development of the blended courses for the spring 2011 semester. One hundred percent of the students stated that the readings were always read and that the assignments connected to the readings were helpful. The syllabus was viewed as always useful was indicated by 100% of the students. Students evaluated that the feedback from the instructor was viewed as useful scored 100%. When receiving a grade, the students understood why they received the grade and the discussion board was very useful were both evaluated as 100% by the students.

Some direct comments included:

"The professor always took the time to respond to our online discussion and highlighted the positives. This was helpful to me in knowing that my responses were appropriate and on point. She always presented us with additional thought provoking questions (no need to respond to them) related to the content of the readings."

"Each of the assignments was beneficial in helping me to understand the depth of school law and its impact on what I do on a daily basis as an educator."

"The online discussion format facilitated thoughtful and critical analysis of the concepts presented in the readings."

"The professor insured that class discussions and presentations were relevant and applicable to our daily responsibilities as educators."

Spring course evaluations were reviewed to help make adjustments and revisions to the fall 2011 course syllabus. Thirteen students completed the evaluation and the following data collected helped prepare for the fall 2011 semester. One hundred percent of the students indicated the discussion board was somewhat to very useful. The course information (i.e. the syllabus and policies) were somewhat to very useful, according to 100% of the students. The number of hours spend per week on the class were 2-4 (15%), 4-6 (38.5%), 6-8 (15.4%), and 8 or more (30.8%).

The readings were useful to always useful was indicated by 100% of the students. The student consulted the syllabus usually or just before class was evaluated as 100% of the students. The instructor response to email/phone was very timely was evaluated by students as 100%. The instructor's availability during office hours or by appointment was 100%. The instructor encouraged students to ask questions was evaluated as 100%. The instructor stimulated interest in the subject was 100%.

Below are listed direct quotes from students which will guide this process.

"Emails were answered very quickly, much appreciated."

"The textbook was easy to read and offered practical ideas. It was relevant to principalship.

"In the Moodle format, the readings were critical to the weekly assignments. The text selected was very useful and well-chosen for gaining knowledge and applying within the answer and response format. The feedback the professor provided was also integral within the assignment, and well versed in the knowledge she presented and commented on regarding the readings and the course."

"The course was informative and aligned well with the requirements and expectations of what one needs to learn in order to be knowledgeable and effective in an administrative position. The course parameters and the content outlined by the instructor brought concepts and practical knowledge to fruition through a variety of textbook applications and also 'real world' working exercises."

Additional data were collected through a student survey that was developed by the instructor based on survey questions that were not asked in the University instructor evaluation and that were deemed important in the research conducted on blended courses. The survey was submitted to the Institute Review Board and was approved. Surveys from fall 2010 and spring 2011 were analyzed and the findings showed several areas for consideration in planning blended courses for the spring 2012 semester. For the analysis, levels 5 (always), 4 (usually), and 3 (most

of the time) were combined. One statement "I feel comfortable in the on-line environment." indicated a percent of 89. "I had the ability to effectively communicate with the instructor." was a statement that resulted in a percent of 96. "The course organization was defined and implemented." had a 96% rating. The statement, "The instructor was interested in me and helpful with my academic progress." was evaluated at a total of 96%. "The instructor was an effective teacher." obtained a total of a 96%. The statement, "The organization of the material presented was well done and easy to follow." received a rating of 100%. "The professor helped me gain valuable knowledge about the subject matter." was determined to have a 99% rating. The statement, "I was satisfied with the availability of the instructor." received a rating totaling 91%. "The work requirements for this class, when compared to that of other similar classes were appropriate." was given a rating of 100%.

Of particular interest were the comments that were for question 32, "What did you like most about the course?" The following are a snapshot of the responses.

"Moodle was easy to navigate."

"I could work independently."

"Working within a cohort group was valuable."

"Alternating the group assignments weekly was beneficial."

"The guest speakers who discussed the practical application of the course concepts were useful."

"Weekly threaded discussion questions could be completed within my own personal schedule."

"The course layout of meeting face to face three times and then completing the threaded weekly discussion the other weeks worked well."

"Getting peer feedback during the weekly threaded discussion was eye-opening."

"Getting a clear, cut agenda with established due dates in advanced help
me plan out the semester."

"Graded assignments were clarified at class meetings."

The analysis of the data from narrative data will be used in revising the blended courses

for the spring 2012 and fall 2012. The feedback included:

"Too many questions to complete on some weekly discussions."

"Blended course, not for me."

"Moodle postings overwhelming with more than 10 students in a
class."

The Conclusions

Several conclusions have been made based on the review of the results from this case study.

It takes time and out of the box thinking to transfer a traditionally taught class to a blended format.

The redesign process needs to be conducted in small steps which included specific learning goals

that were easy to manage and assess. Keeping the technology simple helps the students be more

successful and provides a greater opportunity to focus on the content instead of focusing on the

learning of technology. Careful attention needs to be paid to aligning the blended part of the course

to the three face-to-face meetings to avoid developing a 'course and a half'. Understanding that

online course activities take time to implement is necessary so that the course does not become

overwhelming for the students.   Placing the students in groups and assigning specific groups tasks

with due dates, helped to maintain continuous, consistent, and valuable participation of all students

in the threaded weekly discussions. Even those students in a traditional format who would have

not participated in a class discussion, did so in the weekly threaded discussion because of the safe,

secure, non-threatening environment as well as having the opportunity to think and plan their

respective responses.   Students were given a rubric that indicated how the weekly threaded

responses would be graded. Strong weekly responses included a discussion of the major concepts, citations from the text and outside sources for support of the thinking, personal experiences that showed application of the concepts, questions regarding the concepts, validation of the thinking of peers, and multiple responses throughout the week. Weekly feedback from peers and from the instructor that was specific and meaningful to each student helped sustain threaded weekly discussions that were high quality, were purposeful, expanded the concepts, included citations from resources for support of ideas, and contained personal experiences as examples. Weekly discussion questions included the application of the concepts to new situations through case studies, to personal experiences within the students' school or district, and to situations where the students were in an administrative position making leadership decisions.

There are several challenges that need to be considered to make the blended courses successful. They included: 1) rethinking the course design, 2) continuing to adopting a new approach to teaching, 3) managing two learning environments (on-line and face to face), 4) integrating online and face to face instruction to avoid the course and a half syndrome, 5) keeping the technology and course design simple, 6) spending additional time in planning, designing, and implementing the blended course including providing timely, specific, meaningful feedback, and 7) preparing the students to understand their role in the blended course and how it is different from the traditional face to face course.

The advantages to the blended course format are: 1) new teaching opportunities, 2) more actively engaged students in the learning, 3) increased student learning due to more active engagement, 4) new pedagogical approaches (i.e. learner-centered practices), 5) differentiation of learning, 6) efficient use of student resources including time and money because the learning can take place at any time or any place there is computer access and the many of the course materials

are on-line, 7) interaction takes place not only between the student and the instructor but also between students 8) students gain insights from multiple perspectives, 9) students drill down deeper into concepts, and 10) documentation and assessment of the process of learning as well as the knowledge gained.

The advantages far surpass the challenges. The blended model is a way for this University to move into the 21st century in the use of technology so high quality, equitable educational opportunities are available for adult learners. The structure of the model includes meeting face to face three times a semester; assessed asynchronous, threaded weekly discussions; and three research papers with one presentation during the last class. Based on the successes this year, the next steps in my journey of continuous improvement in the development of my blended teaching and course design is to include additional small group work and the implementation of more strategies to actively engage learners during the reading process.

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Reflecting on Reflecting:

ESOL Teacher Candidate Views of Video Recording

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Abstract

Most of the literature about teacher reflection and video recording is written from the researcher's, rather than the student teacher's, perspective. A study was conducted to determine what ESOL teacher candidates think of the pedagogy. Six ESOL teacher candidates videotaped and critiqued their teaching; afterwards, they filled out a questionnaire about the experience. Results indicate that candidates differed in (1) their expectations of the assignment and (2) what

surprised them about it. Candidates also differed in what they liked and disliked different about the experience. More importantly, all candidates thought that videotaping and reflecting can or did improve their teaching. Finally, all candidates recommended repeating the assignment and making changes to it. These results will help teacher educators to structure better reflective activities in TESOL.

Reflecting on Reflecting: ESOL Teacher Candidate Views of Video Recording

Much has been written about teacher reflection. Scholars have defined the idea (Wallace, 1991), described its elements (Lange, 1990), and discussed ways to implement it (Bailey, 1990; Bartlett, 1990; Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, & Conrad, 1990; Romano & Schwartz, 2005). Video recording for reflection has received a great deal of attention. Authors have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the technique (Day, 1990; Richards & Lockhart, 1994), its implementation (Moore, 1988), and its effects on teaching (Frederiksen, Supisic, Sherin, & Wolfe, 1998; Welsch & Devlin, 2006). Most of the literature on video recording, however, has been written from the researcher's, rather than the student teacher's, perspective.

Having discussed the craft and applied science models of professional education, Wallace (1991) proposes a reflective model of teacher education. Its basic elements include *received knowledge* and *previous experiential knowledge*, which inform practice and reflection and, in turn, create professional competence (p. 15). A feature of Wallace's model is the *reflective cycle*, which refers to the "continuing process of reflection on 'received knowledge' and 'experiential knowledge' in the context of professional action (practice)" (p. 52).

Lange (1990) states that a reflective teacher "knows the art and craft of teaching, and considers it carefully both during and after interaction with students" (p. 247). The important question for Lange is how the art and craft of the reflective teacher is transmitted to the developing teacher (pp. 247-248). In most teacher development programs, reflective teaching occurs only in student teaching; some programs use microteaching as preparation for student teaching. Both kinds of clinical experience "could . . . include more extensive reflection on the act of teaching" (p. 248).

According to Bartlett (1990), reflective teaching focuses not only on the everyday activities of teachers but on the institutional structures in which teachers work. Becoming a reflective teacher

means transcending the "technicalities" of teaching and the desire to improve instruction. To do so, one must move from "how" to "what" and "why" questions (p. 205). Bartlett also discusses ways of collecting evidence of teaching practice. Although audio or video recording is possible, Bartlett claims that the best reflection involves "some form of writing," which allows one not only to observe but to reflect on practice (p. 209). Reflective teaching, Bartlett concludes, is not an "easy" process: it requires us to change our thinking and actions, forces us to adopt a critical attitude towards ourselves as language teachers, challenges our beliefs about teaching, and challenges us to consider the effects of our teaching on society (p. 213). Bartlett is not the only researcher to address reflective writing.

Bailey (1990) discusses the diary study, which she defines as "a first person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events" (p. 215). Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, and Conrad (1990) strongly recommend adding journals to teacher preparation programs. They demonstrate that journals "provide opportunities for ongoing learning that most course assignments do not" (p. 239): they allow for dialogue between teachers and students, allow students to learn through writing without being graded on the writing itself, and alert teachers to student concerns and needs. In sum, journals teach students to do what teacher educators do: integrate new ideas with existing knowledge and communicate with each another in the process.

Romano and Schwartz (2005), on the other hand, used technology to elicit and encourage reflection among beginning teachers. Ten first year students used three tools—electronic portfolios, online discussion, and videotape—to reflect on their teaching. Results showed that using these tools encouraged the teachers to engage in reflection, which often improved their teaching.

Although evidence of teaching may be collected in many ways (Wallace, 1991; Bartlett, 1990), researchers have pointed out the advantages of audio and video recording for the task (Adams & Biddle, 1970; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). First, such methods provide the fullest, most comprehensive account of a lesson. Second, they capture all of the details of the classroom. They also let researchers go "where the action is" (Adams & Biddle, 1970, p. viii), and they allow choice of focus (the teacher or students, for example) for both teachers and researchers. Finally, these accounts may be played and replayed at any time, for supervisory or research purposes.

Moore (1988) cites additional advantages of supervising teaching by means of videotape, including objectivity (there is no disagreement over what occurred), flexibility (the tape can be stopped and reviewed at will), and portability (students may use their tapes when interviewing for jobs). Tapes also allow supervisors to observe more lessons than they might on site, as Piñeiro (1993) noted.

Recording is not without its disadvantages, however, as Richards and Lockhart (1994) point out: the presence of a recording device may be disruptive, such devices have limited range, and reviewing a recording is time consuming. To lessen the impact of recording on the classroom, Day (1990) recommends setting up the equipment before students arrive and allowing them to examine it before it is used. Day also points out that as the number of students increase, so does the complexity of the observation: while six or seven students are "relatively easy" to observe, 30 or 40 is "another matter" (p. 46). Student teachers will learn from experience what and how to tape for best results, which are had when the camera is focused on the teacher rather than the students.

Moore (1988) describes how paired student teaching, videotaping, and coaching are used to improve instruction. At the beginning of the semester-long Junior Professional Experience (JPE), staff from the university media department travel to a local school and conduct a hands-on

workshop on videotaping. Every student works with the equipment, alternating between playing the teacher and operating the camera. From then on, nearly every lesson a student teaches is videotaped by the partner. After every videotaping, the student teacher and supervisor observe and discuss the lesson. Moore states that tapes are "cooperatively critiqued" by both the student teacher and the supervisor. In addition to the particular skill being taught, other aspects of teaching (such as skills taught earlier) may be observed.

There is evidence that video helps students to reflect better on their teaching. Welsch and Devlin (2006) compared effects of video-based reflection with memory-based reflection on the written reflections of preservice teachers. Students who used video had slightly higher mean scores than those who relied on memory. Furthermore, students preferred video- to memory-based reflection. Similarly, Frederiksen, Supisic, Sherin, and Wolfe (1998) found that participating in collaborative video analysis or in scoring video portfolios helped teachers to improve their professional practice.

Although the literature on teacher reflection through videotape and is extensive and detailed, almost all of it is written from the supervising teacher/researcher's, rather than the student teacher's, perspective. What do teacher candidates think of the pedagogy? What do they like and dislike about it? Finally, how do they think it affects their teaching? A study was conducted to answer these questions.

Method

Participants were six students, three of them undergraduate TESOL majors and three of them candidates for endorsement (an additional teaching credential), in a TESOL practicum. Five of the students were female and one male; their ages ranged from 28 to 45. All were native speakers of English. Debbie (like all names, a pseudonym), was a 45-year-old endorsement candidate with

eight years of bilingual/ESL teaching experience. Kay was a 30-year-old TESOL major with no teaching experience; she had a degree in social work. Tom was a 28-year-old endorsement candidate who had taught high school English for two years. Darlene was a 30-year-old major with no teaching experience. Mary Jane was a 28- year-old endorsement candidate with six years of teaching experience at the elementary level. Alma was a 28- year-old major with no teaching experience. Only Tom and Mary Jane had used videotape before (once each) to reflect on their teaching.

At the start of the semester, students (hereafter referred to as candidates) were assigned to videotape themselves teaching a 30- to 45-minute lesson and to write a one-to-two page critique of the lesson. Although they could videotape themselves any time, their videotape and critique were due in the thirteenth week of the 16-week semester. In their critique, candidates were to discuss what they thought they did well, what they thought they did poorly, what they would change about the lesson, and what they would keep the same. (The instructor watched the candidates' videotapes and graded their critiques.) After completing the assignment, candidates were asked to complete a questionnaire in which they indicated their expectations of, and reactions to, the activity (Appendix). Responses to the survey were discussed in class, after which the instructor analyzed them for recurring themes.

Results

As Table 1 indicates, most candidates had positive expectations for the activity.

Table 1
Candidate Expectations for Activity

Positive (4)
Negative (2)

Tom, who had videotaped himself before, expected it to be "a valuable activity." Mary Jane went into more detail. "My expectations," she wrote, "were to observe as an experienced teacher where I can improve in my teaching lessons—because I don't want to always revert to what I do normally—but what is best for the students." Kay's response, however, was negative. "I expected to notice a lot of errors, due to my inexperience as a classroom teacher," she wrote. "I expected my speech to be too fast, or too idiomatic."

Candidates were surprised by three aspects of the assignment: their performance, student activity, and the activity itself; one candidate did not respond (Table 2).

Table 2
What Surprised Candidates the Most
Their performance (2)
Activity of students (2)
Activity itself (1)
No response (1)

Describing her performance, Kay was surprised that she "spoke quite clearly, with a few exceptions, and . . . appeared very enthusiastic." On the other hand, Alma thought that she was boring. "I like being animated in front of the class," she explained, "and this showed me that I'm just not (at least that day)." Darlene was surprised by the amount of activity "that occurs that you are not aware of" and Mary Jane by "the lack of student control and respect for each other." Tom

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said that even though he knew what to expect, he found it "very exciting and useful" to analyze his teaching. "You can always find things to improve in your teaching," he explained.

When asked what they liked most about the activity, candidates gave two responses: (1) what they learned about teaching, generally and specifically, and (2) its entertainment value (Table 3).

Table 3
What Candidates Liked Most
Learning about teaching (4)
Entertainment/interest value (2)

Responses indicating that students learned about teaching generally included Tom's "I liked the opportunity to analyze my classroom and plan improvements." More specific responses included Kay's "I liked that I was able to observe myself, which allowed me to notice certain behaviors or procedures that may interfere with my ability to effectively teach the material." Darlene said that her students "loved" being videotaped and that she found the tape "interesting to watch."

Question four asked candidates what they disliked most about the activity. Their responses fell into three categories: logistical or mechanical problems, videotaping themselves only once, and other (Table 4).

Table 4
What Candidates Disliked Most
Logistical/mechanical problems (2)

| Videotaping themselves only once (2) |
| Other (2) |

In the first category, two candidates noted problems such as borrowing the equipment, setting it up, and using it. "Actually, just the practicality of setting the whole thing up, using borrowed equipment that I was not familiar with using," Debbie explained. "The tripod setup was wobbly & shaky, and I really didn't like where I had the whole thing set up." In the second category, two candidates wrote that they disliked videotaping themselves only once. "I would like to have seen a videotape of myself as I improved," wrote Alma, "or seen that I hadn't."

As Table 5 shows, all candidates thought that the pedagogy improved their teaching by increasing their awareness of themselves as teachers; two candidates also stated that the activity improved specific aspects of their teaching.

Table 5
How Videotaping Can or Did Improve Teaching
By improving awareness of self as teacher (6)
By improving specific aspects of teaching (2)

One candidate's comment is indicative of the first category. "Videotaping is essential," Kay wrote, "because I can become more aware of the unconscious behaviors that I exhibit. Being aware of these behaviors improves my ability to effectively communicate." Another candidate's response is indicative of the second category. "In general, I will always use video to improve my teaching," Tom wrote. "Specifically, I think I can improve on my physical movement around the class. All my movements should be meaningful."

Every candidate recommended the activity for the future, most for the same reason as the previous question: the activity promoted awareness of their teaching (Table 6).

Table 6
Whether Candidates Recommend Activity for Future
Yes (6)

Debbie's response was typical. "Yes. It's a good idea," she wrote. "Sometimes we get in a rut and it takes looking in from the outside to get a better picture of what's going on." Similarly, Kay said that she would recommend it because "no one is completely aware of all of their behaviors until they observe themselves."

Finally, candidates were asked what changes they would make to the activity. As Table 7 indicates, most candidates recommended at least one change.

Table 7
Changes Candidates Would Make to Activity
Videotape self at least twice (2)
Tie with action research project (2)
Numerous (1)
None (1)

Two candidates recommended videotaping at least twice, both for much the same reason. As Kay put it, if you videotape yourself once, you can identify areas for improvement and make changes; if you videotape yourself more than once, you can see if those changes worked. Two other candidates suggested that videotaping be tied to another project assigned that semester so that they could "glean an area for improvement as an action-research," as Mary Jane explained. Darlene recommended a number of changes: "Shorter length. More focused objective such as

action zone, attention span of students, times the students were unclear [about what the teacher was saying or what they were supposed to do], what worked vs. what didn't . . . ."

Discussion

Researchers have commented on the many benefits—and seemingly few drawbacks—of audio and video recording for reflective teaching (Frederiksen, Supisic, Sherin, & Wolfe, 1998; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Moore, 1988; Welsch & Devlin, 2006). For the most part, this study confirms those findings: candidates saw themselves from a more objective perspective than they normally do; they saw themselves and their teaching in more detail than they normally do; and they improved their teaching as a result of participating in the assignment. These findings suggest that teacher educators should continue to use video recording for classroom supervision and research.

The study also suggests steps that teacher trainers can take to use this method more productively. The most important of these steps appear to be the following. First, prepare teacher candidates psychologically for the activity. Let them know that they may not like seeing themselves on tape the first time and that they should withhold judgment until they reflect on both their strengths and weaknesses. (This recommendation is based on two of the six candidates having negative expectations of the activity and all candidates being surprised by the activity, including one who thought she was boring.) Second, prepare candidates logistically for the activity. Allow them access to, and practice with, the equipment ahead of time so that they are comfortable using it. As Day (1990) points out, setting up the equipment in the classroom also allows students to get used to it. Viewing a tape of themselves in class may also help candidates overcome "the shock of recognition." Third, have candidates record their teaching at least twice, and preferably three times, during the term. This will give them a chance not only to get used to the pedagogy but to see their

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progress as teachers. They will also realize that this aspect of the course—and grade—does not rest on only one performance. Finally, make audio and video recording part of a larger reflective teaching pedagogy that includes journal writing, discussion, and, if applicable, action research. At the same time, provide candidates with rubrics that allow them to focus on different, specific teaching behaviors. Audio and video recording is only one of several reflective teaching pedagogies, but it is a valuable one. With proper preparation, teacher candidates—and their supervisors—may use it productively.

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Appendix

Name (optional):

TSL 497, Practicum; Videotaping Questionnaire

Directions Answer the following questions about videotaping and reflecting on your teaching.

1. What were your expectations for this activity and what were the bases of these expectations?

2. What surprised you the most about seeing yourself on videotape? Why?

3. What did you like the most about the activity?

4. What did you dislike the most about the activity?

5. How do you think that videotaping and reflecting can or did improve your teaching?

6. Would you recommend this activity as a future assignment? Why or why not?

7. What changes would you recommend be made to the activity?