

The Field Experience Journal

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**Technology-Oriented Field Experience:
Readying Pre-Service Teachers to Use Emerging Tools**

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The preceding decades have witnessed an influx of technologies into American classrooms. From instructional tools like Nearpod and Poll Everywhere, to course management systems like Edmodo and Schoology, to classroom management applications like Class Dojo and Class Act, nearly every element of teachers' work can be supported with emerging technology tools. A nationwide survey conducted by Gray, Thomas, and Lewis (2010) indicated that ninety-four percent of teachers use the internet regularly as part of their duties, eighty percent use technology applications for record-keeping, and sixty-nine percent of teachers report using technology regularly during instruction. Technology is likely to become even more deeply rooted in the teaching profession in the coming years. The New Media Consortium's *Horizons Report* predicts that emerging technologies are likely to profoundly reshape teacher's roles as they leverage emerging technologies (Johnson et al., 2014). Technology is no longer at the periphery of the classroom; it is intimately entwined in nearly every facet of teachers' work.

Teacher-educators have done their best to keep pace with these rapidly unfolding changes. Many have worked to integrate technology skills into their methods courses and field experiences. In addition, eighty-five percent of teacher education programs require pre-service teachers to complete a stand-alone education technology course (Kleiner, Thomas & Lewis, 2007). These are important first steps. Unfortunately, there is mounting evidence suggesting many pre-service teachers are still not ready to fully capitalize on emerging education technologies in their professional work (DeSantis & Rotigel, 2014; Lei, 2009; Kumar & Vigil,

2011). This problem likely originates from a misalignment between the ways teachers employ technology in their work and in how pre-service teachers are taught to use technology in their courses. Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al. (2012) found this misalignment is most pronounced for technologies used by teachers to help students to practice critical thinking and reasoning, to analyze students' performance on assessments, and to facilitate digital communication.

Bridging the gap between education-technology coursework and the actual technology skills pre-service teachers will need in their careers is a challenge for teacher-educators. We cannot, like biologists, order a supply of specimens for our students to experiment with; we do not, like nurse educators, have realistic student-mannequins for pre-service teachers to try out the techniques we describe in our courses; and we, unlike business educators, do not possess simulators that could allow us to dial up various classroom scenarios. Even if these things existed for teacher-educators, the skills our students need are difficult to define and change quickly (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Johnson, 2013). Moreover, teacher-educators require more resources, support and professional development to learn how to use emerging technologies themselves (Goktas, Yildirim & Yildirim, 2009). As a consequence, many teacher-education programs fall short of fully readying all of their pre-service teachers with the full range of skills they need as classroom teachers

Well-designed field experiences offer hope. Strong field-experience partnerships match the content pre-service learn in their coursework to real-life demonstrations from exceptional in-service teachers (Cavanaugh & Corbett, 2014). The most successful field experience relationships require designers to reject the false dichotomy between theory and practice that can sometimes lead to disjointed and disorganized field experiences. This can be achieved when designers of field experience “bring together school and university- based teacher-educators and

practitioner and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance the learning of prospective teachers” (Zeichner, 2010, p. 486). These ideals are difficult to achieve for education technology field experiences; fewer exemplar cooperating teachers are available to assign to students, the hardware and applications employed in classrooms vary widely from school to school and from district to district, and many districts remain protective of allowing outsiders to use their hardware and networks. That said, the omnipresence of technology in the classroom spurs impetus for overcoming these barriers to design transformative technology-oriented field experiences for pre-service teachers.

This article will describe one effort to create a field experience partnership to help pre-service teachers learn the technology skills they will need in twenty-first century classrooms. This partnership was designed to address the special challenges facing field experience designers seeking to ready pre-service teachers with technology skills. The partnership brought together teacher-educators, K-12 education technology coaches, and classroom teachers in an effort to ready pre-service teachers to integrate technology into their practice. This article also includes the results of a study identifying the effects of the field experience on pre-service teachers’ Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge (TPACK) using an instrument developed by Schmidt et al. (2010). TPACK is a technology-integrated knowledge framework created by Mishra and Koehler (2006). The framework describes the forms of knowledge possessed by effective teachers including their understanding of various technologies and how to use them during instruction. Data gathered during this project indicated the field experience positively influenced the participating pre-service teachers’ TPACK, demonstrating the utility of purposeful field experience for helping students to employ classroom technologies.

The Technology-Oriented Field Experience

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, which establishes program requirements and competencies for teaching certification programs in the state, mandates that teacher education programs create three stages of pre-student teaching field experience. Stage one experiences offer pre-service teachers opportunities to observe teaching and school related functions like school board meetings and Parent-Teacher Organization functions. Stage two field experiences allow pre-service teachers to practice leading short instructional activities with students in classroom settings. Stage three experiences require pre-service teachers to teach whole lessons and design curriculum and assessment materials in preparation for their student teaching placements. Together, these experiences are meant to scaffold pre-service teachers' proficiencies in a way that readies them for student teaching.

The field experience associated with the present study was designated as a stage two field experience in the York College of Pennsylvania teacher education curriculum. It was designed by two liaisons each from York College of Pennsylvania and Central York School District. Both partnering institutions are located in South Central Pennsylvania, about 50 miles north of Baltimore, Maryland. This intermediary stage of field experience required participants to write and conduct an education technology-oriented interview with their assigned host teachers, observe a technology-integrated lesson taught by their host teachers, and prepare detailed reflections of both products. The field experience culminated with participants designing and carrying out their own technology-integrated teaching episode in their placement classrooms. The teaching episodes lasted between ten and twenty minutes and were taught on topics suggested by the host teachers. The students were evaluated by their host teachers on their professionalism and on their ability to use technology to engage with their students. Students

were required to complete these activities in a minimum of twenty hours. These hours were logged by the participants, verified by the host teachers, and submitted to the field services department at York College of Pennsylvania as part of the program procedures.

The two teacher-educators from York College of Pennsylvania served as the higher education liaisons during the partnership. They taught three sections of a three-credit education technology course in which all participants were enrolled while completing the field experience. The course is required for all students who major in education at York College of Pennsylvania. The content taught during the course centered on readying students to address the International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Teachers. These standards require teachers to use technology to “facilitate and inspire Student learning and creativity, design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments, model digital age work and learning, promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility, and engage in professional growth and leadership” (International Society for Technology in Education, 2014).

The course sessions were taught in a traditional classroom, utilizing a range of techniques including group activities, discussions, dialectics, and interactive presentations. In addition, participants joined in instruction modules that taught them to utilize essential classroom technology hardware and applications. Students employed their new technology proficiencies to design their own short classroom teaching role-plays and during the teaching episodes they designed and led during their field experiences. Figure 1 describes the hardware and applications taught during the course. Students were free to select technologies from this list to use during their role-plays and during their field experiences.

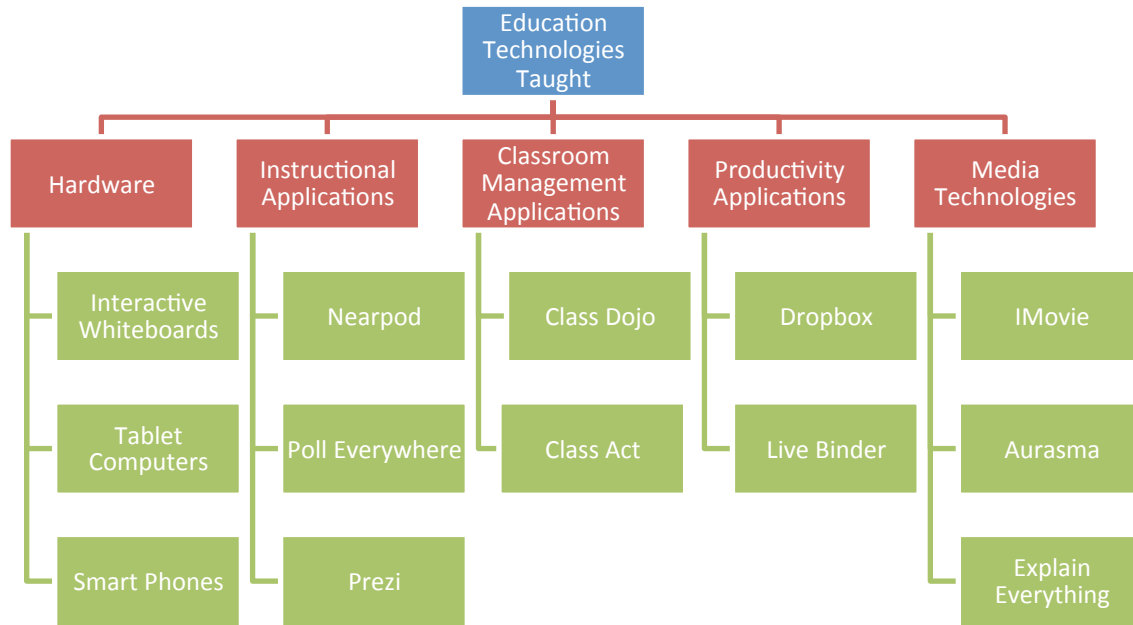


Figure 1. Technologies taught during the stand-alone education technology course.

Two education technology coaches from Central York School District, a large suburban school district located in South Central Pennsylvania, served as the K-12 partnership liaisons. They identified classroom teachers that were exceptionally proficient technology integrators among their staffs and secured their agreement to serve as hosts for the participants' field experience. In addition, they created a technology kick-off event during which they demonstrated the technologies utilized by teachers in the district, described the professional behaviors expected of participants, and registered the students as guests with building entrance privileges using the district's protocol. Seventeen participants received additional support from these liaisons during bi-weekly evening meetings during which participants engaged in structured reflection regarding their success and lessons learned during their field experience. The Central York School District liaisons also provided on-demand feedback and assistance for participants, as well as for cooperating teachers, to help address logistical concerns relating to building entrance and technology disruptions.

The relationship between the higher education teacher-educators and K-12 education technology coaches formed the heart of the field experience partnership. During four meetings held before the outset of the present study, the stakeholders created structures designed to bridge the traditional disconnect that exists between pre-service teachers' education coursework and their field experiences. For example, the expertise of the education technology coaches was called upon to help select the specific hardware elements and applications most prescient for today's classrooms. In addition, the education technology coaches' knowledge of the local school contexts were instrumental in selecting effective host teachers, helping to create procedures for ensuring students received security and administrative permission to enter the schools, and assisting in designing relevant assignments for the participants to complete. The teacher-educators designed the three-credit education technology course to help students develop proficiency with the agreed-upon education technologies and to prepare participants with the theoretical framework required to meet the International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Teachers. The resulting partnership fully leveraged the knowledge and skill sets of both the technology coaches and teacher-educators involved in the project. The result was a field experience partnership designed to ready pre-service teachers to be proficient technology integrators.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The field experience partnership under study was evaluated by determining changes in participants' TPACK following their completion of the field experience and the associated three-credit class. TPACK, created by Mishra and Koehler (2006) describes the forms of knowledge possessed by effective teachers. Their model builds on the teacher knowledge model created by Shulman (1986). Shulman described three categories of teacher knowledge: what teachers know

about their subject, their knowledge of teaching methods, and their knowledge of subject-specific teaching methods. Mishra and Koehler (2006) added technology knowledge, technological-pedagogical knowledge, and technological-content knowledge to Shulman's theory, creating a more comprehensive and descriptive model of the forms of knowledge possessed by effective twenty-first century teachers. TPACK has become a leading theory in teacher-education (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) and the construct has been used to determine the effectiveness of various iterations of education technology coursework and field experiences for pre-service teachers (Mouza et al., 2014; Ozgun-Koca, Meagher & Edwards, 2010; Tai & Crawford, 2014 & Schmidt et al., 2009). Figure 2 shows the forms of knowledge included in Mishra and Koehler's TPACK framework.

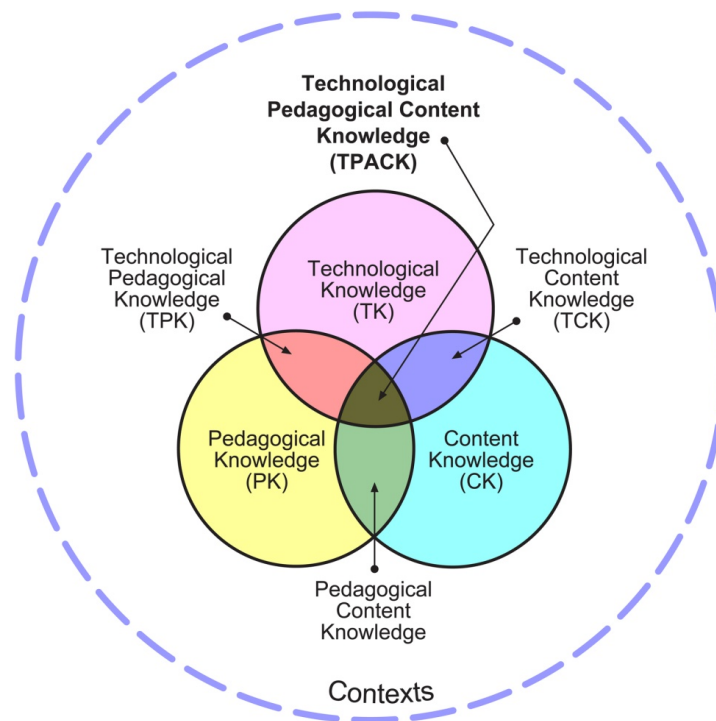


Figure 2. The TPACK model.

Procedures

The population for the present study included forty-seven students enrolled in teacher education programs at York College of Pennsylvania. Twenty-seven participants were enrolled in an early elementary and early elementary–special education dual major program, and twenty participants were enrolled in secondary and specialist programs. Forty participants were female and seven were male. The participants ranged from eighteen to twenty-six years in age. All of the participants were enrolled in one of three sections of the education technology course taught by the participating teacher-educators and required for all education majors at the host site. Seventeen of the participants were also enrolled in a one credit field experience course taught by the two K-12 technology coach partners. Thirty participants were not enrolled in the one credit course. Data were collected before and after participants' completion of the education technology and accompanying field experience hours. The first administration of the instrument occurred during the second meeting of each of the three sections of the education technology course in August, 2014. The second administration occurred on the final class meeting of each of the three sections of the education technology course in December, 2014.

The *Technological and Pedagogical Knowledge Survey* (TPKS) (Appendix A) was employed to record participants' pre- and post-course TPACK. The instrument was modified from a survey created by Schmidt et al. (2010) and was used with their permission. The reliability of the instrument was affirmed by Schmidt et al. (2010) by calculating the Cronbach's α coefficient for each of the four instrument subscales. These coefficients are reported in Table 1 and are each above the Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.7$ or higher threshold, indicating an acceptable level of internal reliability (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Table 1

Cronbach's α For Subscales of the Technological and Pedagogical Knowledge Survey

<u>Subscale</u>	<u>Cronbach's α</u>
Technology Knowledge (TK)	.86
Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)	.87
Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)	.89

Results

A paired sample *t-test* was employed to compare the pre- and post- treatment TPACK of the participants. The choice to utilize a paired sample *t-test* required the testing of assumptions about the pre-experience and post-experience Technological and Pedagogical Knowledge Survey (TPKS) samples. The arrangement of item responses on a Likert scale ensured that the data from the Pre- and Post-TPKS samples were interval. The descriptive data that identified the changes in participants TPACK among the three subscales and total scores as recorded by the pre- and post-experience TPKS surveys are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Pre- and Post-Experience TPKS Results

Measure	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Experience Technology Knowledge	47	3.29	0.80
Post-Experience Technology Knowledge	47	3.80	0.60
Pre-Experience Pedagogical Knowledge	47	3.60	0.51
Post-Experience Pedagogical Knowledge	47	4.01	0.45
Pre-Experience Technological Pedagogical Knowledge	47	3.75	0.45

Post-Experience Technological Pedagogical Knowledge	47	4.29	0.51
Pre-Experience Total Score	47	3.58	0.38
Post-Experience Total Score	47	4.08	0.37

The null-hypothesis for the paired-sample *t-test*, employed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between participants' pre- and post-experience total score on the TPKS, was that there was no difference between the mean scores for the Pre-TPKS and Post-TPKS samples. The Shapiro-Wilk Test was employed to determine the normalcy of the samples for this test. The *p* value was found to be 0.29 on the Pre-TPKS sample and 0.33 on the Post-TPKS sample on the Shapiro-Wilk Test. Each of these values was above the $p = 0.05$ threshold indicating the data for these samples were normal and parametric statistics were appropriate for these data.

The paired samples *t-test* indicated a *p* value of 0.01. This value is below the $p = 0.05$ threshold, indicating a rejection of the null hypothesis. The results of the paired-sample *t-test* demonstrated that the mean score for Post-TPKS samples was significantly higher than the mean score of the Pre-TPKS participants. Cohen's *d* model (1988) was employed to determine the effect size. By dividing the mean (0.5) scores by the standard deviation (0.38), *d* was calculated to be 1.32 which, according to Cohen's (1988) model, is a large effect. These results are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Paired-sample t-test comparison of the Pre- and Post-treatment TPKS scores

	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Pre- and Post-TPKS Scores	46	.50	0.38	9.01	.01

Discussion

The results of this analysis indicated strong growth in participants' TPACK following their participation in the field experience partnership. In addition to the positive changes indicated participants' overall scores on the TPKS, participants' mean scores were higher for each sub score on the TPKS following the field experience. Together, these data reflect positive changes' in participants' self-efficacy for employing educational technologies in classroom settings following their participation in the field experience partnership.

Though the analysis revealed a strong positive effect, several limitations in this study should be noted. First, the positive effects on participants TPACK were situation-specific. They may not be reproducible in other contexts. Second, this analysis can only reveal that the field experience program is correlated to advancement in participants' TPACK. Other factors, including students' other coursework or their participation in technology-oriented workshops, may have been responsible for a portion of the advancements indicated by this analysis. In addition, the TPKS instrument recorded participants' self-reflection of their own technology proficiencies. It did not measure their abilities to enact this knowledge by utilizing technologies in classroom settings. Finally, this analysis described changes in participants' TPACK relating to their experiences in the field with actual students as well as the knowledge and skills they learned during the associated three-credit course. The data collected were not organized in a way to determine the degree to which structures of the combined program contributed to the positive result.

The strong effects revealed during the analyses of these data indicate that this topic warrants further exploration. Three avenues show particular promise. First, adding a qualitative component to the quantitative survey might identify which elements of the field experience and

the associated three-credit course most contributed to the results. Second, the findings would be strengthened if data were collected regarding the degree to which participants' TPACK influenced their actual ability to utilize technology tools during their experience. Finally, re-distributing the survey to the initial population after two or more years might reveal the degree to which the participants retained their TPACK at the after they matriculated through their preparation programs.

Conclusion

Well-designed field experiences can have a profound impact on pre-service teachers' transition into becoming reflective, engaging, and highly effective practitioners (Wyss, Siebert & Dowling, 2012). This is particularly true during technology-oriented field experiences, which require robust collaboration between stake-holders at the K-12 and college settings, careful planning for how technologies are presented to students, and consistency between the ideas and techniques employed in class and in the field (Tondeur et al., 2012). The field experience program under study adhered to these principles. It was created by a team of educators including two K-12 instructional coaches and two pre-service teachers. This team worked together to ensure that the technologies and theories taught in class were the same as those used by cooperating teachers at the host site. In addition, this close partnership allowed for the selection of mentor teachers that were exemplars of classroom technology integration. These characteristics are aligned with the key themes of technology-oriented field experience identified by Tondeur et al. (2012).

The data collected describing the results of this project suggests the field experience helped pre-service teachers develop TPACK, an important indicator of their ability to integrate technology during instruction (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). These findings are consistent with the

work of Habowski & Mouza, (2014), Mouza et al., (2014), Tai & Crawford (2014), who also found positive effects of well-structured field experience on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The results of the present study add to the growing consensus that well-structured field experience, which features robust collaboration between K-12 and higher education stakeholders and matches pre-service teachers with exemplary technology integrators, is critical in readying pre-service teachers to utilize technology in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Technological and Pedagogical Knowledge Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
TK (Technology Knowledge)					
1. I know how to solve my own technical problems.					
2. I can learn technology easily.					
3. I keep up with important new technologies.					
4. I frequently play around the technology.					
5. I know about a lot of different technologies.					
6. I have the technical skills I need to use technology.					
PK (Pedagogical Knowledge)					
7. I know how to assess student performance in a classroom.					
8. I can adapt my teaching based-upon what students currently understand or do not understand.					
9. I can adapt my teaching style to different learners.					
10. I can assess student learning in multiple ways.					
11. I can use a wide range of teaching approaches in a classroom setting.					
12. I am familiar with common student understandings and misconceptions.					
13. I know how to organize and maintain classroom management.					
TPK (Technological Pedagogical Knowledge)					
14. I can choose technologies that enhance the teaching approaches for a lesson.					

15. I can choose technologies that enhance students' learning for a lesson.					
16. My teacher education program has caused me to think more deeply about how technology could influence the teaching approaches I use in my classroom.					
17. I am thinking critically about how to use technology in my classroom.					
18. I can adapt the use of the technologies that I am learning about to different teaching activities.					
19. I can select technologies to use in my classroom that enhance what I teach, how I teach and what students learn.					
20. I can use strategies that combine content, technologies and teaching approaches that I learned about in my coursework in my classroom.					
21. I can provide leadership in helping others to coordinate the use of content, technologies and teaching approaches at my school and/or district.					
22. I can choose technologies that enhance the content for a lesson.					

**Differences between Face-to-Face and On-Line Supervisors
of Interns in an On-Line MAT Program**

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Abstract

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) offers an online Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) certification degree. While all the courses are taken online, the program concludes with a 16-week school-based internship which includes university field supervisors formally observing and assessing the interns' teaching. While most university supervisors make the observations face-to-face, for some remote interns, observations are made at a distance via technology that includes web conferencing and video recording. The purpose of this study was to assess whether there were differences in observation reports and grading between supervisors who engage in face-to-face observations and supervisors who engage in technology-mediated observations. Observation data on interns over four semesters were examined. The compared data included final grades reported by the university supervisors as well as the final teaching pedagogy observation of the interns which includes categories for: teaching for learning; analysis, reflection and continuous learning; technology integration; leadership; global citizenship; and, content knowledge. For each of the categories a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted on data that compared the face-to-face observations and technology-mediated observations. It was concluded that there were no significant differences between the groups on the grading or on any of the observation categories.

Introduction

The looming teacher shortage in the United States in general, and in Maryland in particular, has been well documented in the past decade. The position of University of Maryland University College (UMUC) as a leader in distance education and adult learning made the university especially suited to help alleviate this critical shortage through the development of an online Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in December 2008. The convergence of Maryland's workforce need for new teachers and UMUC's experience in adult online education was an important consideration in the development of the program.

The MAT program was designed to provide career changers with a path towards secondary education certification in nine different fields and eight foreign language areas. Instruction is delivered through the use of an online learning management system (LMS), and additional technology tools, to develop teacher competencies. The UMUC MAT program was initially approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in 2008 and recertified in 2013. Though the program is primarily online, MAT teacher candidates/interns are required to participate in both field and clinical experiences throughout their experience in the MAT program. Each course requires participation in multiple and varied experiences. Teacher candidates participate in a minimum total of 100 days of field and clinical experiences combined. All experiences are directly linked to course specific assignments relevant to the experience. The culminating clinical experience is the student teaching internship, encompassing a total of 16 weeks, 80+ days, and a minimum of 6 hours per day is required in the actual classroom.

Rationale

Current research on teacher-candidate preparation supports the critical need for appropriate field and clinical applications of knowledge and skills, through supervision. Virtual supervision of pre-professionals has been in use for the previous 30 years, primarily in the

counseling and social work fields. Teacher education has only recently begun to move in the same direction. The need for better technology support, with instructional design that works with learning management systems and combined with use of VOIP and web conferencing tools, has been the foundation for virtual interactions in pre-service teacher development (Holstrom, Ruiz, & Weller, 2007). As in model-based instruction, the teacher-candidate has a cooperating/mentor teacher assigned him/her in the classroom at all times to guide and support development. Each student teacher continues to have a university supervisor assigned per teacher candidate. The university supervisor jointly shares in the responsibility with the cooperating teacher for the shaping of behavior. One rationale to reassess university supervision is that the amount of, time used to travel, discuss, observe, analyze, and discuss, is extensive for a supervisor responsible for candidates located at multiple schools. Use of supervision enhanced by virtual technologies should theoretically enable more time to observe, analyze and discuss and allows for greater opportunities for reflection on the part of the teacher candidate.

Supervision is inherent in the field of Teacher Education. Typically, the university supervisor seeks to provide support, encouragement, sharing of expertise in his/her area of instruction to develop the skills of the student teacher/ teacher candidate, and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the candidate. Discussion and analysis of formal observations of teaching effectiveness is inherent in the process. Supervision also includes meetings with both the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher to develop a community of practice that shares data to triangulate the outcome of the teacher candidates teaching practices (Sohet, 2011). The supervisory practice of support and encouragement may not only take place face to face, but can, and has, occurred through phone and online communication. Instead of having only the requisite three to six face to face meetings imposed around the formal observations, the use of

email and online resources, in conjunction with the phone, may enable immediate, supported and ongoing assistance and advice. The use of virtual technologies has long been a part of the communication aspect of student teaching supervision in the form of email, now, and phones currently and in the not too distant past. It is the act of observing and providing immediate and/or direct feedback following an observation while not being present in the classroom that is newer within the field. The National Education Association (NEA) has identified that there is a need for technology integration into the curriculum of teacher candidates in preparation for the 21st century teaching and learning (2011). It is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to provide teacher candidates the opportunity to work with technology integration for their professional development. The ability of the teacher candidate to participate in the use of these new technologies will better prepare him/her for future use of technology based classroom practices.

The application of virtual schooling as an addition to face-to-face schooling assignments should replicate and add to the cooperative attempt and the support of contemporary supervision models that need to be knowledgeable regarding the technological alignment of resources and within identification and use of current operating systems (Sevillano, 2009). It is the infrastructure of information and communication technology (ICT) that is necessary to support virtual supervision, including those in host sites, and thereby support the utilization of technology by prospective teachers. Engaging the supervisors in technology use and management provides for a deeper understanding and stronger support of the benefits and uses of technology enhancements for learning and teaching. Mason (2000) found that teacher candidates that employed technology tools in their as enhancements field experiences were more likely to continue to use technology in their teaching; they also had improved attitude regarding the use of

technology in the classroom. This adds to the support for the potential use of technology tools that can be accessed and embedded in instruction and settings. The added value in the use of virtual supervision assists in the development of inspired understanding and consultative nuances that can be utilized across and among all constituents, including the supervisors and the teacher candidates. A study conducted by Cano and Garcia (2013) attempted to determine the practices that were used in the use of ICT and the variables associated with supervisory function in virtual settings. They found that supervisors who were confident about the technologies that they were required to use were more likely to use the technologies more frequently; that males used ICT more frequently than females; and age appeared to be a factor in the use of technology tools or lack thereof. More specific training in the uses of ICT is needed for all. Schwartz-Bechet (2011) found that an initial teacher preparation program that infused technology (and provided models of technology use) produced teacher candidates that used technology in their student teaching placements and in their own classrooms after they graduated.

Supervision at a Distance

While the majority of teacher candidates enrolled in UMUC's MAT program are located in the state of Maryland, because of the online nature of the program, teacher candidates in the program can reside anywhere in the United States, and anywhere in the world. Between Fall 2012 and Spring 2014, the program placed 91 interns as student teachers in approved secondary schools for a 16-week full-time teaching internship as the culminating experience of the program. Of these, 23 internship placements were outside of Maryland. And of those, placements in the United States included Alexandria, VA; Camden, DE; Chantilly, VA; Fairfax, VA; Farmingdale, NJ; Honolulu, HI; Junction City, KS; Mandeville, LA; Newark, NJ; Rocky Mount, NC; Utica, MI; Virginia Beach, VA; and, Washington, DC. Placements of interns outside

of the United States included schools in Misawa, Japan; Okinawa, Japan; Rota, Spain; Sao Paolo, Brazil; and, Sasebo, Japan. The international placements occurred at U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools or at approved American schools.

In every case, the intern was matched up with a mentor teacher who provided day-to-day oversight during the 16-week internship as the intern gradually assumed the teaching responsibilities of the mentor’s teaching schedule. Also, additional supervision was provided by a university field supervisor, selected as an experienced educator to serve as an advisor and coach to the intern, and also to provide evaluations, through formal observations, of the interns’ progress. For out-of-state interns, this supervision could be provided one of two ways -- either via face-to-face visits by a local educator hired by the university to serve in this capacity; or, at a distance, using a technology-mediated approach. The technology-mediated approach to classroom observation and coaching typically could involve a range of technologies, including Skype, Google+, Facetime, and other web-conferencing technologies; and, video recordings (which included video recordings of the intern teaching, saved to DVD, and sent to the supervisor for evaluation.) As shown in Table 1 (below), between Fall 2012 and Spring 2014, of the 23 interns out-of-state, seven were observed teaching at a distance through a technology-mediated approach.

	In-State F2F Supervision	Out-of-State F2F Supervision	Technology-Mediated Distance Supervision	TOTAL
Fall 2012 Placements	15	5	1	21
Spring 2013 Placements	14	4	2	20
Fall 2013 Placements	22	6	2	30

Spring 2014	17	1	2	20
TOTALS	68	16	7	91

Table 1. Distribution of internship enrollment between face-to-face and technology-mediated supervision

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine differences in observation reports and grading between supervisors who engage in face-to-face observations and supervisors who engage in technology-mediated observations. The nature of UMUC’s online program is to have degree candidates participate in classes from anywhere in the world. In the case of the MAT program, it is critical to be confident that the measurement of teacher candidate performance is consistent. In the case of the internship, a key assessment is the observation of the intern teaching. Thus it is important to know that the observations made by university field supervisors are comparable, whether they are made face-to-face or made by technology-mediated observations.

The question of viability for technology-mediated at-a-distance observations of interns teaching in a K-12 setting is not unique to UMUC. In 2008, the University of North Carolina began offering an online graduate degree program and they explored the the issues of supervision at a distance (Hartshorne, Heafner & Petty, 2011). In their study, their goal was to determine if remote observation of teaching interns was viable. Using a relatively small number of interns, they wanted to gain insights into the preferences and perceptions of both the interns and the supervisors engaged in remote observations. Their conclusions were that the experiences for both interns and supervisors were similar between face-to-face and remote supervision.

Methodology

For the UMUC study, two sets of data were examined and compared -- final grades for the interns, as assigned by the university field supervisor; and, the final formal pedagogical observations of the interns by the university field supervisor.

Final Grades

In UMUC's MAT program, university field supervisors record two formal grades of the interns. The first is a mid-point grade which is not calculated into the intern's final grade and used strictly as a formative assessment for the intern. The second grade, assigned at the end of the internship, is the final summative grade assigned by the university field supervisor. The first test was to see if final grades assigned university field supervisors who observed their interns face to face differed with the final grades assigned by university field supervisors who made technology-mediated observations. Comparing final grades made good sense since it reflects not only the final performance grade, but also the end-point of the internship is where the university field supervisor would have the clearest overall vision of the intern as an emerging professional teacher.

Final grades of interns over four semesters from Fall 2012 through Spring 2014 were sorted into two groups: face-to-face supervised and technology-mediated supervised. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was appropriate to compare group differences.

Final Formal Pedagogical Observation

In the UMUC MAT program, university field supervisors are required to make three formal observations of the intern in the classroom over the 16-week internship. After each formal observation, the university field supervisor completes three observation forms: content knowledge evaluation; professional dispositions evaluation; and, teaching pedagogy evaluation.

The teaching pedagogy evaluation form consists of 20 items grouped into six observation areas: teaching for learning; analysis, reflection and continuous learning; technology integration; leadership; global citizenship; and, content knowledge.

Using the same groupings of university field supervisors -- face-to-face group and technology-mediated group -- the third and final teaching pedagogy evaluation form results were compared. As before, it is assumed that by the time of the final observation during the 16-week internship, the supervisor would be the most familiar with the both the intern and the teaching setting for the internship. The teaching pedagogy evaluation form would be consistently used as an evaluation tool on all interns. The content evaluation form would be specific to the intern's content area; e.g., English or Biology. While the professional dispositions evaluation form is also used consistently as an evaluation tool on all interns, the teaching pedagogy evaluation form focuses on specific teaching activities and thus would be better suited for comparing direct observations of the interns teaching, whether face-to-face observations or technology-mediated observations.

Similar to the methodology for analyzing final grades, using the forms completed by university field supervisors, the third teaching pedagogy observation forms of interns over four semesters from Fall 2012 through Spring 2014 were sorted into two groups: face-to-face supervised and technology-mediated supervised. Scores were grouped into six observation areas: teaching for learning; analysis, reflection and continuous learning; technology integration; leadership; global citizenship; and, content knowledge. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was appropriate to compare group differences for each of these six areas.

Results

Grades

In a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test comparing the final grades of the university field supervisors who made face-to-face observations compared with those who made technology-mediated observations, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups, at a 95% confidence level. Table 2 (below) shows the ANOVA table of the results.

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	61	5654	92.68852	18.95137		
Technology-mediated	6	563	93.83333	8.166667		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	7.159326	1	7.159326	0.395068	0.53185	3.98856
Within Groups	1177.915	65	18.12177			
Total	1185.075	66				

Table 2. ANOVA comparison of grades by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

Final Formal Pedagogical Observation

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were made comparing the university field supervisors who made face-to-face observations compared with those who made technology-mediated observation. An ANOVA test was performed comparing the two groups in each of the six observation areas represented on the teaching pedagogy evaluation form: teaching for learning; analysis, reflection and continuous learning; technology integration; leadership; global citizenship; and, content knowledge. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups, at a 95% confidence level, for any of the six areas. Tables 3 through 8 show the ANOVA table of results for each area.

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	66	297.98	4.514848	0.283952		
Technology-mediated	6	26.8	4.466667	0.246227		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Fcrit</i>
Between Groups	0.012768	1	0.012768	0.045397	0.831895	3.977779
Within Groups	19.68798	70	0.281257			
Total	19.70075	71				

Table 3. ANOVA comparison “teaching for learning” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	60	267.01	4.450167	0.394585		
Technology-mediated	4	19.25	4.8125	0.057292		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Fcrit</i>
Between Groups	0.49232	1	0.49232	1.301526	0.258322	3.995887
Within Groups	23.45237	62	0.378264			
Total	23.94469	63				

Table 4. ANOVA comparison of “analysis, reflection and continuous improvement” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors.

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	63	269.68	4.280635	0.71528		
Technology-mediated	4	16	4	0.666667		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	0.296216	1	0.296216	0.41543	0.521495	3.98856
Within Groups	46.34737	65	0.713037			
Total	46.64359	66				

Table 5. ANOVA comparison “technology integration” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	60	263.67	4.3945	0.510357		
Technology-mediated	4	20	5	0		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	1.374863	1	1.374863	2.830902	0.097497	3.995887
Within Groups	30.11109	62	0.485663			
Total	31.48595	63				

Table 6. ANOVA comparison “leadership” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	52	230.5	4.432692	0.519891		
Technology-mediated	5	21	4.2	0.7		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	0.24698	1	0.24698	0.463387	0.498901	4.016195
Within Groups	29.31442	55	0.53299			
Total	29.5614	56				

Table 7. ANOVA comparison “local, national, and global community” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
F2F	66	304	4.606061	0.303963		
Technology-mediated	6	28	4.666667	0.166667		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	0.020202	1	0.020202	0.068678	0.794041	3.977779
Within Groups	20.59091	70	0.294156			
Total	20.61111	71				

Table 8. ANOVA comparison “content knowledge” by face-to-face supervisors and technology-mediated supervisors

Conclusions

In online learning and distance education, the “no significant differences” standard is a common benchmark for the technology-mediated experience. It establishes that the online experience is at least comparable to the traditional face-to-face experience. In this case, the data appear to support that in the case of observing and evaluating interns teaching in the classroom,

there does not appear to be differences in how supervisors evaluate these interns, whether that observation be face-to-face or technology mediated. In this particular situation, the teacher candidates know that they will be evaluated virtually due to their circumstances, and the university supervisors who are hired to supervise them, understand that they will need to use ICT tools as well as part of supervision. This includes finding ICT tools that are effective for them in their school setting, and figuring out how to use the tools, without any formal training. While support was provided by the Department of Education at UMUC, 24-hour technology support related directly to the variety of tools that could be utilized was not an option. A further examination of ICT tools and the supervisor knowledge and use of various tools would provide a broader picture of the abilities of the supervisors to actively engage in evaluating the teacher candidates effectively. It would also help to assess the quality of the supervision. Based on the results, there is no discernable difference in the ability of the supervisors to evaluate the teacher candidates when in face-to-face or in virtual settings, but it is not known if the quality of the experience in terms of emotional and instructional support, technology issues, ability to successfully develop relationship with the triad of supervisor, teacher candidate and cooperating teacher, etc., is as beneficial as it is in a face-to-face setting. Investigating whether the use of technology for supervision increases the quality of pedagogical support for the teacher candidate, (while in alignment with the current standards based reforms,) may support understanding of how the use of ICT could be an active option in face-to-face programs as well as in those that necessitate its use.

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Preparing Mentors: Professional Development to Support Clinical Practice

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Introduction

It is hard to disagree that quality clinical experiences supported by effective mentors are essential to the development of prospective teachers. Likewise, most would concur that effective teacher preparation relies on mutually beneficial partnerships between preparation programs and P-12 schools. It is unsettling, though, to realize cooperating teachers (CTs), who play such an integral role in the clinical component of preparing teachers, are not always provided with the necessary training and support to guide their work with preservice teachers. CTs often lack opportunities to develop deep understanding about the difficulties associated with learning to teach, learn effective strategies for communicating and setting expectations, plan for the integration of a student teacher into their classroom, or acquire the necessary skills for collecting observational data to provide timely, constructive feedback.

While there are certainly examples within the field of teacher preparation, from both traditional and alternative pathways, where consistent mentor support is provided, CTs are not traditionally required to participate in any type of training to prepare them for this role and the significance of their role is often undervalued. There are a number of practical explanations as to why these dynamics exist. First, professional development (PD) targeting CTs is not a priority in school districts. District PD typically focuses on standards integration, curriculum development, and student assessment data; with all the current pressures on districts and schools, supporting CTs learning needs is just not on the radar. Oversight of student teaching, clinical placements, and the training of CTs are viewed as the primary responsibility of teacher preparation program

faculty and staff. Second, district leaders do not typically consider the long-term value of strategically investing resources towards the development of a cadre of trained mentors to support a process of preparing, identifying, and hiring future teachers. Consequently, the tremendous value of the cooperating teacher role is rarely fully realized. Third, CTs are often haphazardly selected, compensated little for their professional commitment, and routinely regarded as volunteers that are providing a “service.” Although there are examples like the Denver Teacher Residency (DTR) and teacher preparation programs at both St. Cloud State and William & Mary that have established criteria for selecting CTs, require mentors to participate in professional training, and provide fair compensation, this is not a widespread practice. Unfortunately, not enough value is being placed on the cooperating teacher role; yet, these individuals significantly impact the preservice teachers they mentor (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Zeichner, 2011).

Levin (2002) points out that while clinical experiences are essential to effective teacher preparation, they are perhaps the least intentional component of the process. Similarly, Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) posits: “Often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work” (p. 308). Researching the relationship between teacher preparation coursework and field experiences, Zeichner (2010) found that student teachers often lack essential support from their mentors and describes clinical experiences as commonly being “unguided and disconnected” (p. 91). Despite substantial evidence that training CTs positively impacts the development of teacher candidates, the practice is just not the norm.

The following discussion addresses three distinct, but interrelated dynamics highlighting

the need to more effectively prepare and support CTs. The first section provides a detailed review of research and education policies emphasizing why preparing CTs to be effective mentors is necessary. The second section describes professional development workshops currently being provided by a university-based teacher preparation program to prepare mentor teachers. The article concludes with a number of recommendations for recruiting, preparing, and supporting CT's in an effort to strengthen teacher candidates' clinical experiences.

The Argument for Preparing Cooperating Teachers

The literature on clinical experiences support two primary ideas related to preparing cooperating teachers: Professional development for CTs mentoring teacher candidates during their clinical experiences is critical to the preparation of effective educators; the education policies and agendas of various organizations involved with teacher preparation are drawing increased attention to how cooperating teacher are selected, trained, supported, and evaluated.

Significance of PD for Cooperating Teachers

There is clear consensus within the field of education that clinical experiences, supported by well- supported and effective CTs, are critical to the preparation of new teachers (AACTE, 2013; Clarke, et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2000; NCATE, 2010; NCTQ, 2011). Whether prospective teachers enroll in a traditional undergraduate or graduate preparation program, opt for a residency-based pathway, or seek one of the numerous alternative routes to licensure, it is essential they be paired with mentors who possess a deep understanding of how to support the cognitive, emotional, and pedagogical growth of preservice teachers. This preparation is important as student teachers tend to view their practicum experience as the most important component of the preparation process and consider their cooperating teacher as essential to their success (Clarke, et al., 2014; Kirk, Mcdonald, & O'Sullivan, 2006; Weiss & Weiss, 2001). Yet,

it is widely acknowledged that current practices for preparing CTs to be effective mentors is inadequate and fails to fully address their various roles (Clarke, et al., 2014; Knowles & Cole, 1996).

This lack of preparation is critical to consider, especially when contextualized with research documenting CTs who participate in training are more likely than their untrained counterparts to provide evaluative rather judgmental feedback, interact more when planning lessons and developing assessments, create a reflective environment to reflect on teaching practices, and utilize the clinical supervision model (Bryant & Currin, 1995; Kent, 2001; Killian & McIntyre, 1987; Koster, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 1998). Similarly, while Gareis and Grant (2012) found training CTs is associated with stronger student teacher performance as well as more effective assessment and feedback practices by CTs, research from the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) indicates positive effects of higher levels of training among CTs (Murray, 2010). It is also important to note that untrained CTs may provide passing grades and/or ratings to student teachers that do not meet university and/or school expectations (Clark 2001). Sykes, Bird, and Kennedy's work (2011) draws attention to a major problem with how CTs are typically identified:

If we speak of the need for 'effective' or 'capable' teachers to serve as mentors, such phrasing misses the complications that that teacher might be effective in teaching their students yet not possess skills and dispositions to be effective mentors for novice (p. 475).

What is needed to be an effective cooperating teacher is learned, develops over time, and requires both participation in training and access to resources that support mentoring practices. Weiss and Weiss (2001) contend there is wide acceptance to the idea that "cooperating teachers

are the most powerful influence on the quality of student teaching experience and often shape what student teachers learn by the way they mentor” (p.134). If we are to accept this assertion, along with the multitude of other evidence emphasizing the significance of clinical mentors, it becomes clear that CTs need to be explicitly, consistently, and thoughtfully prepared to take on this role.

Policy Implications

A number of prominent national organizations as well as various education policies across the country draw attention to issues related to the quality of CTs, how these individuals are trained, and the type of training they receive to serve in this role.

AACTE’s 2013 report on teacher preparation, which stresses teaching as a “clinical practice profession,” outlines the critical components of effective teacher preparation (AACTE, 2013, p. 2). These components include strong school-based clinical educators that are “selected for their deep expertise,” “trained as mentors” and are highly-skilled in supporting the learning of adults” (p. 5). Highlighting the success of teacher preparation programs at Arizona State, Stanford, and St. Cloud State, AACTE recommends the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships between school districts and preparation programs to allow for the creation of effective and supportive clinical experiences. NCATE’s 2010 Report on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning recommended 10 design principles for clinically based teacher preparation. These principles specifically include the need for clinical educators to be rigorously selected and prepared to become skilled, effective mentors (NCTE, 2010).

Publishing results from a study of student teaching in the United States, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), which receives substantial funding from the likes of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Walton family, and the Teaching Commission, emphasized five

“critical standards” that were used to examine the clinical components of teacher preparation programs included in their review. Standards three and four specifically address the quality, preparation, and capacity of CTs (NCTQ, 2011). Primary findings include: a shortage of well-prepared and trained CTs; institutions lacked clear and consistent criteria for identifying and selecting mentors; and compensation for serving in this role is unfairly inconsistent. Additionally, NCTQ argues that few state departments of education have established requirements for cooperating teacher selection based on effectiveness (NCTQ, 2013). Calling into question the “accuracy” of 2011 NCTQ’s report, Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) directly responded with a published letter that reaffirmed its longstanding Standards for Field Experiences in Teacher Education, which have been in existence for over a decade. ATE’s response emphasized both the importance of and its commitment to training, supporting, and advocating for CTs to ensure they are prepared to serve as effective mentors (ATE, 2011). Regardless of the clear rift between these two organizations, one thing is clear: Adequate preparation for CTs is an issue that needs more attention, more resources, and more action.

In addition to efforts by these highly influential national organizations to draw attention to the significance and preparation of CTs, there is action within state legislatures to examine and regulate these expectations as well. For example, in 2011 BILL 12-1135, which more clearly defines requirements for CTs, was introduced in Colorado’s House of Representative Education Committee. This legislation includes provisions establishing that CTs must have completed an approved clinical mentor training program that addresses how to mentor adults, skills in observation, providing feedback, holding professional conversations, and working collaboratively (Concerning Teachers - Field Work Act of 2011). Although, the bill did not move forward, it does represent the recent increase in attention on the preparation and quality of CTs.

In other states, successful efforts have been made to institutionalize clear regulations and expectations for CTs.

In Florida, for instance, the Education Department's clinical educator training is required for all those supervising or directing teacher candidates during field experience courses or practicum. It is also required of instructors in teacher preparation programs who instruct or supervise field experience courses or internships (Florida Department of Education, 2014). Likewise, a number of years ago, the General Assembly of Virginia passed legislation establishing the role of a "clinical faculty member", which became codified as a "licensed public or private school teacher" who has been "specially trained" (Code of Virginia, § 22.1-290.1, ¶ 2 and 5) to supervise and evaluate student teachers.

In 2000, the Virginia Department of Education (2000) published Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers to provide more guidance on how to create a larger pool of well-qualified clinical faculty members. While a number of states have requirements that CTs have mentoring skill and/or participate in mentoring training, institutional compliance with selected state regulations is inconsistent (NCTQ, 2011) While many people, including the authors of this paper, have significant reservations about the methodologies employed by NCTQ to conduct reviews of teacher preparation programs, when their assertions about how CTs are selected, prepared, and evaluated are contextualized with large body of research on effective clinical practice, a strong argument can be made about the critical need to address these issues in a meaningful and substantive way.

Three Professional Development Approaches

In direct response to both the body of research highlighting the critical need to prepare CTs to be effective mentors as well as the various expectations stemming from state and national

policies, three different PD workshops were developed to support mentor teachers. Although the workshops are structured differently, all participants are provided with a practice-oriented understanding of effective mentoring skills, co-teaching strategies, and the expectations and structure defining the university's teacher licensure program. A brief, but detailed description of each workshop provides context about its purpose and importance.

Workshop One

The first workshop at the university to specifically focus on preparing CTs was established in June 2011 and has taken place annually. Each summer, 25-30 area teachers, ranging from elementary through high school, meet on the university's campus for a two-day workshop focusing on effective mentoring of preservice teachers. The workshop, designed as an intensive, interactive, practice-oriented training, is open to CTs currently working with the School of Education's licensure programs as well as those educators interested in taking on this role. Participants are provided meals, a modest stipend, and resources to inform and support mentoring practices.

The workshop begins with an in-depth examination of the characteristics essential to effective mentoring. These research-supported traits, which serve as organizing principles for the workshop and underscore the critical importance of the cooperating teacher role, include establishing clear lines of communication, negotiating expectations, being sensitive to the needs of beginning teachers, understanding of diverse learning styles, modeling instruction, developing trusting relationships, and creating consistent opportunities for co-planning and reflection (Johnson, 2008; Rowley, 2009). This introductory session is the first step in providing participants with a concrete understanding about the responsibilities of this role as well as the many ways cooperating teachers actively participate in teacher preparation (Clarke, et al., 2014;

Leatham & Peterson, 2010). Other workshop topics include the clinical supervision model, co-teaching, lesson study, effective conferencing, licensure program expectations and structure, and methods for observing classroom practice, collecting data, and communicating formative and summative feedback (Johnson, 2008; McMahon & Hines, 2008; Rowley, 2009). For many participants, this workshop is their first exposure to many of the ideas concepts, and strategies essential in developing successful mentor/mentee relationships.

The workshop's co-teaching component involves examining resources and practices established by faculty from the St. Cloud State University School of Education, which received a Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership Grant in 2003 to develop an Academy for Co-Teaching and Collaboration. In addition to learning co-teaching strategies, discussing data on its instructional effectiveness, and observing implementation through video case analysis, participants spend time collaborating with other teachers to develop detailed plans for incorporating co-teaching strategies into their classroom with a student teacher (St. Cloud State University, 2011). This activity provides concrete approaches for implementation and fosters discussion among participants about ways to shift their instructional practices to successfully support a student teacher. Additionally, because the university's licensure program has officially adopted co-teaching as a requirement for the student teaching process, this learning is necessary for any teacher taking on the cooperating teacher role.

Another integral element of the workshop is a panel presentation spotlighting recent student teachers and CTs, university supervisors, licensure program faculty, and administrative leaders from partner K-12 schools. This forum provides participants with insights about relevant issues like the challenges of mentoring, co-teaching implementation, developing professional relationships, and how to engage in difficult conversations with student teachers. Additionally,

the panelists spend time in small groups with workshop participants discussing university's teacher preparation program and its expectations for student teachers and clinical placements. This workshop provides a solid foundation in effective mentoring for educators interested in becoming CTs as well as those already serving in this role. The significance of this professional development should not be underestimated as its presence created a broader awareness among faculty and university leadership about the critical need to allocate more resources to support cooperating teachers, directly influenced the establishment of the two other effective mentoring workshops (will be subsequently discussed), and served as the impetus for integrating co-teaching practices into the student teaching process.

Workshop Two

Faculty members from the math department involved with teacher preparation developed and currently facilitate the second professional development workshop. This workshop specifically targets secondary math teachers who have experience as a cooperating teacher as well as those educators interested in this role. Before laying out important elements of the workshop, it is useful to provide a brief background as to why it was developed.

In the past, math CTs have not had meaningful opportunities to develop understanding of the principles shaping how teacher candidates are being prepared. Additionally, CTs have been inconsistent semester to semester, and the majority of these individuals have never been provided any formal training to support their work with pre-service teachers. Consequently, math student teachers frequently have placements that are misaligned with the math program's curricular goals, faculty's expertise, and what candidates are learning. This phenomenon is well documented within the program as both teacher candidates and math education faculty have described clinical experience as disconnected from research on effective teaching and best

practices as well as university coursework. Responding to these programmatic dynamics, mathematics faculty established a full-day mentoring workshop as a way to better prepare CTs. This group of trained mentors will serve as a cadre of potential CTs in future semesters.

Similar to the structure of the other workshops, participants spend time discussing strategies for effective mentoring and co-teaching. However, one different component of this training is its specific focus on lesson study. Lesson study is an instructional practice used to systematically examine teaching with the primary goal of becoming a more effective, reflective practitioner (see Fernandez, M., 2010; Lewis, C., Perry, R., & Hurd, J., 2009; Parks, 2008; McMahon, M.T. & Hines, E., 2008). This practice, which centers on teachers collaborating to select goals and research questions to guide the study of lessons, involves small groups of educators co-planning, teaching, observing, and reflecting on instruction. Lesson study is a central component within instructional methods courses required of aspiring math teachers. While math education faculty spend time in middle and high schools helping to facilitate and support the lesson study with student teachers and mentors, this intentional preparation will help to ensure cooperating teachers are more comfortable with the process.

It is also important to emphasize that considerable time is spent addressing best practices and emerging trends in math education. For example, workshop participants engage in activities to better understand the standards of mathematical practice embedded within the Common Core Standards (CCSSI, 2010) as well as the eight research-based teaching practices established by the National Council for Teaching Mathematics (NCTM, 2014). Additionally, this past summer, participants had the opportunity to analyze samples from the PARCC exam being given for the first time in spring 2015. The decision to embed this close examination of curricular standards and expectations into the workshop structure was deliberate. Ultimately, the goal is to create

stronger connections between university coursework and the internal and external expectations shaping schools where teacher candidates are placed. This workshop has the long term potential to not only improve and strengthen math clinical placements, but it is also a model for other licensure programs wanting to develop programmatic structures to more effectively support CTs.

Workshop Three

The third professional development workshop is facilitated through the School of Education's Office of Clinical Experiences. This PD only targets CTs and their assigned teacher candidates in the weeks leading up to student teaching. The three-hour workshop, offered multiple times prior to fall and spring semesters, has three primary goals.

First, the workshop provides a setting for CTs and student teachers to begin forming a professional relationship. The introductory component of the workshop focuses on two key areas of development: communicating instructional strengths and challenges and establishing short- and long-term goals. During the workshop, CTs and student teachers collaborate to develop an action plan to support their work during the 16-week practicum. This plan includes, for example, area of instruction and assessment in which the student teacher believes he or she can immediately contribute as well other dynamics in which a slower immersion and observation will be beneficial. Similarly, the CT identifies immediate opportunities for student teacher involvement, such as beginning of class routines, small group work, and facilitating class discussion. This initial part of the workshop, which is usually the first time CTs and student teachers have interacted, supports pairs in getting to know one another, developing common goals, discussing expectations, and setting into motion a professional relationship.

The second part of the workshop provides CTs and student teachers with a detailed introduction to effective mentoring strategies and what it means to be a high-performance mentor

(Johnson, 2008; Rowley, 2009). Pairs discuss their understanding of the strategies as well as negotiate what these approaches can look like in practice and how best to hold one another accountable for making them central to the student teaching experience. For example, one quality of a high-performance mentor teacher is serving as an instructional coach (Rowley, 2009). Putting this strategy into practice can be challenging if details like time to co-plan, a process for observing instruction and discussing feedback, and solo teaching opportunities are not clearly laid out. This form of strategic planning is often overlooked; its omission, unfortunately, tends to result in misunderstanding, misaligned goals and priorities, and a dysfunctional and sometimes contentious relationship.

The remaining part of the workshop is spent introducing participants to the purpose of co-teaching, its well-documented instructional value, and seven research-based teaching strategies (St. Cloud State University, 2011). Participants also have an opportunity to watch video footage of co-teaching approaches being implemented. This exposure provides a strong foundation for pairs as they review curriculum to identify how co-teaching strategies can be practically integrated. Although student teachers still have numerous opportunities to solo teach, co-teaching is a required part of the student teaching process. Based on feedback from administrators and teachers in partner districts, a decision was made in spring 2014 to move to co-teaching as a way to mitigate growing concerns around teacher evaluations, state mandated assessments, and the litany of pressures schools are dealing with.

While the workshop is not currently mandatory, since its establishment in summer 2014, over 80% of CTs and their students have participated. There is, however, agreement among School of Education leadership team that this preparation is critically important and needs to be required. With the various demands being placed on teachers combined with traditionally low

compensation and hectic schedules at the beginning of both fall and spring semester, requiring CTs to attend to mentor a student teacher is a scenario that must be navigated with care. Nonetheless, the workshop's value cannot be understated, especially when considered within the broader policy landscape and body of literature highlighting its relevance and impact.

Recommendations for Action

This article considers the critical importance of providing CTs with the necessary preparation to serve as effective mentors as well as various approaches being implemented within a university-based teacher preparation program to address this need. Drawing on both the literature framing this article and the authors' experience with facilitating PD for CTs, a number of practical recommendations are offered. These recommendations have direct relevance for district leaders, K-12 school personnel, and teacher preparation faculty and staff wanting to more effectively support CTs and strengthen teacher candidates' clinical experiences.

Strong clinical partnerships: The most effective strategy for recruiting, preparing, and supporting effective CTs is to establish mutually beneficial partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts (AACTE, 2013; NCATE, 2010). These mutually beneficial relationships provide a number of clear advantages for improving clinical practice.

First, strong partnerships help create consistency in the process for placing teacher candidates in clinical placements and allows for the establishment of norms and clear procedures to guide this process. Through collaboration, CTs, school leaders, and university faculty all become authentic stakeholders and can collaborate to develop consensus about the roles, responsibilities, and expectations defining clinical components. Second, strong clinical partnerships create opportunities for stakeholders to discuss how to best prepare and support CTs; this dynamic is essential to ensure partnerships are preparing effective teachers. Lastly, it is

important for stakeholders to identify desired outcomes to ensure the partnership is mutually beneficial. For example, will university faculty provide PD to K-12 teachers in partner schools? Is a goal of the partnership to provide schools and districts with teachers in high-need content areas? How might CTs get opportunities to work with preservice teachers in a university setting so that there is more consistency between coursework and clinical placements? Outcomes need to be reciprocal, benefit all parties involved, and reflect a commitment to a “shared responsibility for teacher learning and for improved student achievement” (Levine, 2010). Putting these ideas into practice not only enhances the relationship between K-12 schools and university-based preparation programs, but it will also help ensure clinical mentors are invested in preservice teacher education and are committed to helping the partnership succeed and persist.

Cooperating teacher: One of the key elements of effective clinical preparation is the process of pairing teacher candidates with mentors. To do this strategically, two elements deserve careful consideration. First, criteria for the selection of CTs should be clearly established. This criterion could potentially include: years of experience; participation in mentoring training; holding a valid teaching license; recommendation from school leaders; expressed interest and commitment; teaching evaluations; content and pedagogical expertise; and/or a demonstrated understanding of adult learning, stages of teacher development, and professional standards of teacher competency. Selection criteria should serve to professionalize the role and attract educators because it is a highly-respected leadership opportunity, recognized as PD, and valued by both school and district leaders. Second, as part of the pairing process, mentors and their potential student teachers need to have an opportunity to meet with one another to gauge whether pairings will likely be suitable matches. A number of preparation pathways are already doing this work including the Denver Teaching Residency, which brings

together student teachers and mentors to participate in a matching event that supports the pairing process. Advocating a similar position about the importance of a thoughtful, systematic pairing approach, Levine (2010) argues for a:

“MATCH process, similar to that used in graduate medical education, should be developed for the mentored internship experience. Prospective teachers should be able to identify districts in which they would like to do their internship and apply to those districts. Districts in turn should be able to rank their preferences for intern placements” (p.15).

Both teacher preparation programs and school district need to work more closely so that assigning teacher candidates to mentors based primarily on factors such as willingness and availability become a thing of the past. The cooperating teacher selection process needs to reflect the high expectations, professionalism, and thoughtful coordination it rightfully deserves.

Effective preparation of CTs: One strategy to immediately improve the quality of clinical placements is to provide PD to CTs. In the best case scenario, this preparation will be consistent, draw on effective mentoring research, and provide CTs with the practical skills, resources, and guidance needed to support the instructional and PD of preservice teachers. Effective PD should address adult learning, co-teaching, effective observation instruments, formative data collection, conferencing techniques, and how to negotiate expectations, develop productive relationships, and deal with challenging situations. Strong partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts provide an ideal context for this type of PD.

Professional incentives for CTs: While there is widespread consensus about the critical importance of CTs, as it currently stands within the field, these individuals are compensated little for their participation in this critical role (Clarke, et al., 2014). As part of a partnership agreement

between school districts, K-12 schools, and teacher preparation programs, there are a number of ways incentives can be offered to CTs to ensure they are valued for their commitment to take on this role.

First, cooperating teacher should not only receive re-certification credits, but financial incentives need to be seriously considered. The reality of the situation demands a tremendous amount of additional work and CTs are expected to dedicate significant time to support teacher candidates. To make financial incentives both palatable and strategic, district leaders need to start conceptualizing student teaching as a long-term investment in human capital rather than an isolated, short-term experience. In short, districts should be hiring more of the candidates completing student teaching in their schools.

Second, university programs should offer CTs the opportunity to take one or two courses that are related to their teaching at no cost. This would enable teachers to pursue PD within their content area, for example, and/or begin pursuing introductory courses towards a Master's degree. Third, university-based preparation programs could create opportunities for CTs to co-teach instructional methods courses or serve as adjunct professors. This would facilitate more interaction between CTs and teacher candidates, provide opportunities to create a stronger bridge between what preservice teachers are learning in class and the classroom, and strengthen the relationship between preparation programs and K-12 schools.

Finally, school districts should develop way to professionalize the cooperating teacher role. These strategies could include providing course release time for those mentoring preservice teachers, establishing the cooperating teacher role as part of a school's staffing structure, or developing a coaching endorsement that results in a salary increase. In the end, school districts, especially those with high teacher turnover, should make it a goal to allocate resources to

establishing and supporting a cadre of talented CTs that can help to effectively prepare future hires. To make this happen, though, the cooperating teacher role needs to become more professionalized, incentivized, and valued.

More than a decade ago, Clarke (2001) reported that even though CTs play a major role in preparing new teachers, the various ways in which CTs are prepared and supported areas of research and practice that deserves critical attention. Additionally, recent policies at both state and national levels, make one thing abundantly clear: school districts and teacher preparation programs must start working more collaboratively, more strategically, and with shared purpose in order to ensure CTs are adequately prepared for their role and have access to needed support and resources to effectively mentor teacher candidates. In addition to advocating for more professional development, the authors argue the CT role needs to be more valued within school districts and considered one of the most respected positions for which a practicing teacher is selected.

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“Presence”:

The Rapid Formation of a Strong Teacher Identity

During the Student Teaching Experience

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Abstract

This article illuminates teacher identity formation during the student teaching process, identifying missed opportunities to form a strong teacher identity early on that result in a less effective and more difficult experience for prospective teachers. The author suggests that the demonstration of “presence” can improve the student teaching experience.

Introduction

For prospective teachers, student teaching is an understandably challenging and transformative time that facilitates the goal of transitioning from student to teacher. At the core of the student teaching process is the formation of a prospective teacher's future teacher identity. For the student teaching process to be as effective as possible for both the students and the prospective teacher, it is crucial that student teachers take advantage of opportunities early in their experience for the active formation of a strong teacher identity - through the demonstration of what the author refers to as "presence." Not only does a correct demonstration of "presence" address common student teaching concerns regarding classroom management (Stoughton, 2007), the analysis of this process is meant to increase our understanding of teacher identity to enhance teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This article first discusses a theoretical background for teacher identity formation during the student teaching process before moving on to describe how student teachers can take early opportunities to demonstrate their "presence" as confident and capable classroom teachers.

Teacher Identity

At the core of learning to teach is the formation of a "teacher" identity (Sachs, 2005; Vetter, Meacham, & Schieble, 2013), a process foundational to the student teaching experience. Before the student teaching experience, prospective teachers may see the teacher identity in very simple terms (i.e. one that has a teaching degree and is employed instructing students) owing to common societal messages suggesting that attending higher education is about earning credentials and finding a job. Therefore, teacher education programs play an essential role both in fostering an awareness of the complexity of teacher identity formation and in preparing new teachers for the challenges of developing strong teacher identities within their early formative

teaching experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Vetter, et al., 2013). Though it can be hard to specifically define *teacher identity*, within this context the term refers to a belief about the self that includes both an agency and responsibility for advancing ideas, reaching goals, and the fostering of transformative experiences for one's students (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A more nuanced understanding of what it means to be identified as a teacher is a necessary requisite for successful teaching at any level.

In the field of education, the formation of a teacher identity presents a unique challenge. For many professions it is easy to separate one's personal identity from professional identity. For teachers though, their teacher identity is a combination of personal and professional aspects of identity, including both a personal view of self tied to morals and ethics as well as a professional view of what kind of teacher one will be (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Indeed, the profession of teaching involves such a high level of personal involvement that it is impossible to separate the personal from the professional identity (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006). For prospective teachers, gaining awareness of this unique duality has the potential to begin a process through which they may broaden their view of the teacher identity.

Unfortunately, for eager teachers-to-be, student teaching is the point at which one's identity often becomes the most confusing. To be sure, thoughts about one's identity formation often do not gain high priority – though they should – as student teachers face what can seem like an insurmountable flood of new information, systemic requirements, a need to fit in and pressures to perform for multiple audiences. As a result student teachers often adopt multiple identity-roles. Student teachers are simultaneously “students” to their university supervisors, “apprentices” to their cooperating teachers, and “someone new” to their students. Within the first few days of the experience, many student teachers get off to an ineffective start by giving mixed

signals that mark them – to students – as “another student,” a “friend,” an “observer,” or a host of other identities that do not include “teacher.” Without a doubt even the term “student-teacher,” used throughout both this article and the vast majority of literature on teacher education, communicates a mixed identity to all who encounter the term. Couple this multiple-identity problem with the incomplete or idiosyncratic understandings student teachers often have of the classroom (Emmer & Stough, 2001) and it is no surprise that many student teachers struggle to be effective. While there certainly are instances of student teachers naturally embracing or being encouraged by mentors to embrace a strong teacher identity early in the process, for student teachers that struggle to establish themselves, missing this key process is a likely culprit. For teacher educators, the goal should be to better assist struggling student teachers to become more effective teachers throughout the student teaching process by helping them to more quickly negotiate and project strong teacher identities that resonate immediately with their students.

Shaped by Interaction

Teaching is an inherently social action and as such the “teacher” identity is not created in a vacuum, but rather through interaction between teachers and students. Student teachers have often already developed a tentative view of their future teacher identity, yet they rarely have given enough thought to the ways in which the contexts in which they teach and the diversity of those they teach will question, influence and alter these identities during the student teaching experience (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Stoughton, 2007). The result is often a challenging beginning for student teachers that may desire to assert themselves unilaterally as classroom teachers but fail to account for the ways in which their teacher identity is formed through their interactions with others – particularly their students.

Though surely many touch on the subject, teacher educators need to expand the ways in which they address teacher identity formation with future teachers within traditional university classrooms, early field experiences and specifically within student teaching experiences. As Stoughton (2007, p. 1037) explains, “there is a need to continue to confront their unanswered questions and issues of ambivalence as well as support and further develop the beliefs that they hold firmly.” Prospective teachers need to better understand that identity is not just knowledge of one’s self or how one imposes themselves on others, but rather how that self fits into outside contexts and how one’s self is recognized and positioned by others (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Hilton, 2009; Vetter, et al., 2013; Wiggins, 2011). Learning to teach and therefore be a teacher involves a challenging process of identity construction within multiple systems that often overlap and conflict (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Smagorinsky, et al., 2004), a reality for which future teachers need more preparation. During student teaching, prospective teachers must be ready to negotiate positions of power with cooperating teachers, university supervisors, within the school environment, and most importantly with students – a process that often includes compromises that will challenge new teacher’s fundamental beliefs about who they are as teachers (Vetter, et al., 2013). Appropriate preparation that accounts for the social-interactive construction of the teacher identity not only makes student teachers more aware of the identity formation process, it enables these new teachers to begin to create strong teacher identities early in their experiences that allow them to be more effective teachers throughout their student teaching placements.

Competing Worlds

For prospective teachers who wish to form a strong teacher identity early in their student teaching process, perhaps one of the largest hurdles they face is what may be analogous to an

existence in two worlds. In one world, the university school of education teaches student teachers to maintain progressive educational goals, engage in widely-varied pedagogical practices, and to passively observe and then quickly deduce the often-vague standards/expectations of professors to which one adapts in order to earn high grades (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004; Stoughton, 2007). In the other world of the classroom setting, prospective teachers are often faced with more traditional educational goals, a smaller selection of accepted pedagogical practices, and the need to appear as an active and effective teacher in the eyes of both a constantly present “expert” teacher and a rotating audience of students (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004; Stoughton, 2007). As a result of the persistent presence of the cooperating teacher and immersion within the school setting, during student teaching most prospective teachers will find it more pragmatic to embrace the common language and standards of behavior of the classroom setting (Norris, 2003; Smagorinsky, et al., 2004). However, this choice leaves student teachers grasping to determine how to be an effective teacher as they struggle to adapt their fledgling teacher identities to multiple competing education discourses existing between the university and primary/secondary classrooms (Stoughton, 2007; Vetter, et al., 2013). For university supervisors it is important to remain aware of and address this divide. By acknowledging to the student teacher and cooperating teacher that such a divide exists, it becomes possible for all parties involved to work together to determine the best path forward that allows the student teacher to satisfy both university and classroom requirements to the betterment of their students.

A consequence of the need to rapidly shift one’s notion of teacher identity to match the classroom setting is that often student teachers will spend the beginning of their experience focusing on the identity forming interactions they have with their cooperating teachers, rather than their students who actually hold the key to their success. Seeing the classroom teacher as the

most knowledgeable authority present for educational practices (Stoughton, 2007), student teachers tend to spend the crucial early identity formation process passively observing their cooperating teachers. Indeed, many cooperating teachers are often looking for mimetic approaches to teaching from their student teachers, and see early passive observation as a key part of this process (Smagorinsky, et al., 2004). At the university, passive observation may be a survival skill in which students spend the early period of a class trying to determine the various preferences and quirks of their professors in order to establish a path to the highest course grade. However, when this practice is translated into a focus on passive observation of the cooperating teacher, this causes student teachers to miss important early opportunities to establish a strong teacher identity through more active, instructional interactions with students. Student teachers who miss these early opportunities for interaction establish weak and confused teacher identities by sending early signals that they are just another student who is there to learn from the teacher, rather than one who is there to teach.

“Presence”

Instead of a passive beginning, the goal for the student teacher should be to develop “presence” – a term used here to signify a display of characteristics, behaviors and interactions with students that facilitates a rapid social acquisition of a strong teacher identity. It is important from the very beginning that students in the classroom feel as though the student teacher’s “presence” is that of another teacher in their classroom – thus creating a strong teacher identity that results in a more effective teaching-learning experience. In the first two to three weeks of student teaching, before a prospective teacher begins to teach their own lessons, it is crucial that they demonstrate “presence” with their students if they are going to craft the strong teacher identity they need to be most effective within the student teaching setting.

Establishing presence rightly begins before the student teacher enters the classroom setting. Before entering the room, strong teachers dress as a professional. People judge others by their appearance and dressing as a professional educator helps students to correctly identify the new person in their classroom as a teacher (Wong & Wong, 2009). While surely all schools of education encourage their prospective teachers to dress professionally, it is less likely and therefore more useful to take the time to explain to future teachers how professional dress can mark them as classroom teachers to their students. It is often the case that veteran teachers may have allowed their professional dress to lessen to some degree over time as they have established strong teacher identities in other ways. By communicating to student teachers that their professional appearance marks them as a teacher in an environment where they are otherwise strangers, the student teacher may be less inclined to mirror a less professionally dressed appearance that may be common in the school setting. As such, professional attire is an important demonstration of “presence” by assuring that student teachers are immediately recognizable as teachers.

Additionally, effective teachers know how to regulate their emotions and see this skill as part of their teaching identity (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009). A sign of a strong teacher is the use and emphasis of humor and positive emotions with a downplaying of more negative emotions (Sutton, et al., 2009). While student teaching is a challenging time emotionally, understanding and remaining mindful that emotional regulation is a key characteristic of a strong teacher identity can help student teachers to regulate their “presence” through the myriad ups and downs of student teaching. Any interaction with students should be one in which the student teacher displays both a positive disposition and an eagerness to help. While engaging in the types of negative conversations that often permeate teacher lounges may

seem like a quick way in which to fit in with other teachers, these types of conversations should be avoided as they lead to more negative displays of emotion in the classroom as well. For university supervisors, reminding student teachers to remain aware of and to regulate their emotions within and around the classroom can help them to avoid sending inappropriate signals to their students.

Finally, and most importantly, the “presence” of a teacher is communicated through their classroom management – an area to which this discussion now turns. Effective classroom management is a necessary foundation for learning to occur and student teachers must demonstrate appropriate classroom management skills before they can move on to instruction (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Smagorinsky, et al., 2004; Stoughton, 2007; Wong & Wong, 2009). As Norris (2003, p. 315) explains, “of critical importance among the many roles that teachers play is that of creating a positive, supportive classroom environment based on a clear and well-organized management plan.” Many student teachers may begin the process believing that classroom management means obedience to the teacher. Managing a classroom is far more than just getting students to comply with instructions, rather it includes socialization into school norms, the creation of effective procedures and routines, organization that remains flexible, as well as a proactive and inclusive approach to social interaction within the classroom (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Stoughton, 2007; Wiggins, 2011; Wong & Wong, 2009). Beginning teachers are often aware that a large part of their evaluation is control of classroom, but most are not initially confident they can be successful (Stoughton, 2007). Schools of education need to equip future teachers with an understanding of the complexity behind effective classroom management as well as an understanding of the many ways in which classroom management is part of teacher identity formation. This knowledge will allow student teachers to become more aware of

opportunities present in the first few weeks of student teaching where they can assert best practices in classroom management, thus signifying “presence.”

Effective classroom managers develop procedures for different classroom possibilities and allow these procedures to address possible problems before they arise, as opposed to having to discipline children after a problem has already occurred (Wong & Wong, 2009). The very first goal of student teachers should be to familiarize themselves with classroom procedures established by their cooperating teacher and then be prepared to facilitate their continued use. This includes not only the written policies and procedures of the district, but also the implicit policies and procedures of the cooperating teacher. Knowing exactly what to do when a student needs to use the restroom or has forgotten their writing utensil immediately likens the student teacher to the cooperating teacher present in the room. Student teachers should be prepared to, “reinforce the correct procedure and reteach an incorrect one” (Wong & Wong, 2009, p. 177). Many a student teacher has fallen into the trap of being asked a procedural question for which the student already knows their cooperating teacher’s answer. Much like parents who agree to work not to be placed in opposition to each other, learning correct procedures and routines avoids these sorts of awkward instances for the student teacher. To ensure that classroom procedures and routines are well known to the student teacher early on, university supervisors should encourage their prospective teachers to make contact with their cooperating teachers before entering the classroom, specifically directing the student teachers to obtain a copy of the student handbook and to engage their cooperating teacher in a very targeted conversation about the implicit procedures and routines that allow his/her class to run smoothly.

When a cooperating teacher asks a student teacher to observe them teaching, following their years of experience as a student the student teacher often takes up position in a desk in the

back of the room and begins to take notes. This observation process can last for many weeks in some cases. Unfortunately, this positioning makes the student teacher immediately look and act like another student – sending mixed signals to students about the role of the student teacher in the classroom. Undoubtedly, this one act may be the single most common mistake student teachers make during the beginning of the student teaching experience. Instead, observation should be done from a standing position in the back or side of the room, notes are best taken mentally rather than physically, and anytime students are working on their own or in groups, the student teacher should be observing while also actively circulating throughout the room. Effective classroom managers adapt their style to the instructional goals, types of activities and characteristics of the students (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Vetter, et al., 2013). The approach outlined above allows the student teacher to also adapt their observation in a manner that matches the more subtle, proximity-based classroom management that effective teachers employ. University supervisors can assist in this process by building up student teacher confidence at the beginning of the semester so that they may feel encouraged to assert themselves more actively within the classroom setting.

During circulation, while the teacher is providing the main thrust of the instruction, the student teacher should be prepared to assist individual students to keep them moving toward the instructional objectives. This mirrors the “lead and support” co-teaching strategy described by Friend, Reising & Cook (1993), which includes one teacher in front of the room delivering instruction and one teacher drifting among the students offering assistance and support. In well-managed classrooms, instruction moves briskly and transitions smoothly between activities (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Wong & Wong, 2009). By locating students who are struggling and quickly helping them to catch up with their classmates, the student teacher is able to assist in the

smooth and efficient running of the classroom lesson while simultaneously teaching those students who perhaps may benefit most from the “presence” of another teacher in the room (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Wong & Wong, 2009). Beyond the benefits for students of being exposed to co-teaching, these tutorial interactions establish the student teacher as a content expert within the class setting. These instances of assistance represent the most powerful moment-to-moment interactions through which teachers and students can negotiate power and enact their identities (Vetter, et al., 2013). Reminding student teachers that teaching is often more powerful one-on-one than it can be through teacher-centered delivery can help student teachers to recognize the importance of these individual interactions.

Finally, the “presence” of a strong teacher identity should be felt outside of the classroom as well. Between periods, student teachers should stand outside the room at the classroom door, greeting students as they enter the room while smiling and presenting positive emotional characteristics (Sutton, et al., 2009; Wong & Wong, 2009). While eager student teachers and cooperating teachers may see this as time to get to know each other, it is equally important that student teachers use this time to get to know their students. This need to be present and interacting with students also extends to any duties that the cooperating teacher may be assigned (i.e. bus duty, cafeteria duty, etc.), which allows the student teacher to contribute beyond the classroom, identifying themselves as teachers within the larger school community (Carver & Meier, 2013). Though generous cooperating teachers may offer to allow their student teachers to accomplish their planning during these duty periods, doing so may cause the student teacher to sacrifice opportunities to interact with students while also not allowing the student teacher to gain the full experience of the cooperating teacher’s work day.

Conclusion

For prospective teachers, student teaching is simultaneously one of the most challenging and transformative experiences in a teacher's career. Both the challenges and transformations are linked to the formation of a teacher identity that represents the core of the teaching profession. By preparing future student teachers with an understanding of teacher identity formation, the social nature of identity construction, and the ability to recognize opportunities to craft strong teacher identities in the first weeks of the student teaching experience, prospective teachers are better prepared both to be more effective during the student teaching process and to be more attuned to their own professional and personal growth throughout the experience. By asserting their "presence" as classroom teachers alongside their cooperating teachers, student teachers take an essential first step toward becoming the meaningful and effective teachers they one day hope to become.

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**Developing Professional Relationships with High School Students:
The Teacher Candidate Perspective**

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Abstract

The foundation of building a professional rapport hinges on a teacher candidate's ability to socially interact with students. This qualitative study investigated three, secondary teacher candidates' perception of social interaction in high school classrooms during the semester-long student teaching experience. Findings reveal that candidates diligently seek to maintain a professional rapport with high school students that results in professional interpersonal separation with students and moves successfully toward professional interpersonal connections. This study articulates how candidates purposefully interact with students to maintain classroom discipline and sustain a positive teacher-student relationship during field experience.

Introduction

During the student teaching experience, most teacher candidates are encouraged to develop positive relationships with students. Establishing a professional rapport can be a challenge at the secondary level, especially when they are close in age with the students. Candidates are often conflicted between evaluating students and creating a friendly relationship, which can lead to classroom discipline problems (Wiggins & Clift, 1995). Scholars contend that discipline issues are a concern during student teaching (Knudson & Turley, 2000; Meinick & Meister, 2008; Wiggins & Clift, 1995). Effective classroom disciplinary actions often hinges on the ability to develop and maintain positive, professional relationships with students (Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Kosnic & Beck, 2009; Sheets, 2005). Social interaction is at the heart of the learning environment (Hollins, 2008; Kohn, 1996, 2011; Sheets, 2005). Effective interactions are the foundation on which positive, professional teacher-student relationships are developed and maintained during field experiences. Sheets (2005) describes the classroom as a place where students and teachers together experience social aspects of life. Field experiences offer candidates a social context to practice and develop social relationships with students.

To effectively interact with students, candidates must understand how their pedagogy influences the social learning environment (Hollins, 2008; Kohn, 2011; Sheets, 2005). Effective interaction in the learning environment is encouraged through skilled teacher pedagogical behaviors (Sheets, 2005). The student teaching experience provides the context to purposefully choose behaviors that build interpersonal relationships with students. During this time, their belief of, judgment toward, and response to disruptive student behavior is critical in the development of a positive learning environment. Candidate's effective response to disruptive classroom behavior is supported by positive dispositions toward students and their ability to

inquire into the ways students' lives may influence classroom behavior (Martin & Van Gunten, 2002; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). Therefore, effective social interaction during student teaching allows candidates the opportunity to learn more about students in the classroom environment, promoting occasions for successful teacher-student interaction and minimizing disruptive student behavior.

According to Nichols (2011), teachers should have the ability and possess the desire to develop a positive relationship with every student in their classroom. He posits that teachers can purposefully establish constructive relationships in the learning environment. Although Nichols addresses in-service teachers, the same can apply for teacher candidates. Effective social interaction allows candidates the means to investigate and understand the diverse needs of students on an interpersonal level. Establishing interpersonal relationships with students through effective social interaction during the student teaching field placement can be difficult for candidates. The complexities of the learning environment require them to focus on multiple components of the learning-teaching process during student teaching. The teacher-student relationship is among these critical components. Without a clear conceptualization of how teacher pedagogical behaviors affect student behaviors (Sheets, 2005), candidates may undermine their roles as well as the value of interpersonal relationship with students, while focusing on other aspects of learning how to teach.

When teachers develop positive relationships with students, they experience fewer classroom behavior problems (Kohn, 1996; Marzano & Marzano, 2003). In light of this research, candidates' ability to purposefully interact with students and develop positive teacher-student relationships potentially minimizes disruptive student behavior. Therefore, insight is needed on

how candidates purposefully engage in effective social interaction with secondary students and what teacher pedagogical behaviors support social interaction.

Candidates must be prepared with the knowledge and skill necessary for the establishing positive relationships with students in the secondary learning environment during field experiences. Understanding how candidates perceive social interaction with students potentially provides insight on how to improve their teacher preparation experiences. This investigation explores secondary teacher candidates' perceptions regarding social interactions during the semester-long student teaching field experience.

Although research has captured teacher candidate perceptions of social interaction in the classroom (Knudson & Turley, 2000; Wiggins & Clift, 1995; Wiseman & Nason, 1995), studies have not included perspectives of those close in age with secondary students. Knowledge gained about candidate perceptions of teacher-student social interactions in high school classrooms may provide insight on how they establish relationships with students. Knowledge of the ways they interact with secondary students potentially provides teacher educators with the understandings needed to assist their conceptualization of the role interpersonal relationships play in the teaching-learning process. Interpersonal relationships impact classroom behaviors. Purposeful teacher-student interactions play a significant role in the environment, because potentially they encourage students to be more cooperative (Sheets, 2005). Positive, professional rapport with students is often key to minimizing disciplinary events in classrooms (Kohn, 1996; Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Sheets, 2005).

Method

The participants in this study included three teacher candidates enrolled at Western Plains University (WPU) who completed their semester-long student teaching in a high school

classroom during the Spring 2013 semester. For the purpose of this study, a teacher candidate is defined as one who is completing their student teaching during the final semester of their teacher preparation. They were further defined as having graduated from high school at least six years prior to their student teaching field experience. Anna was 23 years old. Matthew and Tom were 22 years old at the time of student teaching. To insure recruitment protocol, a questionnaire was given to all teacher candidates completing their student teaching during that semester.

Candidates were placed in two, rural high schools in the southwest, according to the availability of cooperating teachers in their content. Anna was assigned to Mr. Carson who taught English at Palmer High School (PHS). Matthew also completed his student teaching at PHS. His cooperating teacher, Mr. Napier, taught history. Tom was placed at Dalton High School (DHS) with Ms. Luca who not only taught mathematics, but served as the department chair.

Data sources included a candidate questionnaire, interviews, classroom observations, cohort meeting observations, a researcher's journal, and participant documents. The documents were required by the Teacher Education Program at WPU and were not in addition for this study. Documents included weekly journals, lesson plans, teacher evaluations, cooperating teacher conference notes, and student discipline logs. Although data was collected primarily from teacher candidates, the university supervisor and cooperating teachers were interviewed and served as secondary data sources. While three cooperating teachers were included in the study, the same university supervisor mentored all candidates and participated. Multiple data sources provided triangulation and contribute to the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The in-depth exploration of the case studies was intended to provide transferability to similar context not to offer findings for generalization (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Since data collected at each stage influenced the subsequent stages, a systematic data collection plan was necessary. The candidates' ideas, values, and beliefs on social interaction with high school students were revealed through digitally recorded, face-to-face interviews conducted during the second and eleventh weeks of the semester and were transcribed by the researcher. Each interview was guided by an interview protocol (Appendix A). However, candidates were encouraged to elaborate on responses to provide clarification and reveal a thick description. Candidate behavior was observed during time in the classroom and during cohort seminars. Observations in the classroom setting documented the activities and interactions of the candidate when directly interacting with high school students. Four, two-hour observations were logically scheduled throughout the sixteen-weeks of the student teaching field experience. Candidate behavior also was observed at cohort meetings scheduled and led by the university supervisor. During each of the three the cohort meetings, field notes recorded the candidates' comments that related to interacting with high school students. Candidates used email to submit their documents weekly as they generated them throughout their field experience. Finally, the data obtained through interviews and documents from cooperating teachers and the university supervisor served as secondary source. Digitally recorded, face-to-face interviews were guided by an interview protocol (Appendix A), but further exploration occurred as the interview became a conversation. When referring to the teacher candidate, the term 'student teacher' was used, because it was part of the current school culture. In addition to interviews, documents were collected. The cooperating teachers and university supervisor were required to complete three formal observations and a final evaluation. A constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to assure that the data collection and its subsequent data reduction, display, and analysis were interconnected throughout the investigation.

Throughout the progression of this qualitative research, the interactive, recurring process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) of data collection and analysis permitted themes to naturally emerge from multiple data sources without predetermined outcomes driving the study. Raw data was organized by defining information as units and separating the data according to boundaries (Krippendorff, 1980). Open coding was then used to analyze the unitized data and determine themes (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Themes were constantly revisited as analysis gave insight to the investigative lens for the subsequent data, which allowed the themes to continually evolve and reconfigure. Decisions were made based on the significance and patterns and reduction of data was necessary because of the copious amount of data. This resulted in 309 units of data used for this study. The purposeful process of data collection and analysis provided the study with a transparent foundation to determine the credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Although careful measures were taken to adhere to the trustworthiness criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), limitations existed because there were factors that could not be controlled. In the context and structure of the student teaching field experience, some high school students may not have viewed the candidate as a “real teacher.” The teacher pedagogical behaviors of the cooperating teacher could have influenced the candidate’s behavior. Social interaction between the candidate and the students could have been a result of behavioral norms of that classroom culture or the expected behaviors defined or implied by the cooperating teacher or the university supervisor, as well. Finally, self-reported data presented another limitation. The majority of data was derived from self-report, which may cause errors because of the retrospective nature of recalling an experience at a later time. However, triangulation, prolonged engagement, persistent

observation, member checks, an audit trail, and a researcher's journal were used to counteract these limitations.

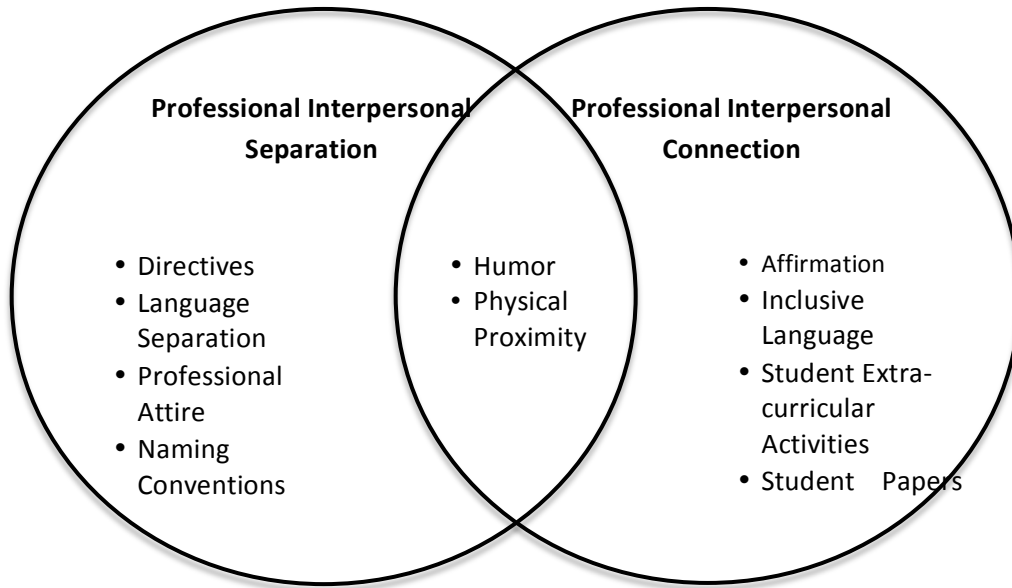
Research Findings

Two primary categories emerged from the data that reveal candidate perception of social interaction in high school classrooms during student teaching: professional interpersonal separation and professional interpersonal connection. Professional interpersonal separation occurs when the purpose of the interaction is to create professional separation between the role of teacher and student. Findings reveal that candidates engaged in behaviors that were intended to establish themselves as an authoritative figure in the classroom and professionally separate the candidate from high school students. Professional interpersonal connection appears when the candidate desires to establish a positive rapport with a student or students. For both of the primary categories, data uncovered themes that support the categories.

Themes are discussed according to which category or categories the theme supports. Directives, language separation, professional attire, and naming conventions all contribute to professional interpersonal separation. Humor and physical proximity sustain professional interpersonal separation or professional interpersonal connection depending on the candidate perception. Affirmation, inclusive language, student papers, and student extracurricular activities support professional interpersonal connection. Figure 1 provides the continuum in which these themes are presented and interconnected among the three major categories.

Figure 1

Social Interaction Continuum



Directives

Candidates used direct statements to provide their students with explicit curricular or behavioral expectations to establish effective classroom management and discipline. For example, Matthew instructed his students when to read aloud and students began reading. Behavior expectations were also given as directives. Matthew told a student to “please sit down. You’ve got to be in your desk.” Matthew shared the importance of “setting out very specific expectations and making sure the students meet those expectations”. Anna’s cooperating teacher, Mr. Carson, further supports this claim; “you’ve got to hold them [students] to what you [teacher] say”. Candidates used directives to communicate behavioral expectations, guide student behavior, and create an interpersonal, professional boundary between them and the student. The findings demonstrate how candidates relied the use of directives to establish a professional

rapport with high school students. In addition to directives, language separation also enhances a professional teacher-student relationship.

Language Separation

Candidates used language to set themselves apart from high school students. Vocabulary used by the candidate and manner of responding created professional separation between the candidate and the students during social interaction. Permissive terms that indicate the candidate's authority in the classroom were used repeatedly. Anna used the term "allowed" repetitively in her journal. Matthew and Tom also used the word "let" that indicated permission was given to students. For example, Matthew told his students, "If you are really good, I will *let* you pick your group." While Tom said to his class, "I will be nice and generous today and *let* you do your mixed review." When candidates used words that were not commonly spoken by high school students, this was perceived to establish a professional separation from their students. Anna referred to the "allotted amount of time" when giving the procedures for answering questions during the review game played with freshman students. Matthew agreed that understanding language, which was new to the students, helped his rapport with them. He shared how he used "rich words that they [students] don't know and maybe I can explain to them."

Along with vocabulary, the manner in which candidates respond to students' interaction also established language separation. Findings uncovered how candidates' vocal tone and pace promoted separation between them and the students. Candidates used a louder tone of voice when requesting the attention of the class and a slower vocal speed when reinforcing learning expectations. No response was also revealed as an effective way to establish a professional teacher-student relationship. Ms. Hughes, the university supervisor, advised the candidates to

ignore comments and not respond at all to maintain a professional rapport with high school students. Tom believed this to be true. When students talked about another teacher or the principal, he stated, “you [teacher] can’t discuss that type of situation with a student because you are the professional regardless if you know that statement is true or not, you just can’t admit to it to hold up your professional rapport.” Matthew explained it would be unprofessional to address the issue with the students. Anna added to this claim by emphasizing that not responding through body language enhances a professional teacher-student relationship. She explained how, although she would hug a friend after he or she confided in her, she would not react the same way with high school students who shared a problem. Data revealed that candidates purposefully used or refrained from language when interacting with students to establish a professional teacher-student relationship.

Professional Attire

According to findings, the manner in which the candidate dressed during student teaching was found to be an influential non-verbal behavior that supported a professional interpersonal separation between the candidate and high school students. It was recorded that Tom, Anna, and Matthew dressed professionally. Tom and Matthew wore slacks, shirt with a collar, dress shoes, and other items they felt were appropriate teacher apparel. Anna wore slacks, a blouse, dress shoes, and often a blazer. Anna commented that dressing professionally was a priority. She did not wear t-shirts but rather wore blouses, dress slacks, and blazers because these items are “very distinctive for a teacher.” She felt her clothing created professional interpersonal separation with her students. She reiterated, “When I have been dressed down [t-shirt and jeans] there’s more of like a ‘oh, we [students and Anna] are friends because we are dressed the same’ type of tone. So they [students] will speak more casually with me.” In addition to attire, Matthew wore his

identification badge when he taught. He indicated that dressing appropriately also meant wearing his badge to set him apart from his students. He mentioned the importance of trying “to do certain things to make yourself stand apart,” because “most of those students look way older than I do. A lot of them do (pause) look older than me. So I try to dress the part [teacher role].”

Data suggest that appropriate dress for candidates in a high school classroom is essential in maintaining a positive teacher-student relationship with high school students. Candidates perceived professional attire as fundamental in achieving a professional interpersonal separation between their students and them. According to findings, professionalism was expressed by the suitable clothing the candidate purposefully wore. The candidates believed that this contributed to their ability to cultivate a positive rapport with high school students. Besides dressing appropriately, candidates also felt that the manner a teacher verbally addresses promotes a healthy teacher-student relationship.

Naming Conventions

Findings revealed that candidates viewed the title students used to address them was important in maintaining a professional relationship with high school students. Candidates did not consider it to be professional if students called them by their first name. During the first cohort meeting Tom exclaimed, “That’s probably the most, most significant way to make sure they view me as a professional, even though I am a student teacher.” Matthew also reinforced this claim and credited his cooperating teacher, Mr. Napier, with setting the tone for the student. “He [Mr. Napier] calls me Mr. Bingley, always Mr. Bingley, with him. He did that from the beginning. He makes a point to do that.” Because of the behavior of Mr. Napier, Matthew believed, “I think that is why I never had a problem with my students calling me *Mr. Bingley*. The students saw that happening and they know that I was *Mr. Bingley*.” Anna agreed with the

importance of using her last name when being addressed by her students. She shared that when her students refer to her as “Miss,” she will require them to say “Miss Bennett.” The candidates indicated that when students identified them using a formal naming convention, this endorsed a professional interpersonal separation.

Humor

Data divulged that candidates believed humor was important when interacting with high school students. Humor was found to promote professional interpersonal separation and connection between the candidate and students. The candidate’s response to inappropriate humor displayed by students supported the development of a professional rapport and was perceived to establish them as an authority in the classroom. Candidates identified humor as a way to connect with students and create a positive learning environment.

When candidates perceived the humor displayed by students as inappropriate, they believed their response created professional separation. Anna shared that when students were reading a story with the word “buttonhole” in the text and laughed, because they “were taking it inappropriately,” they laughed and looked up at her. She simply shook her head in response. The next time the word was read, the students laughed silently but did not look up at her. “They were like, ‘it’s funny to me but it’s not funny to her.’” Besides non-verbal cues, Anna used verbal warnings regarding humor in the classroom. “When they joke about inappropriate things, I will tell them, ‘not in this classroom. You can do it outside if that’s what you want to do, but not in this classroom.’” Tom also indicated that his reaction to what high school students found humorous was significant in sustaining a professional interpersonal separation. “They talked about a movie, *Ted*, the other day. They asked if I should watch it, and I was like, “Uh, I don’t

think that's a good movie to watch." He verbally disapproved of the movie in which the students found humorous.

The data also indicated that candidates perceived humor as an effective means to build a positive rapport. The use of humor in the classroom supported a professional interpersonal connection between the candidate and students. Tom stated that he jokes with the students in a non-threatening way to encourage them to complete their work, "I guess that's the kind of discipline I use. I just kind of make jokes, so maybe they'll be quiet and get back to work...in a non-threatening way". Tom indicated that he teased a student in a singsong tone, "um you didn't get your planner signed" in an attempt to encourage the student to meet the expectation and have his planner signed the next day. Tom values humor when interacting with students, "They [students] just kind of feel relaxed and realize that I'm not out there to get them...it just kind of makes the environment tension free so they are not really worried". Anna used an object of humor to gain the attention of her students in a non-threatening way. A toy pig with an inner squeaking device was used as an attention getting device. She shared, "I will use it as a way to get their attention, but it's not a demanding way of getting their attention. So the environment stays kind of loose feeling. It doesn't feel like 'oh, she's mad that we're not listening to her.'"

Matthew directed humor toward the content. For example, when discussing a world leader in history, he said with a smile, "He [leader in the text] needs to chill out." Matthew's cooperating teacher, Mr. Napier, agreed that Matthew used humor in the classroom effectively when interacting with students, "He (Matthew) jokes with them without being a comedian and it puts them at ease instead of being a rigid task master in front of them."

Candidates recognized humor as a constructive way to develop a professional relationship with their students. They considered their reaction to inappropriate student humor as

essential in maintaining professional interpersonal separation. The data also indicated that candidates perceived humor as an effective means to bond with their students. The use of humor in the classroom also supported a professional interpersonal connection between the candidate and students.

Physical Proximity

The space in the classroom where the candidates stood in relation to where the students were located was a prevalent theme among the data that exposed how candidates developed professional interpersonal separation. Findings illustrated how candidates stood in the hallway beside the classroom door to monitor behavior as they walked from one class to another after the bell rang. Candidates also stood behind the podium or the front of the classroom also to institute professional interpersonal separation. Anna stood behind the podium when students walked into the classroom, when she gave papers to a student, while she asked students questions during a review game, when she led discussions, or when she conferred with individual students. Matthew primarily stood behind the podium during direct instruction and whole group discussions. Tom did not have a podium in his classroom but stood at the front of the class during direct instruction. Besides using physical proximity to establish distance between them and the students, candidates also used effective physical proximity to promote interaction with their students.

Data indicated that candidates also used physical proximity to connect with their students during the learning-teaching process. Candidates moved around the room and talk with students and answer questions. During group work, Matthew walked from group to group, to ask students which project they chose and to inquire about the progress they were making. Tom often sat or

stood beside a student when assisting with independent practice. Anna indicated how she capitalized on physical proximity creatively interact with students during a lesson:

In one of my classes, we moved all the desks into a circle and I got Mr. Carson's [cooperating teacher's] chair and I turned in a circle the whole time I was reading to them [during the lesson]. So it was fun for me, but it was fun for them because it was a different type of learning atmosphere...I kind of took that as moving [around the room] because I got to see all of them at the same time, so it was good.

The data showed how candidates perceived the benefit of physical proximity when interacting with students to establish professional interpersonal separation and nourish professional interpersonal connection. Candidates used areas of the classroom or the podium to create a barrier or distance between them and their students. However, they valued walking to the student or student groups, sitting beside students, and circulating the room to interact more effectively with their students. These behaviors are believed to have enhanced their professional interpersonal connection with students. Physical proximity either promoted a professional boundary or improved teacher-student connection, depending how it was perceived and executed by the candidate.

Affirmation

According to the findings, candidates perceived that affirming the performance and identity of students was significant in constructing a professional interpersonal connection with high school students. Behaviors that contributed to the affirmation of students were personal investigation, validation of student voice, positive reinforcement, and manners.

Candidates perceived that investigative questions to support students as individuals were part of the foundation of a positive teacher-student rapport. Tom pointed out, "the more you

[candidate] interact and get to know your students, the better they perform in the class, and they feel more welcome and open to learning”. Anna emphasized that getting to know more about students must be purposeful. She commented, “I think my interaction with the students and me making a point to get to know them, helps with classroom discipline,” and “When somebody [candidate] takes interest in you [student] and cares about you, it makes you want to do better”. Mr. Carson indicated that Anna interacts to “ build a relationship, so that allows her to communicate with them a little easier in class, more positively...If she knows they are involved in something, she will ask questions”. Ms. Hughes also agreed, “When they [students] find out you [teacher] are interested in them, they respect you more”. Matthew provided further data that supported this theme:

So I try to ask them about themselves, “What do you like to do? What are you about?” They are experts about themselves and they want to talk about themselves. They enjoy it...that’s one thing I remember when interacting with the students. When I don’t know what to talk about, talk about them... look for those moments when you can connect with them. I don’t think it’s something that can necessarily be planned. You’ve just got to take advantage when you see it, and go with it.

In addition to using questioning, candidates validated and empowered the voice of the students in the classroom through positive feedback, assignments and class discussions. Matthew noted that when he gave students specific, positive feedback, he is “really interacting and entertaining their idea of the answer, so that can bring validation to the learning process.” Mr. Napier observed that Matthew created a positive learning environment where students “can be themselves and be genuine,” which encouraged students to express their ideas, feelings, and beliefs and supported a positive teacher-student relationship. Anna encouraged students to voice their thoughts and

opinions in writing assignments and during class discussions. For example, she recorded that an assignment was designed for students write about someone they really respect because “students love to talk about themselves and what is important to them, and so I have created an assignment for them.” Anna valued lively classroom discussions. She wrote:

I am hoping that my asking them more open ended questions and requiring them to actually speak up and say something, whether it be right or wrong, is helping them to find their voice and freeing them to not hide who they are.

According to findings, candidates recognized positive reinforcement as a means for affirming the achievement of the students. Ms. Lucas stated that Tom relates to the students very well, “gives them positive reinforcement,” and “does a good job of giving them reinforcement”. For example, Tom used the phrases “Look at you,” “You are getting this,” and “There you go.” Matthew and Anna also used verbal praise but included the context of the student outcome when verbalizing their approval of student ideas and beliefs. The identity of the student was a valued by the candidates. When Anna passed out student essays at the end of the freshman class, she exclaimed to the entire group of students, “You all have wonderful dreams.” When a student shared an analogy to the class, Matthew commented, “That’s a great analogy. I couldn’t have said it better myself.” Candidates deemed positive reinforcement through verbal praise as an essential way to give students affirmation in the classroom and cultivate a positive teacher-student relationship.

Inclusive Language

Candidates used purposeful language when interacting with students. Findings illustrated how specific pronouns that portrayed an inclusive relationship between the candidate and students were supportive to the professional interpersonal connection. During classroom discussions and activities, the terms such as ‘we’ and ‘us,’ was used frequently by all candidates

to indicate the expectation of partnership during the learning-teaching process. For example, Anna shared, “It was important to remember that it is not solely the teacher’s responsibility for them to learn, but that it was a team effort.” The learning-teaching process offered the context for the use of inclusive language that enhanced the teacher-student relationship. Inclusive language promoted the interpersonal connection between the candidate and his or her students. Candidates demonstrated the value of social interaction during the learning-teaching process in developing a positive teacher-student relationship.

Student Extracurricular Activities

Candidates expressed that a professional interpersonal connection is nurtured through their interest and attendance of student extracurricular activities. According to the findings, candidates believed that expressing their interest in extracurricular activities or attending school sponsored events promoted a positive teacher-student relationship with high school students. The importance of creating a bond with students beyond the four walls of the classroom was revealed by this theme. For example, Tom indicated that developing a positive rapport with his students included, “just talking to them about stuff they like to do...sports...or just whatever kind of extracurricular activity they do”. Matthew’s cooperating teacher, Mr. Napier, validated Matthew’s attempt to connect with students, “He takes an interest in them as individuals. He will, if he knows they are involved in some extracurricular or something they mentioned in class, he’ll ask about that.” Besides talking with students about extracurricular activities, candidates also attended events, such as basketball games, softball games, and plays. Anna shared, “it shows that I care about what they are doing and it’s still a professional setting.” She further explained that attending student activities helped diminish classroom discipline problems:

I think it [her extracurricular attendance] helps classroom discipline. I've tried to interact with my students on different levels, however I can relate to them...I've tried to go to their athletic events and interact with them or doing something they like. I have noticed that they behave better in class.

In addition to asking about and attending events, candidates participated in activities with students. For example, Tom played basketball with students after school and Anna helped choreograph several dance numbers for the school play. Ms. Hughes, university supervisor, validated the data, "These students [candidates in this study] have been going to games and concerts and things. That means so much to those students, to see them [candidates] there and they talk about it." She went on to explain how this created a bond between the candidate and students. Candidates perceived that interacting with students outside the classroom was essential in developing professional interpersonal connection with high school students. This interaction occurred in a setting that was considered professional because the school sponsored the activities.

Student Papers

According to the data, candidates recognized the value of student papers had when interacting with high school students. Feedback on papers, passing out papers, and student planners served as a means to interact with students and connect with them on an individual basis. For example, Anna said she "made appoint of writing notes on each student's speech." Mr. Carson shared that Anna frequently wrote on student's papers to interact with their ideas and encourage them. Matthew believed that students are validated through a teacher's grading process when written feedback is given on papers. This written interaction was perceived to effectively promote a professional interpersonal connection. Passing out papers also presented

another avenue for interaction. Anna took the opportunity at the beginning of the semester to pass out papers in an attempt to learn students' names and exchange in small talk. Matthew interacted verbally and with facial expressions when he gave students the assignment papers that included group project expectations or resource handouts that provided additional information on communism that was not in the history textbook. Tom interacted with students individually at the end of the class period when he collected the cards that contained the problem of the day. Besides assignment papers, student planners afforded another way of candidates to regularly interact when the signing of planners was a classroom routine. For example, Tom told a student that he had to have his planner signed by his parents the next day then asked if they were back in town. In another instance, Anna commented on what a student had written and drawn in her planner. In each of these examples, candidates took the opportunity to develop the teacher-student relationship through the use of student papers.

Discussion

Since effective classroom disciplinary actions often hinges on the teacher's ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with students (Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Kosnic & Beck, 2009; Sheets, 2005), understanding how teacher candidates perceive social interaction designed to promote professional rapport during the student teaching field experience was the focus of this qualitative, multicase study. This study gave insight on how three, young candidates, Anna, Matthew, and Tom, viewed social interaction as a means to cultivate a positive relationship with high school students through professional interpersonal separation and a professional interpersonal connection. The social interaction continuum (Figure 1) illustrates the behaviors identified by the candidates. Two major categories construct the continuum: professional interpersonal separation and professional interpersonal connection. The data

uncovered themes that give understanding on how intentional candidate behaviors promote a positive rapport with students during student teaching in high school classrooms.

Professional interpersonal separation.

Anna, Matthew, and Tom sought to establish an appropriate separation between themselves, as a teacher, and the students, while still developing a positive relationship with students. Candidates rely on professional interpersonal separation to achieve a sense of authority in the classroom as they distance themselves personally from students. To achieve a professional relationship with students, an appropriate level of authority is desired (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). The candidates purposefully engage in pedagogical behaviors with the intention of being viewed as a professional and not as a peer by students. The social interaction initiated by the candidates promotes a professional rapport when these behaviors are implemented in the learning environment (Hollins, 2008; Kohn, 1996, 2011; Sheets 2005). Professional interpersonal separation demonstrates the candidate's authority in the classroom and is achieved by the use of directives, language separation, professional dress, and naming conventions.

Intentional behaviors that establish the candidate as an authoritative figure are a significant part of the social interaction continuum (Brophy, 2010). Directives are used to attempt to control student behavior and demonstrate that the candidate had a sense of power in the classroom that was not afforded to the students. Procedural instructions in the form of directives guide the students toward acceptable behavior (Jiang, 2010). Candidates relied on and favored assertive discipline practices (Kaya, Lundeen, & Wolfgang, 2010; Sadler, 2006). Specific language also separates the candidate from the students. Terms that identify the exclusive roles help define the line between teacher and student. Dressing in professional attire visually sets apart the candidates from high school students. Candidates use their manner of dress to stand out

from students who are only some years older. Enforcing that students call the candidate by a formal, professional name remains another component of professional interpersonal separation. These behaviors enable the candidates to distinguish themselves as a leader in the classroom even though they are close in age with high school students. Leadership in the classroom is essential in establishing a positive learning environment (Nichols, 2011). These themes that encourage the definition of roles are exclusive to this major category in the social interaction continuum. However, as noted in Figure 1, themes that facilitate professional interpersonal separation exist and overlap two categories in the continuum.

Professional interpersonal separation or professional interpersonal connection.

Humor and physical proximity are ways candidates either establish professional interpersonal separation or professional interpersonal connection. When a candidate disciplines a student for inappropriate humor, the candidate's response to humor causes professional separation or distance with the student. The student is given the message that the behavior is unacceptable. Inappropriate humor can exist in the context of the learning environment (Neuliep, 1991; Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk, & Smith, 2006). However, when a candidate engages in socially accepted humor, either teacher or student initiated, a professional interpersonal connection or bond is formed (Hurren, 2005). Appropriate humor contributes to a non-threatening environment that is less stressful (Fovet, 2009; Hurren, 2005; Neuliep, 1991).

Physical proximity also creates a means for professional separation or connection. When candidates stand behind a podium or remain primarily in the front of the classroom when interacting with students, this creates a physical barrier between the candidate and the students resulting in separation. Yet, when candidate interacts while standing or sitting next to the student, a closer bond is formed (Noddings, 2003). Both of these behaviors contributed to the

professional teacher-student relationship. When candidates practice professional interpersonal separation in conjunction with other pedagogical behaviors classified as professional interpersonal connection in the social interaction continuum, they cultivated the professional rapport with their students. These categories work in harmony to produce harmony in the relationship.

Professional interpersonal connection.

When candidates focus on a professional interpersonal connection with students, the learning environment becomes non-threatening for students (Kohn, 1996, 2011; Noddings, 2003, O'Connor, 2008). Pedagogical behaviors that are intended to build interpersonal bonds between the candidate and student result in a sense of community in the classroom and promote a positive teacher-student relationship. Affirmation, inclusive language, student extracurricular activities, and student papers offer concrete ways for candidates to connect with their students.

Social interaction that involves the candidates' goal to effectively bond with students on a professional level is imperative for a positive teacher-student relationship (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). When candidates provide students with words of affirmation that validate their identity and classroom contributions, a healthy relation is recognized (Jiang, 2010). Inclusive language that emphasizes the team effort of the candidate and student in the learning-teaching process also advances collegiality in the classroom (Brown, 2003; Sheets, 2005). Candidates' genuine interest in and attendance at student extracurricular activities demonstrates the effort to connect with students in an appropriate venue outside of the classroom. Authentic interaction enables students to feel valued as a human being and an important member of the learning environment (Noddings, 2003). Student papers also allow a way for candidates to make connections with

students either through written comments on the student's paper or when the paper is given back to the student after evaluation.

Candidates purposefully exhibit behaviors designed to support a positive rapport with students during their student teaching field experience. These teacher pedagogical behaviors enable the candidate to establish and maintain a positive learning environment for all students (Decker, Dona, & Christenson, 2007; Sheets, 2005). Whether trying to set themselves apart from students and identify the teacher-student boundary or trying to make connections with students, candidates purposefully interacted to develop a professional teacher-student relationship. These behaviors resulted in professional interpersonal separation and professional interpersonal connection with high school students.

Summary

Effective social interaction is at the heart of the teacher-student relationship. This study unveiled how teacher candidates, who are close in age with high school students, pursued a professional relationship with students during the student teaching field experience. Candidates engaged in purposeful interaction to establish and sustain a professional rapport with students, which potentially minimized classroom discipline problems during student teaching. The ability to build positive teacher-student relationships during student teaching hinges on intentional behaviors designed to form a professional, teacher-student boundary and promote a professional connection with all students. Professionally interacting with students involves the candidate establishing oneself as an authority figure in the classroom while still interpersonally connecting with the students. The balance between being a leader and relating to students on a professional level is at the center of candidate performance. Behaviors identified in the social interaction continuum provide examples on how candidates can achieve that balance. Understanding how

intentional behaviors promote social interaction and result in a positive rapport with students is a critical component of teacher candidate development during the student teaching field experience.

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Appendix A

Teacher Candidate Interview Protocol

The following questions served as guides during the interview process. However, the data collection process and the emergence of themes required the revision or deletion of these questions and inclusion of further questions. At the beginning of the interview, participants were informed that they might skip questions or quit at anytime. They were reminded that their participation did not affect their grade for student teaching.

Interview 1

1. Describe how you go about getting to know a student.
2. How is interacting with students important to you as a classroom teacher?
3. Describe how you have begun to interact with your students.
4. What challenges have you faced when interacting with students?
5. Describe an incident where you interacted with a student. What was the outcome?
6. How does interaction impact your classroom discipline?
7. What does it mean to build a professional rapport with your students?
8. What other thoughts or feelings would you like to share about interacting with your students?

Interview 2

1. What specific things have you done to be viewed as a professional by your students?
2. What does it mean to not cross “the line”? What behaviors would be on the other side of “the line”?
3. How does interacting with your student impact your classroom discipline?
4. What are your strengths when interacting with high school students?
5. What are your weaknesses when interacting with high school students?
6. How do you use humor when interacting with students?
7. How does your age affect how you interact with students?
8. How does your cooperating teacher influence your interaction with students?
9. When you interact with high school students, how do you purposefully use language to create a positive learning environment?
10. If you could give advice to other student teachers about interacting with high school students, what would it be?
11. What other thoughts and feelings would you like to share about interacting with your students?

University Supervisor Interview Protocol

The following questions served as guides during the interview process. However, the data collection process and the emergence of themes required the revision or deletion of these questions and inclusion of further questions. At the beginning of the interview, participants were informed that they might skip questions or quit at anytime.

1. How do student teachers positively interact with high school students?
2. What does it mean for a student teacher to establish a professional rapport with students?

3. What specific behaviors do observe when your student teachers interact with students?
4. In what ways does interaction affect the student teacher's classroom discipline?
5. What challenges do student teachers face when interacting with students?
6. Describe what it means for candidates to not cross "the line." What candidate behaviors would be on the other side of "the line"?
7. What advise do you offer to candidates in regards to interacting with high school students?
8. What other thoughts and feelings would you like to share about how student teachers interacting students?

Cooperating Teacher Interview Protocol

The following questions served as guides during the interview process. However, the data collection process and the emergence of themes required the revision or deletion of these questions and inclusion of further questions. At the beginning of the interview, participants were informed that they might skip questions or quit at anytime.

1. How does your student teacher positively interact with your students?
2. What does it mean for a student teacher to establish a professional rapport with your students?
3. What specific behaviors do observe when your student teacher interacts with students??
4. How does your content area affect teacher/student interaction with student teachers?
5. In what ways does interaction affect your student teacher's classroom discipline?
6. What challenges does your student teacher face when interacting with your students?
7. What guidance do you give your student teacher about interacting with your students?
8. What other thoughts and feelings would you like to share about how student teachers interacting students?