The Field Experience Journal

Volume 29   Spring 2023

Table of Contents

From the Editor

Dear Readers of *The Field Experience Journal:*

The first article in this edition is a submission from Alicia Moore and Rebecca Giles that focuses on field experiences that are culturally responsive that provide best practices within these placements.

Tia Neal is an instructional supervisor in the Catahoula Parish and an adjunct professor at the University of Louisiana Monroe. Her writing deals with the crisis of teacher retention and efficacy in rural school settings.

From Central Michigan University, Shane Cavanaugh and Kristina Rouech share how they utilize a microteaching learning cycle with CMU student teachers.

Lastly, Jayson Evaniuck and Kathleen Wagner share their research into teacher candidate perceptions of the methods courses required to prepare for field experience placement.

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

Kim L. Creasy

Culturally Responsive Field Experiences:

Expanded Best Practices for Preservice Teachers

Alicia L. Moore and Rebecca M. Giles

Southwestern University and the University of South Alabama

Public schools continue to rapidly diversify across the nation (McFarland et al., 2017) while the teaching profession remains predominantly white, female, and middle class, with inadequate training in cultural competency (Sleeter, 2001; 2017). The diversity in race, ethnicity, learning capacity, socioeconomic status, and gender that exists in today's classrooms necessitates the urgency for new teachers who are well-prepared to meet the needs of all learners (Garcia & Cueller, 2006; Eisenhardt et al., 2012). Although this is not a new concept, the effectiveness of educator preparation programs is now, more than ever, being closely examined.

One reason for this scrutiny is the current teacher shortage, which has worsened noticeably overall these past few years (Buttner, 2021; Kini, 2022). Roughly a quarter of all beginning teachers leave the profession within three years, and 40-50% leave within five years (Gallant & Riley, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Loeb et al. (2005) examined the predictors of high rates of teacher turnover and found that demographics of a school's student body, such as ethnicity, racial composition, languages spoken, and poverty level, strongly contributed to higher attrition.

Teacher education graduates often fail to consider the vast complexities of the diverse student populations they will teach. Instead, they harbor idealistic views of their future classrooms largely based on their own school experiences, personal beliefs and values, preservice field placements, cultural incongruities, and the educational theories and strategies learned in their coursework. A disconnect between personal belief systems, cultural differences,

theory, and practice often leaves many new teachers disheartened and confused, which may result in their leaving the profession early in their careers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Since educator preparation programs play a vital role in ensuring that teachers feel well-prepared to teach all students, it is incumbent upon these programs to present curriculum that provides comprehensible examples of best practices to make sure that preservice teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to meet students' needs (Blanton et al., 2011; Vaz et al., 2015), especially those who are culturally diverse (Coffey, 2010). Thus, educator preparation programs should reexamine their course curriculum, conceptual frameworks, and program goals to ensure preservice teachers are being adequately equipped to meet these challenges effectively. One of the main goals in preparing preservice teachers should be to effectively equip them for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018, 2002; Miller & Mikulec, 2014).

The Need for Culturally Responsive Teaching

To be successful, today's teachers must be able to negotiate complex and unexpected situations that neither reflect their own experiences of teaching and learning (Recchia, 2009) nor the cultural norms to which they are accustomed. These unanticipated differences may bring about a state of disequilibrium and, especially, cultural dissonance. This dissonance is a major reason that culturally responsive teaching is important (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Sleeter, 2001). Culturally responsive teaching, as defined by Gay (2018), calls for "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, and effective for them" (p. 29). Gay (2013) additionally added that culturally responsive teaching is a transformative venture for teachers that involves teaching to and through each students' strengths to make learning culturally validating and affirming.

4

Siwatu (2007) cautions that assisting prospective teachers in developing the knowledge and skills associated with culturally responsive teaching may not accurately predict their future classroom behavior. Similarly, Hill-Jackson (2007) points out that merely providing preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills related to diverse populations without opportunities to interact with these populations is insufficient. Instead, teacher educators must accept the more challenging role of expanding their programs to include: (1) the development of preservice teachers' understanding of the importance of culturally responsive teaching, (2) examinations of teacher dispositions and behaviors through reflective practice, including confronting their own implicit biases, and (3) opportunities to interact with diverse student populations and communities through immersive, intentional, and quality field experiences.

Selecting Field Experience Sites

Because the amount of learning that occurs during field experiences is highly contextualized, field experience sites must be carefully selected with preference given to those that promote the idea of the teacher as a change-agent. The concept of the preservice teacher as an agent of change includes facilitating teacher candidates' recognizing and modeling their mentor teachers' ability to bring about positive change in circumstances that directly impact how the school operates at the individual, classroom, school, and district level (Marchel et al., 2011). Such experiences allow preservice teachers opportunities to see that their own actions, in the role of a culturally responsive teacher, truly make a difference in the lives of children and their communities.

Redesigning educator preparation programs that emphasize the application of self-examination and knowledge about culturally responsive teaching in diverse field experiences has been recommended as an important factor in preparing preservice teachers to teach all students

(Kent & Giles, 2016). Accordingly, many educator preparation programs have begun a concentrated shift toward clinically based instruction that integrates academic content, theory, pedagogy, and critical reflection within meaningful field experiences (Ingram, 2007 NCATE, 2010). Educator preparation programs must consider the benefit of preservice teachers developing the skills and strategies necessary to ensure the success of all students (Cooper, et al, 2008; Gay, 2002) by gaining "intense, significant" experience in actual classrooms.

The terms "intense" and "significant," as associated with field experiences, are correlated with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) expectations of field experiences (CAEP, 2013, 2022) which states that "field experiences should be designed and implemented utilizing various modalities, of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on diverse P-12 students' learning and development" (CAEP Component R2.3 - Clinical Experiences, 2022). Additionally, CAEP supports the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013) which provide the following insights:

> Teachers need to recognize that all learners bring to their learning varying experiences . . . that are assets that can be used to promote their learning. To do this effectively, teachers must have a deeper understanding of their own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families (p. 4).

These expectations include educator preparation programs and school partners working collaboratively to design and implement extensive and intensive field experiences that structure opportunities for preservice teachers to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and

dispositions to teach children who are diverse in terms of academic abilities, ethnicities, race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Preservice teachers' learning during field experiences is dependent on the type of school setting, student population, and overall school culture (Ritter et al., 2007; Téllez, 2008). Further, the quality of the settings, time spent in these settings, and the careful selection of mentor teachers, who are committed to teaching in culturally responsive ways, are significantly important learning pillars, as well.

Quality Field Placements: The critical role that quality field experiences play in learning to teach has been well-documented (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Maloch et al., 2003, Zeichner, 2010). While multicultural and diversity-related education courses are common in educator preparation programs, such courses usually examine the differences in learners superficially without providing consideration of specific populations or the effect of biases on their achievement. Instead, a more comprehensive approach is required to truly gain an understanding of issues related to unintentional and unconscious biases and their impact on professional practice (Gay; 2003, Goggins & Dowcett, 2011). Best practice necessitates opportunities for preservice teachers to authentically examine such issues through cross-cultural experiences (Coffey, 2010).

Diverse Field Experiences: Preparing preservice teachers to meet the needs of all students, hinges upon quality opportunities for practice teaching in various field placements (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Gentry, 2012; Kent & Giles, 2013). Further, these placements must include the support needed for preservice teachers to build meaningful connections to the lives of their diverse students. Akiba (2011) cited field experiences for understanding diverse students as one of four characteristics of teacher education programs that help to develop preservice

7

teachers' cultural responsiveness. It is posited that completing field experiences in diverse schools with students of different socioeconomic status or ethnic backgrounds than themselves will have the same positive influence on preservice teachers' improved perceptions of and preparedness to teach that occurred following of field experiences with students with disabilities (de Boer et al., 2011; Lancaster & Bain, 2010; Leyser et al., 2011, Reeves et al., 2019).

Yet, one challenge for educator preparation programs may be their differing understandings about what experiences and settings are culturally diverse. Since the "conceptualization and measurement of diversity remains a challenge" (Unal & Unal, 2021, p. 29), Unal and Unal (2021) describe how a teacher education program developed a web application used to record and calculate diversity of their field placement sites using a school's demographic data to guarantee that every preservice teacher was placed in a diverse school at least once. Their focus on diversity mirrors the guidelines for quality placements set forth by accreditation agencies such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2022), which highlight the importance of cultural diversity as a consideration for field placements made by educator preparation programs.

Sustained Field Experiences: Long-term, immersive, cultural experiences can be highly effective in overcoming misconceptions and/or biases by increasing awareness of the importance and value of other's cultural mores, lived experiences, and communal traditions. For example, Bollin (2007) reported that 66% of the 110 preservice teachers tutoring Hispanic immigrant children acknowledged that they had stereotypes about the children and their families that proved to be unfounded. Further, 77% of the preservice teacher tutors reported developing an understanding and appreciation of the children's culture over the semester. Similarly, Lambeth

and Smith (2016) found that secondary preservice teachers, who had limited exposure to people outside of their race and realm of experiences perceived that their skills, knowledge, and abilities concerning culturally responsive teaching improved after a semester-long field experience working with students of non-Caucasian races and cultures.

Community-based Field Experiences: Traditionally, teacher education field placements occur in local school districts; however, moving beyond those customary placement sites can provide other avenues for preservice teachers to work with diverse learners. Community-engaged field experiences offer opportunities for preservice teachers to connect authentic and personal interactions with diverse populations to best practices in culturally responsive teaching. Beaudry (2015) found that preservice teachers who completed a series of community-based field experiences, which were designed to shape their knowledge and identity in unique ways, experienced personal growth and greater acceptance of student differences. As an example, in an interview excerpt reported by Beaudry (2015), a participant shared that "her community-based field experiences enabled her to connect to issues and ideas related to community, education, and diversity in ways that solidified them and made them tangible" (p. 32). Those experiences included visiting local community organizations, collaborating with students at a local high school for an interview project, and exploring the community surrounding a high school. Without establishing personal connections established during field experiences, many students' conceptions of culturally responsive teaching may remain theoretical and intangible. Such connections can be established with the assistance of culturally responsive mentors.

Culturally Responsive Mentors: Quality mentor teachers are those who understand culturally responsive teaching, are well-aware of their own biases and the negative impact that they may have on student achievement, and who recognize that cultural differences do not equal

academic and behavioral deficits. These mentor teachers are willing to guide preservice teachers away from blaming the students' families and background to using this knowledge to scaffold their success. Thus, the influence of mentor teachers on preservice teachers' images and understandings of teaching must not be underestimated (Nettle, 1998, Goldstein et. al, 2003).

Lampert (2010) defines the term "practice" as describing the "strategies, routines and activities that novices need to learn to do, and from which they will continue to learn teaching" (p. 26). However, Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2005) note, ". . . practice alone does not make perfect, or even good, performance. Opportunities to connect practice to expert knowledge must be built into learning experiences for teachers" (p. 402). Consequently, preservice teachers' practice teaching must occur in conjunction with their being encouraged to acknowledge, reflect upon, and respond to the cultural differences they encounter (Recchia, et al., 2009). Specifically, preservice teachers must be taught to reflect on their conceptualizations of diversity and to examine the influence of these conceptualizations on their practice. Reflective practice is an important aspect of "transformative learning—the kind of learning that shifts students' worldviews and understandings of themselves" (Gorski, 2019, p. 357).

Addressing Bias through Critical Reflection

Field experiences often represent a time of professional instability and transition that requires preservice teachers to reflect on their interactions with students and examine their own implicit biases and assumptions (Goldstein et al., 2003). While experiences with diverse groups of children may lead to enhanced teacher sensitivity and effectiveness (Shippen, et al., 2005), it is unwise to assume that preservice teachers' incoming preconceptions, beliefs, and assumptions will change during field experiences without being examined and addressed directly (Goldstein et al., 2003). Gollnick and Chinn (2021) emphasized the need for preservice teachers "to accept

the fact that they have prejudices that may affect the way they react to students in the classroom"

(p. 348), and one way to do this is through critical reflection (Nieto, 2006; Shandomo, 2010).

Critical reflection is the process by which adults identify the assumptions governing their

actions, locate the historical and cultural origins of the assumptions, question the meaning of

assumptions, and develop alternative ways of behaving (Cranton, 1996). Opportunities during

field experiences that encourage such reflection can result in the realization that recognizing and

responding to individual differences in children is the basis for creating quality learning

experiences (Maynes, et al., 2013, Recchia, et al., 2009).

Critical reflection is vitally important for preservice teachers, since many possess a

limited understanding of multiculturalism and have uncritical assumptions about diversity,

meritocracy, and student achievement (Castro, 2010). Combining reflection with an

examination of preservice teachers' knowledge and beliefs based on their own experiences

further contributes to personal transformation (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2004; Van Hook, 2002;

Wolfe & Falk-Ross, 2002). Lafferty, et. al (2014) recommend reflecting upon experiential

learning as one way for preservice teachers to confront their beliefs as they shift from holding

stereotypical perspectives to greater understanding of children's the cultural and linguistic

richness while Kondor et al. (2019) caution that field experiences without embedded critical

reflection can perpetuate previously held stereotypes.

Milner (2003) suggests several options for promoting critical self-reflection. Teacher

educators can use preservice teachers' responses to a critical reflective questionnaire about race

to facilitate discussions or implement "race reflective journaling," which allows preservice

teachers to process issues of racial and cultural differences in a more private manner through

writing, as opposed to sharing ideas in a more open and public forum that might become

11

uncomfortable and difficult for some. Regardless of the format in which it occurs, critical teacher reflection is essential to promoting culturally relevant pedagogy because it can ultimately measure the preservice teachers' levels of concern and care for their students (Williams, 2019).

Conclusion

Extended opportunities for direct interaction with people who are racially or culturally different from themselves does not necessarily result in preservice teachers becoming more culturally responsive. Carefully considering where field placements occur and how long they last is only the first step. Once placed, preservice teachers must be engaged in reflective practices that disrupt stereotypes and myths while addressing implicit bias.

It is essential to utilize best practices to prepare teachers to be knowledgeable, positive, and confident to facilitate success for all their students in an inclusive setting (Beacham & Rouse, 2012). Therefore, teacher preparation programs must provide their preservice teachers with a solid understanding of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018, 2002; Miller & Mikulec, 2014) along with opportunities to practice it in appropriate field-based settings.

Teachers who become overwhelmed by the cultural dissonance they face when teaching diverse populations often resort to teaching the way they were taught, attempt to meet all students' needs using a single approach (Faircloth, et al., 2011), or leaving the field of teaching altogether. Most cultural dissonance stems from teachers' misconceptions of diverse students, which continue to permeate traditional school thinking, instructional practices, and field placements. This dissonance could be lessened by ensuring preservice teachers access to quality field experiences that emphasize critical reflection and culturally responsive pedagogy.

To successfully implement culturally responsive pedagogy, preservice teachers must process what it means to teach students who come from different racial and cultural backgrounds

than their own. Requiring preservice teachers to engage in rigorous, and oftentimes painful, reflection on racial and cultural differences is essential for preservice teachers to fully understand how issues such as race, ethnicity, and culture influence students' learning experiences and be able to use this knowledge to support students' academic success.

References

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2010). Reforming Teacher Education: The critical clinical component. Washington, DC.

Akiba, M. (2011). Identifying program characteristics for preparing pre-service teachers for diversity. *Teachers College Record, 113*(3), 658-697.

Anderson, L. M., & Stillman, J. A. (2013). Student teaching's contribution to pre-service teacher development: A review of research focused on the preparation of teachers for urban and high-needs contexts. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(1), 3-69.

Beacham, N., & Rouse, M. (2012). Student teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion and inclusive practice. *Journal of Research in Special Needs, 12*(1), 3-11.

Beaudry, C. (2015). Community connections: Integrating community-based field experiences to support teacher education for diversity. *Educational Considerations, 43*(1), 29-35.

Blanton, L. P., Pugach, M. C., & Florian, L. (2011). Preparing general education teachers to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. American association of colleges for teacher education. https://www.ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/aacte_ncld_recommendation.pdf

Bollin, G. G. (2007). Preparing teachers for Hispanic immigrant children: A service learning approach. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 6*(2), 177-189.

Buttner, A. (2021, April 19). The teacher shortage, 2021 edition. *frontline education.* *https://www.frontlineeducation.com/blog/teacher-shortage-2021/*

Castro, A. J. (2010). Themes in the research on preservice teachers' views of cultural diversity: Implications for researching millennial preservice teachers. *Educational Researcher, 39*(3), 198-210.

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. (2013). CAEP Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from http://caepnet.org/standards/archive-standards/2013-itp

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2022). Standard 2. CAEP Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from https://caepnet.org/standards/2022-itp/standard-2

Cochran-Smith, M. (2000). The future of teacher education: Framing the questions that matter. *Teaching Education, 11*(1), 13-24.

Coffey, H. (2010). "They taught me:" The benefits of early community-based field experiences in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, *26*(2), 335-342.

Cooper, J. E., Kurtts, S., Baber, C. R., & Vallecorsa, A. (2008). A model for examining teacher preparation curricula for inclusion. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 35*(4), 155 -176.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013, April). InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A resource for ongoing teacher development. Council of Chief State School Officers.

Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional development as transformative learning: New perspectives for teachers of adults*. Jossey Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K. Grossman, P. Rust, F. & Shulman, L. (2005). The design of teacher education programs. In Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (Eds.) *Preparing teachers for a changing world. What teachers should learn and be able to do?* Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 300–314.

de Boer, A., Pijl, S. J., & Minnaert, A. (2011). Regular primary schoolteachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 15*(3), 331-353.

Faircloth, B., He, Y., & Higgins, H. (2011). The impact of service-learning-type experiences on preservice teachers' integration of principles of educational psychology. *Teaching Educational Psychology, 7*(1), 1-26.

Gallant, A., & Riley, P. (2014). Early career teacher attrition: New thoughts on an intractable problem. Teacher Development, 18(4), 562-580.

Garcia, E. E., & Cuellar, D. (2006). Who are these linguistically and culturally diverse students? *Teachers College Record, 108*(11), 2220-2246.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106-116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gay, G. (2003). *Becoming Multicultural Educators: Personal Journey Toward Professional Agency*. Jossey-Bass.

Gay, G. (2013). *Teaching To and Through Cultural Diversity. Curriculum Inquiry, 43*(1), 48–70. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23524357

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Multicultural Education Series, 3rd edition). Teachers College Press.

Gentry, R. (2012). Clinical experience for teacher candidates: Taking preparation beyond the four walls. *Research in Higher Education Journal, 15*, 1-13

Goldstein, K., Goldstein, L. S., & Lake, V. E. (2003). The impact of field experience on preservice teachers' understandings of caring. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 30*(3), 115-132.

Goggins II, L., & Dowcett, E. (2011). Beyond introduction: The need for competency in diversity training. *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities & Nations, 11*(2), 67-74.

Gollnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. C. (2021). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society*, (11th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Gorski, P. & Dalton, K. (2019). Striving for critical reflection in multicultural and social justice teacher education: Introducing a typology of reflection approaches. J*ournal of Teacher Education*, 71 (3) (2019), pp. 357-368. https://doi:10.1177/0022487119883545

Hill-Jackson, V. (2007). Wrestling whiteness: Three stages of shifting multicultural perspectives among white pre-service teachers. *Multicultural Perspectives, 9*(2), 29-35.

Ingram, I. L., & Walters, T. S., (2007). A critical reflection model to teach diversity and social justice. *Journal of Praxis in Education, 2*(1), 22-41.

Kent, A. M., Giles, R. M. (2016). Dual certification in general and special education: What is the role of field experience in preservice teacher preparation? *The Professional Educator*, *40*(2), 14 pgs. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1120324.pdf

Kent, A. M., & Giles, R. M. (2018). Principals' perspectives on teacher preparation: Does merging two programs make a difference regarding the abilities of new teachers? *Special Education Research, Policy & Practice, 2*(1), 53-72.

Kent, A. M., & Giles, R. M. (2013). The influential role of field experiences in a dual certification program. *Field Experience Journal, 12,* 59-85.

Kini, T. (22 January 2022). Tackling teacher shortages: What can states and districts do? *Learning Policy Institute*. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/teacher-shortage-what-can-states-and-districts-do.

Kondor, C., Owusu-Ansah, A., & Keyne-Michaels, L. (2019). Intercultural fortuitous learning: preparing prospective teachers to teach culturally diverse populations. *Multicultural Education*, *26*(3-4), 17.

Lafferty, K. E., & Pang, V. O. (2014). Challenging teacher bias: Implementing a community learning fair. *Issues in Teacher Education, 22*, 189-203.

Lampert, M. (2010). Learning teaching in, from, and for practice: What do we mean? Journal of *Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 21-34.

Lambeth, D. T., & Smith, A. M. (2016). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of culturally responsive teacher preparation. *Journal of Negro Education, 85*(1), 46–58. https://doi-org.libproxy.usouthal.edu/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.1.0046

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2011). Is meeting the diverse needs of all students possible? *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 48*(1), 13-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2011.10516716

Leatherman, J. M., & Niemeyer, J. A. (2004). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion: Factors influencing classroom practice. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 26*, 23–36.

Liu, K. (2017). Creating a dialogic space for prospective teacher critical reflection and transformative learning. *Reflective Practice*, 18(6), 805-820. doi:10.1080/14623943.2017.1361919

Loeb, S., Darling-Hammond, L., & Luczak, J. (2005). How teaching conditions predict teacher turnover in California schools. *Peabody Journal of Education, 80*(3), 44-70.

Maloch, B., Fine, J., & Flint, A. S. (2003). ''I just feel like I'm ready'': Exploring the influence of quality teacher preparation on beginning teachers. *The Reading Teacher, 56*, 348–350.

Marchel, C. A., Shields, C., & Winter, L. (2011). Preservice teachers as change agents: Going the extra mile in service-learning experiences. *Teaching Educational Psychology, 7*(2), 3-16.

Maynes, N., Hatt, B., & Wideman, R. (2013). Service learning as an alternative practicum experience in a preservice education program. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 43*(1), 80-99.

McFarland, J., Hussar, B., de Brey, C., Snyder, T., Wang, X., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Gebrekristos, S., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., Barmer, A., Bullock Mann, F., and Hinz, S. (2017). The Condition of Education 2017 (NCES 2017- 144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017144

Miller, P. C., & Mikulec, E. A. (2014). Pre-service teachers confronting issues of diversity through a radical field experience. *Multicultural Education, 21*(2), 18–24.

Nettle, E. B. (1998.) Stability and change in the beliefs of student teachers during practice teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 14*(2), 193-204.

Nieto, J. (2006). The cultural plunge: cultural immersion as a means of promoting self-awareness and cultural sensitivity among student teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 33*(1), 75-84.

Recchia, S., Beck, L., Esposito, A., & Tarrant, K. (2009). Diverse Field Experiences as a Catalyst for Preparing High Quality Early Childhood Teachers. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 30*(2), 105–122.

Reeves, L., Johnson, T., Giles, R. M. (2019). Exploring Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness to Teach Students with Disabilities. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals* (Spring-Summer), 112-129.

Ritter, J. K., Powell, D., & Hawley, T. S. (2007). Takin' it to the streets: A collaborative self-study into social studies field instruction. *Social Studies Research and Practice*, *2*, 341-57.

Siwatu, K. O. (2007). Preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy and outcome expectancy beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*, 1086–1101.

Shandomo, H. M. (2010). The role of critical reflection in teacher education. *School-University Partnerships, 4*(1), 101-113.

Shippen, M. E., Crites, S. A., Houchins, D. E., Ramsey, M. L., & Simon, M. (2005). Preservice teachers' perceptions of including students with disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, 28*(2), 92-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/088840640502800202

Sleeter, C. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(2), 94-106.

Sleeter, C. E. (2017). Critical race theory and the whiteness of teacher education. *Urban Education, 52*(2), 155-169.

Unal, A. & Unal, Z. (2021). Preparing teachers for diverse schools - An online tool for calculating school diversity for field placements. *Journal of Research in Education, 30*(1), 29-52.

U.S. Department of Education (2007). *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the 2004–05 Teacher Follow-up Survey.*

Vaz, S., Wilson, N., Falkmer, M., Sim, A., Scott, M., Cordier, R., & Falkmer, T. (2015) Factors associated with primary school teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. PLoS One, 10(8): e0137002. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0137002

Van Hook, C. W. (2002). Preservice teachers reflect on memories from early childhood. Journal of *Early Childhood Teacher Education, 23*(2), 143–155.

Williams, N. R. (2019). Getting started with culturally responsive teaching. EDUTOPIA. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/article/getting-started-culturally-responsive-teaching

Wolfe, R. B., & Falk-Ross, F. C. (2002). Impact of early clinical experiences on student attitudes about diversity. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 23*,157–165.

Zeichner, K. (2010). University-based teacher education: Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college- and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*, 89-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109347671

Dr. Alicia Moore is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Education at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. She has several areas of expertise including, but not limited to Multiculturalism, Cultural Proficiency, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. She holds certifications/ endorsements in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. For the past 15 years, she has served as the co-editor of The Association for the study of African American History's (ASALH) Black History Bulletin. Her research interests include the experiences of African- American Students at Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Education and the Perceptions of White Pre-Service Teachers Regarding Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT).

Dr. Rebecca M. Giles is a Professor in the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, AL, where she teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. She has spoken and published widely in the areas of early education, literacy, and teacher preparation. She is the author of two books – *Write Now! Publishing with Young Authors, PreK through Grade 2* (Heinemann, 2007) and *A Young Writer's World: Creating Classrooms Where Authors Abound* (2020, Exchange Press).

Teachers as Leaders: Increasing Teacher Self-Efficacy and

Retention in Rural Louisiana Schools

Tia Neal

Catahoula Parish School Board and the University of Louisiana at Monroe

Introduction

In education, one of the greatest challenges facing school districts is teacher retention. A longitudinal study by the Institute of Education Sciences: National Center for Educational Statistics analyzed public school teachers' attrition and mobility within the first five years of their careers (United States Department of Education [USDE], 2015). It was found that, "Among all beginning teachers in 2007–08, 10 percent did not teach in 2008–09…and 17 percent did not teach in 2011–12" (USDE, 2015, p. 3). Moreover, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are more likely to consider leaving the profession or retiring (Zamarro et al., 2021). This leads to teacher shortages in core subject areas needed for students to be appropriately challenged and prepared for college and careers. In Louisiana, where this study takes place, there was a significant statewide shortage of teachers during the 2021-2022 school year in the core areas of English as a second language, special education, mathematics, sciences, and world languages (USDE, 2022). Apart from mathematics and science, where the shortage included grade levels 6th-12th, teacher shortages in the other areas ranged from prekindergarten to 12th grade (USDE, 2022).

In addition to teacher shortages, during the global pandemic, teacher self-efficacy regarding the ability to organize learning in virtual environments was low (Tas et al., 2021). Furthermore, the low number of students who attended their virtual classrooms negatively

impacted teacher motivational levels (Tas et al., 2021). Given that teacher self-efficacy decreased and difficulties retaining teachers were exacerbated by the pandemic (Zamarro et al., 2021), it is becoming increasingly important to provide support and training for teachers that focuses on collective leadership practices to give teachers a voice within the school systems (Youngstown State University [YSU], 2021).

Theoretical Framework

When educators are given opportunities to improve their practice and grow as leaders, they can experience an increase in their self-concept and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), which refers to "one's collective self-perceptions (a) formed through experiences with, and interpretations of, the environment and (b) heavily influenced by reinforcements and evaluations by significant other persons" (Schunk, 2012, p. 383). Self-efficacy is made up of elements, such as self-esteem and self-confidence, that influence the thoughts of human beings regarding their abilities to successfully complete given tasks (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). For example, if teachers have high self-efficacy beliefs regarding their abilities to complete given tasks, they will likely do so successfully.

Observational learning and social cognitive theory accentuate the idea that much of what human beings learn occurs in a social atmosphere (Bandura, 1986). The social atmosphere can be anywhere, occurring at any time, and can include a diverse group of individuals. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, there is a connection between learning, the environment, and human behavior. In other words, humans are affected by their environment and personal factors, and their behavior is adjusted accordingly. When given leadership opportunities within schools, teacher self-efficacy increases, as well as motivational levels, and through the sense of empowerment gained, teachers' commitment to the profession is strengthened (FranklinCovey,

2022). By exploring this theory in relation to how teacher retention can be increased through professional development that targets the enhancement of leadership skills and self-efficacy, school districts can design and implement more appropriate leadership development activities for educators that decrease the rate at which teachers leave the profession.

Problem Statement

When a district experiences low teacher self-efficacy and high teacher turnover, student achievement is negatively impacted, with higher turnover rates occurring in districts serving low-income students (Darling-Hammon et al., 2017). In Catahoula Parish (a parish is similar to counties in other states and is unique to the state of Louisiana), where the study takes place, there are 1,006 students in grades kindergarten through 12th, all of whom attend low-income Title 1 schools (Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE], 2021). Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides federal financial assistance to school districts that serve a high percentage of children from low-income homes to ensure that the students are provided high quality educational opportunities that meet the state academic standards (LDOE, 2017).

The amount of funding a school system receives to operate is based on the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), which Louisiana allocates for education to school districts based on the number of students per district. In the Catahoula Parish School District (CPSD), the per pupil allotment allocated by the state for the 2021-2022 school year was $ 7,711. The amount of funding received through MFP dollars drives the base salary for teachers throughout the state, and in the CPSD, certified teachers average a salary of $41,584 per year. Catahoula is bordered by six school districts (Avoyelles, LaSalle, Caldwell, Franklin, Tensas, and Concordia), and apart from Tensas, all the districts pay average salaries ranging from $42,713 to $45,765, which are greater than Catahoula's average teacher salary (iteach, 2022). Therefore, the CPSD typically

experiences a high teacher turnover rate of 14% each year as teachers leave the district seeking employment in higher paying districts.

To counteract low self-efficacy and high teacher turnover, the CPSD provides teachers with professional development and relies heavily on grant funding from The Rapides Foundation (TRF) of central Louisiana to support stipends for teachers. Grant funds from TRF are intended to support district plans that include professional development for teachers and strengthen leadership capacity within districts (The Rapides Foundation, 2022). Professional development is extremely important, especially at the district level, for the teachers in Catahoula as many of the small schools only have one teacher per grade level, and some have multiple grade levels per classroom and teacher. Opportunities to collaborate with district colleagues are essential for collaboration, growth, and increasing teacher self-efficacy.

Purpose of the Study

The CPSD was a recipient of the TRF Effective Schools Initiative (ESI) grant during the 2021-2022, which provided $85,000 to the district, and part of the funds were used to pilot the Catahoula Leadership Academy (CLA). Constructed by Courtney Dumas, Miranda Britt, and Shannon Streett of Edu20/20, the goal of the CLA was to seek out teachers within the district who exhibited potential for leadership, to build on their existing skills, and to strengthen their self-efficacy. Working alongside the district, Edu20/20 provided professional development and leadership training for these select CLA teachers to nurture their confidence and teacher efficacy, and to create a talent pipeline within the district. Ultimately, the district hoped this would increase teacher retention.

Given that most of the surrounding parishes have higher salaries, the teachers in Catahoula could seek employment elsewhere, and the CPSD implemented the CLA with the

23

intent of retaining teachers by developing a culture of collective leadership that would give teachers a decision-making voice within their schools. The CLA sought to build a network of colleagues throughout the district that would support one another, foster collaborative relationships, and strengthen teacher competencies based on unit and lesson ownership within a curriculum, lesson implementation, and leading effective professional learning communities (PLCs). The intent of the CLA was to provide the participants with effective systems and structures through professional learning experiences that increased their self-efficacy by giving them opportunities to experience leadership roles within their school environments (Edu20/20, 2022).

Significance of the Study

Although this study takes place in a rural parish in the southern region of the United States of America, the work of the CLA is extraordinarily significant. Not only does the study provide insight as to how professional development focused on teacher leadership can increase self-efficacy and lead to teacher retention in a rural area such as the CPSD, but the study can also be replicated in larger school districts as well. Teachers who believe strongly in their abilities can create environments that promote mastery learning experiences for students (Bandura, 1997) and are likely to have a stronger commitment to their schools (FranklinCovey, 2022) regardless of location. The results of this study can assist district leaders in designing professional development activities that can positively impact teacher self-efficacy and, thereby, lead to retention.

<div align="center">

Literature Review

</div>

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory is founded in an agentic point of view in which people are self-regulating, not just reactive to environmental forces or internal impulses (Bandura & Locke, 2003). "This theory specifies four core features of human agency, which include intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness" (Bandura & Locke, 2003, p. 97). Human beings can adopt choices and regulate their own behaviors based on environmental and personal factors that influence their lives. According to Bandura (1999):

> One must distinguish between the physical basis of thought and its functional properties. Cognitive processes are not only emergent brain activities; they also exert determinative influence. The human mind is generative, creative, proactive, and self-reflective not just reactive. People operate as thinkers of the thoughts that serve determinative functions. They construct thoughts about future courses of action to suit ever-changing situations, assess their likely functional value, organize, and deploy strategically the selected options, evaluate the adequacy of their thinking based on the effects which their actions produce and make whatever changes may be necessary. (p. 23)

Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on the interactions that humans have among their behaviors, their environment, and their own personal awareness or understanding. Therefore, one can conclude that if the learning environment (professional development) provides teachers with positive learning experiences (collective leadership development), teacher self-efficacy will increase as they develop relationships with their colleagues and grow in their crafts, leading to increased teacher retention. According to Bandura (1997), this framework of human behavior is a triadic reciprocal that continues indefinitely, with human behaviors both influenced by and influencing personal experiences and the social environment.

Triadic Reciprocality

Bandura (1999) developed the causal model of triadic reciprocality to illustrate the social cognitive theory. Bandura (1999) stated that the triadic reciprocality model was one in which, "personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events, behavioral patterns, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another

25

bidirectionally" (p. 21). According to the triadic reciprocality model, people are not only producers, but are also products of their environments (Bandura, 1999).

The social cognitive theory divides the environment into three separate categories, which include the imposed environment, selected environment, and constructed environment (Bandura, 1999), and for the purpose of this study, the district chose to focus on the constructed environment. "The construal, selection and construction of environments affect the nature of the reciprocal interplay between personal, behavioral and environmental factors" (Bandura, 1999, p. 23). The more teachers' self-efficacy increases because of a constructed environment, such as leadership development, the more likely they will perform tasks successfully. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect whether teachers think in ways that are self-debilitating or self-enhancing (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy beliefs can also affect teachers' motivational levels, the choices they make that determine the courses of their careers, and how they endure difficulties, stressors, and adversities faced in their school environments (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003). Therefore, a high sense of self-efficacy is a pivotal element necessary for teachers to take on leadership roles that equate to a greater commitment to their schools and districts (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001).

Gap in the Literature

This research focused specifically on improving self-efficacy and teacher retention through a purposefully designed leadership academy in a rural school district. A gap exists in this literature as there are few studies that exist of this nature within rural school districts in the state of Louisiana. This study is intended to fill the void in this area of literature.

Research Method

This study utilized a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods, to gain a complete and thorough answer to the research question. Applying a quasi-experimental design, the study was used to determine causal impact of the CLA on the target population of teachers who were selected non-randomly and volunteered to participate.

Research Question

This study sought to answer the following research question: Can participation in a leadership academy increase teacher self-efficacy and retention in a rural school system?

Participants & Setting

Each of the participants (see Appendix E for a list of participants) were purposefully selected by supervisors and principals within the district as teachers who had exhibited potential for leadership, had multiple years of experience within their classrooms, and had adhered to district and state policies; no other criteria were needed. There were ten participants: one male and nine females. Of the participants, there were nine Caucasian and one African American. Participants taught a variety of subject areas and grade levels ranging from kindergarten to grade 12. There were six elementary teachers, one middle school teacher, and three high school teachers.

The CLA participants were immersed in a teacher leadership experience during the 2021-2022 school year during which time they met twice per month in a face-to-face setting. On the first day of the month, they worked toward increasing their self-efficacy regarding teacher leader competencies set forth by Edu20/20 (see Appendix A) that align with Louisiana state credentials for teacher leadership roles (LDOE, 2018). The teachers devoted time to developing a deep understanding of the competencies throughout the year long program.

As they worked together within groups completing team building activities, the teachers began to form professional relationships with one another across the district. Forming relationships was imperative, as on the second day of the month, the teachers spent time observing one another and providing feedback using the Edu20/20 observation tool (see Appendix B). After observations were made of all participants' classes, the teachers worked together to design lessons and co-teach in one another's classrooms across the district.

Leadership opportunities were provided for CLA participants throughout the school year. The teacher leaders facilitated parish-wide PLCs during the first semester, and during the second, they worked with Edu20/20 to create professional development presentations for new teachers within the CPSD. The CLA participants led sessions that spanned a variety of topics such as curriculum implementation and lesson ownership, classroom management, and parental involvement. As teacher leaders, the participants were even able to recommend curriculum changes to the district that were adopted.

At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, the Edu20/20 held a graduation ceremony for the participants. Members of the school board, principals, supervisors, representatives from TRF, and the families of the participants were invited to attend. At the graduation ceremony, the work of the academy was shared with the attendees, and accolades were given to the participants for their time and dedication to their students, their schools, and the district.

Instrumentation

All questions on the instrumentation protocols used for the study were developed by both the CPSD and Edu20/20. Quantitative data was measured using both an ordinal scale and a nominal scale. Qualitative data was obtained using open-ended questions that allowed participants to develop and direct their responses according to their own terms.

Data Collection

To determine teacher perceptions regarding their levels of self-efficacy in relation to the teacher leader competencies, quantitative data was obtained by having the participants rate themselves on a Likert scale of 1-5 for each indicator (see Appendix A), with 1= Beginner and 5= Expert. Teacher participants completed these proficiency ratings in-person during one of the CLA meetings using a Google Form. Scores were then converted into percentages by averaging the range of proficiency and dividing by the maximum number of points for each indicator. Additionally, to determine if the CLA made an impact regarding teacher retention, quantitative data was obtained by having the participants respond to a nominal survey (see Appendix C). Edu20/20 emailed the participants, and they responded via Google Form. Qualitative data was obtained using a Google Form (see Appendix D) that was emailed to participants from the CPSD. All participants voluntarily completed the data collection forms with the understanding that both the CPSD and Edu20/20 would use the data obtained to make program adjustments and improvements.

Findings

All data was cross-checked and verified by the district's Internal Review Board.

Data Analysis

All ten participants rated themselves using the teacher leader competencies (see Appendix A), and the percentages regarding their proficiency ratings were charted to serve as growth indicators. Charting the data allowed Edu20/20 to make needed program adjustments during the school year as they were better able to follow the learning trajectories of the participants. It should be noted that during the winter of 2021, some of the percentages decreased. Participants indicated that as their understanding of each indicator grew, they adjusted

Figure 1. CLA Teacher Leader Competency Self-Assessment 2021-2022 School Year

Competency	Fall 2021	Winter 2021*	Spring 2022
Unit Ownership	73%	76%	83%
Lesson Ownership	78%	75%	84%
Lesson Implementation	77%	80%	86%
Student Work Analysis	68%	64%	75%
Leading Effective PLCs	37%	51%	78%

their ratings to better reflect their construction of new knowledge around each indicator. Figure 1 shows the change in percentages for the participants given each indicator of the teacher leader competencies.

Nine out of ten participants responded to the nominal survey (see Appendix C) to determine if the CLA had made an impact on their decision to remain as an educator employed by the CPSD. Of the participants, 88.9% stated that their participation in the CLA had influenced their decision to remain in the CPSD as an educator, while 11.1% stated that the CLA was not influential in this decision-making process. The participant who chose "no" on the nominal scale is considered an outlier as the reason for remaining in the CPSD as an educator was based solely on residency in Catahoula. It should be noted that the participant who chose "no" on the nominal scale indicated that participation in the CLA increased teacher capacity and growth.

Data obtained from the ten participants who responded to the open-ended questions (see Appendix D) was qualitatively coded to generate common themes, such as leadership, increased confidence and self-efficacy, and collaboration. Most of the participants stated that because opportunities for collaboration and professional development focused on unit and lesson

implementation, their self-efficacy and self-confidence grew as teachers, which better enabled them to lead their peers in effective PLCs. Observing one another and providing feedback was challenging for the participants in the beginning of the program, as was self-reflecting on their own lessons, but these experiences also afforded them opportunities to grow in their craft, increasing their self-efficacy as teachers. Many of the teachers stated that their self-efficacy had increased because, as members of the CLA, they felt valued by the district.

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that participation in a leadership academy does increase teacher self-efficacy which leads to retention in a rural school system, even when conditions such as high pay scales exist in nearby parishes. When given opportunities to lead and to collaborate with fellow teachers across the district through the CLA, the participants felt respected by the CPSD as educators. These teachers now have a deeper understanding of lesson implementation and leading as teachers, and that positively impacted their perceptions regarding their abilities to deliver effective lessons and lead PLCs.

Even still, the most resilient teachers can find themselves doubting their abilities as teachers when faced with adversities (Bandura, 1997); nevertheless, the teachers in the CLA have been given the tools they need to overcome difficulties they will face as educators. Those tools include a network of colleagues throughout the district, including fellow teachers, principals, supervisors, as well as Edu20/20. They also have learned the benefit of making informed decisions through the lens of self-reflection. By providing the teachers with the CLA experience, the CPSD has begun to build a pipeline of educators who can not only support one another, but also new teachers as they enter the profession as well.

31

Implications for Practice

What do these findings mean to the field of education? Through this study, the CPSD and Edu20/20 were able to adjust the environment of participants by providing targeted professional development that increased teacher self-efficacy, consequently, leading to an increase in district teacher retention. Each of these factors, the environment, the participants, and the participants' behavior, had an operable dependence on one another, functioning within an interdependent structure of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), "Human adaptation and change are rooted in social systems. Therefore, personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences" (p. 6). Thus, applying the social cognitive theory to the development of appropriate leadership activities, school districts could design and implement those activities for educators that decrease the rate at which teachers leave the profession.

Limitations

Internal limitations that may have impacted the validity of the study include the small sample size of only ten participants. There was only one male in the study, only one African American participant, and only one middle school teacher. Instrumentation used in the study was created by the CPSD and Edu20/20 and therefore was not standardized. The study was conducted within a singular rural school district in the southern region of the United States, and the results may or may not be transferrable to larger school districts.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the CPSD moves into year two of the CLA with Edu20/20, there will be two cohorts of teachers. Cohort one for the 2022-2023 school year will participate in the CLA under the same teacher leader competencies utilized for this study. Teachers for this cohort should include a more diverse group of educators to improve upon the limitations of this study. Cohort two for the

2022-2023 school year will consist of select teachers from the 2021-2022 CLA, and they will have two pathways, peer leadership and administrative leadership, that will guide their work.

Moving forward, the CPSD needs to consider how teacher participation in the CLA impacts not only teacher self-efficacy, but also student self-efficacy as well. Does an increase in teacher self-efficacy lead to an increase in student self-efficacy? If student self-efficacy improves, how does that correlate with standardized assessment scores? If student self-efficacy improves, how does that impact school performance scores and district performance scores? If teachers benefit from a leadership academy, could students also benefit from a district leadership academy that would engage students in critical thinking opportunities that encourages them to take an active role in their education? These questions will be the central focus for the district with year two of the CLA during the 2022-2023 school year.

Conclusion

Collective teacher efficacy is a vital component to growth as a district. As participants developed a better understanding of the teacher leadership competencies, their self-efficacy increased. Staying the course for the CLA is important for the CPSD if the district wishes to grow as a whole unit. Empowering teachers through leadership training and recognizing them for their abilities as professionals is a first step in improving the district.

Teacher retention and progression as a district begins with individual teachers at individual schools. Investing in teachers and ensuring that they feel valued needs to be at the forefront of professional development design. This is exceptionally important if districts seek to cultivate a generation of educators who will be committed to their students, their schools, and themselves as experts in their given content areas and grade levels. Education itself is not static.

It is an ever-changing field, and as educators, we must always endeavor to grow ourselves to provide our students with the dynamic education that they deserve.

References

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman and Company.

Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *2*(1), 21-41.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Development*, *67*(3), 1206-1222.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, *72*(1), 187–206.

Bandura, A., Caprara, G.V., Barbaranelli, C., Gerbino, M., & Pastorelli, C. (2003). Role of affective self-regulatory efficacy in diverse spheres of psychosocial functioning. *Child Development*, *74*(3), 769–782.

Bandura, A., & Locke, E.A. (2003). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*, 87-99. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.88.1.87

Darling-Hammond, L., Sutcher, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2017, November). *Why addressing teacher turnover matters*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/why-addressing-teacher-turnover-matters#:~:text=High%20turnover%20undermines%20student%20achievement&text=Research%20shows%20that%20high%20teacher,students%20and%20students%20of%20color.

Edu20/20. (2022). *Supporting, coaching, and training today's teachers and leaders*. edutwentytwenty.com

FranklinCovey. (2022). *Leader in me: Teacher efficacy*. https://www.leaderinme.org/teacher-efficacy/

iteach. (2022). *Average Louisiana teacher salary*. https://www.iteach.net/blog/average-louisiana-teacher-salary/

Louisiana Department of Education. (2017). *Louisiana believes: Louisiana's elementary & secondary education plan pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/louisiana-believes/louisianas-essa-state-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=23

Louisiana Department of Education. (2018). *Louisiana establishes credentials for teacher leadership roles*. https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2018/10/17/louisiana-establishes-credentials-for-teacher-leadership-roles

Louisiana Department of Education. (2021). *Preliminary Title I school list: Louisiana believes*. https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/family-support-toolbox-resources/preliminary-title-i-school-list.xlsx?sfvrsn=30099e1f_10

Schunk, D.H. (2012). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

United States Department of Education. (2015). *Public school teacher attrition and mobility in the first five years: Results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007–08 beginning teacher longitudinal study*. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015337.pdf

United States Department of Education. (2022). *Teacher shortage areas*. https://tsa.ed.gov/#/reports

Tas, Y., Eminoglu, S., Atila, G., Yildiz, Y., & Bozkurt, U. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and opinions about distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 22*(14), 229-253.

The Rapides Foundation. (2022). *District grant for effective schools.* https://www.rapidesfoundation.org/Grants/Education.aspx

Youngstown State University. (2021). *The Future of Teacher Leadership After COVID-19*. https://online.ysu.edu/degrees/education/msed/curriculum-instruction-teacher-leader/teacher-leadership-after-covid-19/

Zamarro, G., Camp, A., Fuchsman, D., & McGee, J. B. (2021). *Understanding how COVID-19 has changed teachers' chances of remaining in the classroom*. Education Reform Faculty and Graduate Students Publications. https://scholarworks.uark.edu/edrepub/127

Dr. Tia Neal has 20 years of experience in education and currently serves as an instructional supervisor at the Catahoula Parish School Board and as an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM). She supports teachers in curriculum implementation in her school district and teaches graduate courses in the field of gifted for the School of Education at ULM. Her research interests include self-efficacy, teacher retention, curriculum implementation, and academically gifted education.

Appendix A

Catahoula Leadership Academy

Teacher Leader Competencies	
Unit Ownership	**The Teacher Leader can identify essential content of curriculum units based on end assessments.** **Unit Ownership Look Fors:** ● The teacher begins with the end in mind by identifying skills and knowledge needed for end of unit tasks. ● The teacher prepares lessons connected to the end of unit goals and tasks.
Lesson Ownership	**The Teacher Leader plans an effective lesson based on Essential Content Questions:** ● What do I want students to be able to know and do by the end of the lesson? ● How will I know if students learned it? ● What will I do for students who already understand the content? What will I do for those who aren't "there yet"? ● How will I ensure that *all* students engage in the thinking of the lesson? **Lesson Ownership Look-Fors:** ● Lesson plan objectives are identified and connected to a standard. ● Checks-for-understanding are identified. ● Criteria for mastery is identified. ● Plans include moves to support struggling and on target students. ● Student engagement moves are included in the lesson plan.

Teacher Leader Competencies	
Unit Ownership	**The Teacher Leader can identify essential content of curriculum units based on end assessments.** **Unit Ownership Look Fors:** ● The teacher begins with the end in mind by identifying skills and knowledge needed for end of unit tasks. ● The teacher prepares lessons connected to the end of unit goals and tasks.
Lesson Ownership	**The Teacher Leader plans an effective lesson based on Essential Content Questions:** ● What do I want students to be able to know and do by the end of the lesson? ● How will I know if students learned it? ● What will I do for students who already understand the content? What will I do for those who aren't "there yet"? ● How will I ensure that *all* students engage in the thinking of the lesson? **Lesson Ownership Look-Fors:** ● Lesson plan objectives are identified and connected to a standard. ● Checks-for-understanding are identified. ● Criteria for mastery is identified. ● Plans include moves to support struggling and on target students. ● Student engagement moves are included in the lesson plan.

Appendix B

Teacher: _____ Subject: _____ Time: _____

Mission/Unit and Lesson #: _____

Teacher Use of Curriculum	Student Engagement in Curriculum
The teacher is using Tier I materials during the designated core instructional time. ☐ Yes ☐ No The teacher is teaching the lesson as intended by the curriculum. ☐ Yes ☐ No The teacher is within one week of the curriculum pacing guide. ☐ Yes ☐ No	The students are using Tier I materials. ☐ Yes ☐ No

CLA Lesson Implementation Competencies

Teacher Moves	Evidence
☐ There is evidence that the teacher owned the lesson before teaching it.	
☐ The teacher spends the majority of the lesson on essential content.	
☐ There is a clear throughline from one activity to the next.	

Student Moves	Evidence
☐ All students are held accountable for their learning (i.e. each student is doing the work/thinking of the lesson).	

Appendix C

Lead. Grow. Serve.

Has participating in the Catahoula Leadership Academy impacted your decision to continue to teach in Catahoula Parish Schools? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

If you answered "no" to the above question, please explain what actions the DISTRICT can take in the future to encourage you continue teaching in Catahoula Parish Schools. *

Your answer

If you answered "no" to question 1, please explain what actions the ACADEMY can take in the future to encourage you to continue teaching in Catahoula Parish Schools.

Your answer

Appendix D
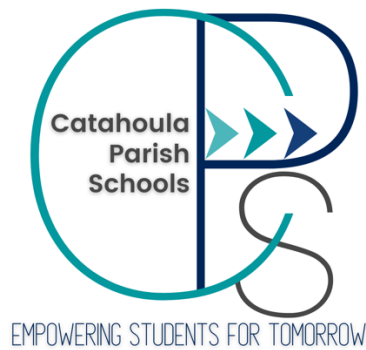
How has participation in the Catahoula Leadership Academy impacted your role as a teacher? *

Long answer text

How has participation in the Catahoula Leadership Academy impacted your self-confidence *
and self-efficacy as a teacher?

Long answer text

Participation in the Catahoula Leadership Academy has helped to create a network of *
professional colleagues on whom I can trust.

⭕ True

⭕ False

Please elaborate on your response (true or false) to the above question: *

Appendix E

The CPSD and Edu20/20 would like to thank the following teachers for participation in the CLA:

Aneshia Barber
Chris Cather
Miranda Coon
Janet Davis
Amanda McGuffee
Katie Nappier
Courtney Powell
Leslie Scarbrough
Christy Taylor
Emilee Winborne

Utilizing a Microteaching Learning Cycle with Student Teachers:

A Practice-Based Pedagogical Tool

Shane Cavanaugh and Kristina Rouech

Central Michigan University

Introduction

Providing teacher candidates with a way to authentically practice and reflect on their emerging teaching skills is a critical part of their preparation. In our work with student teachers, we do this through microteaching video analysis which involves the student teacher recording a short video of themselves teaching in their classroom placement. This microteaching video is then analyzed by the student teacher, and later during our seminar, viewed and discussed with a group of peers. After seminar, the student teacher writes a scaffolded reflection describing what they learned about their teaching and the specific component of practice that was the focus of the microteaching process. After several years of using microteaching in this way, we can report many positive outcomes, but the most powerful benefit is clear - teacher candidates can actually *see* their teaching, specific moments of success and struggles, rather than simply reflecting on how they *thought* or *felt* the teaching went. Microteaching allows teacher candidates to identify specific teacher and student moves in their own practice by analyzing videos of their teaching.

Based on our experiences with student teachers and microteaching, we have developed a guiding framework we call the Microteaching Learning Cycle. Our framework will be explained in this paper and offered as a potential model for others to use with teacher candidates during their field placements.

Literature Review

Microteaching is a common teacher education technique that began at Stanford in the 1960's with pre-service teachers as a way to hone particular teaching skills with a strong behavioral emphasis. Since then, it has evolved with the ease of recording and reviewing video, and remains a staple in teacher education programs (Cavanaugh, 2022). While some elements of microteaching may vary, its essence is what Hattie (2009) describes as, "…an often intense under-the-microscope view of … teaching" (p. 112). Typically, microteaching involves pre-service or in-service teachers planning and video recording a specific element of their teaching to be analyzed and reflected upon. Microteaching is not a recording of an entire lesson, instead it is concise and focuses only on a particular teaching practice such as leading a group discussion. For pre-service teachers in particular, microteaching offers a way to scale-back the complexities of teaching to focus on critical elements of practice. Reviewing their own microteaching videos gives pre-service teachers a chance to review and learn from their early teaching experiences.

The literature shows a variety of positive outcomes for microteaching with pre- and in-service teachers. These include an increased ability to "notice" student learning, successfully shifting focus from the teacher's actions to the students' learning (Barnhart & van Es, 2015; Sherin & van Es, 2005, 2008; Sherin & Han, 2004; Starr & Strickland, 2007; Tuluce & Cecen, 2017); improving teaching self-efficacy (Arsal, 2015; Sen, 2009); increased Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Altuk et al., 2012; van Es & Sherin, 2008; Godek, 2016; Johnson & Cotterman, 2015; Lederman & Lederman 2019; Zhou & Xu, 2017); and using microteaching videos as a tool for self-reflection (Amobi & Irwin, 2009; van Es & Sherin, 2008; Kourieos, 2016; Rich & Hannafin, 2009; Rosaen et al., 2008; Sydnor, 2016; Tripp & Rich, 2012; Welsh & Schaffer, 2016). In addition, Hattie's (2009, 2016) meta-analysis of factors affecting student achievement

has consistently found microteaching to be a high-impact practice; the 2016 meta-analysis shows it as the second highest impact practice with an effect size of 0.88.

The Microteaching Learning Cycle

We have used microteaching as part of our student teaching seminar for several years, refining our method based on our observations and student feedback. Our current approach uses a structured sequence for student teachers to examine a component of teaching practice - from observing expert teachers to their own teaching, reflection, and re-teaching. As teacher education has moved away from being largely "knowledge-based" toward "practice-based", several learning cycles have been developed as practice-based pedagogical tools for those working with novice teachers. McDonald, Kazemi, and Kavanagh's (2013) Learning Cycle is one such pedagogical tool that can "support teachers in learning to practice" (p. 381) by offering "guided assistance to candidates to learn particular practices" (p. 382). Similarly, Lampert et al. (2013)'s Cycle of Enactment and Investigation, offers "deliberate practice" where novice teachers receive "feedback from three sources: their peers, teacher educators who observe their teaching, and the students whom they teach" (p. 229). Following these two learning cycles, the Teacher Education by Design (TEDD) project out of the University of Washington developed a simplified learning cycle that consists of four parts - Introduce, Prepare, Enact, and Analyze (Teacher Education by Design, 2014). The University of Michigan's TeachingWorks (2020) now uses TEDD's Learning Cycle, but with high-leverage practices replacing the "instructional activity" used in the Lampert et al. (2013) and TEDD cycles.

Each of these learning cycles has influenced how we use microteaching with student teachers in our student teaching seminar. Taking these learning cycles and adapting them based on experience using microteaching, we have developed a framework we call the Microteaching

Learning Cycle. We use the Microteaching Learning Cycle to guide student teachers through an examination of core teaching practices and an analysis of their early attempts to enact them in the classroom. Since our cycle has been developed for student teachers, those at the ultimate "enact" stage of their teacher education career, our Microteaching Learning Cycle places more emphasis and time on teaching and analyzing one's teaching than on the introduce/observe/prepare/rehearsal phases, although these parts are also important in our cycle.

The center of our Microteaching Learning Cycle, uses our state's identified Core Teaching Practices (Michigan Department of Education, n.d.), what TeachingWorks and others call "high-leverage practices'. According to Michigan's Department of Education (n.d.), 19 research-based Core Teaching Practices have been identified that "teacher candidates are to develop, practice, and demonstrate appropriate mastery of within their clinical experiences". A major focus of our student teaching seminar is to examine, enact, and analyze two Core Teaching Practices - CTP #1 Leading a Group Discussion; and CTP #2 Explaining and Modeling Content, Practices, and Strategies.

Microteaching is a useful pedagogical tool to help our novice teachers learn to enact Core Teaching Practices, and our Microteaching Learning Cycle has helped to scaffold that experience in their field placements. Each stage of our Microteaching Learning Cycle is described below and represented in the following figure:
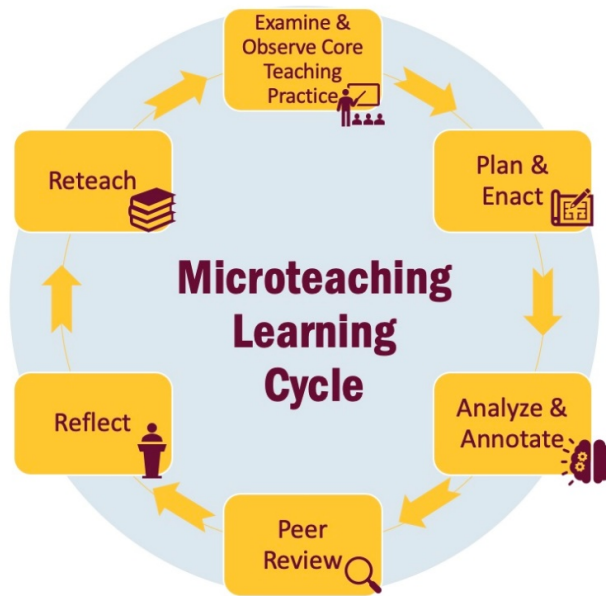
Figure 1: Microteaching Learning Cycle

Microteaching Learning Cycle

1. <u>Examine and Observe Core Teaching Practice:</u> The first step in the Microteaching Learning Cycle sets the stage for the others. The Core Teaching Practice (CTP) is introduced (e.g., leading a group discussion) and as a class, we examine [TeachingWorks' decomposition](#) or breakdown of the practice. Our novice teachers are also asked to reflect on what they know about the component from past courses and what they've observed in the field. For example, we ask them to observe their cooperating teacher and notice specific teacher moves that lead to fruitful group discussions. This is a critical point in the process, to remind students what they have already learned and lead them into a more focused study of the practice within the context of their field placement. This phase in the cycle we always analyze video clips of expert teachers enacting the core teaching practice, asking students in small groups to identify each aspect of the practice as outlined in the decomposition. We may also show "non-example" video clips with a discussion of what is lacking. With permission, we show

microteaching videos of former students as non-examples, emphasizing the difficulty of enacting core teaching practices well. We find that seeing last year's student teachers struggle, helps put the current students at ease as they prepare for their own microteachings.

2. Plan and Enact: Planning and enacting are combined in our cycle because we have made them a deeply integrated process. Student teachers will plan in-depth what they will soon enact. In our view, the "plan" piece is the most important part of the Microteaching Learning Cycle, and over the years we have expanded this to include a highly-scaffolded planning document our students must complete before enacting their microteaching. The planning document was adapted and expanded upon from experience with multiple observation tools from the TeachingWorks website (2022). The planning document asks them to consider and plan for all elements of the CTP, including: Preparing; Framing/Launching, Orchestration, and Concluding. The planning document requires the student teacher to answer specific questions for each element in terms of teacher moves and anticipated student thinking and behavior. A portion of the Leading a Group Discussion planning document is included below for reference. Once students have completed the planning for their microteaching they move to enactment, which includes teaching and video recording the component of practice in their student teaching placement. We don't prescribe one way to video record their lesson and students will often try different ways for each microteaching. As video recording and editing technology has become increasingly easy and readily available, students have very few problems recording their teaching. Some will ask their cooperating teacher to record the lesson on their phones while others arrange their laptop to record. We stress that the microteaching videos do not need to be perfect, but we do need to be able to see and hear the

student teacher throughout.

Use the table below to plan your microteaching. This table is designed to help you plan your group discussion. The completed table will be **uploaded as an attachment with your microteaching in GoReact.**

	Teacher Moves:	**Anticipate Student Thinking & Behavior:**
Discussion Enabling (Prepare): Select appropriate content to discuss	Content to discuss:	What might students think about this topic?
Framing/Launching:	Discussion goal: How will you activate prior knowledge? What specific open-ended question(s) will you ask? How will you start the discussion? What will you tell/ask students?	What prior knowledge will students likely have about this content? Will there likely be some students who have no prior knowledge on your topic? If so, how will you address this?
Orchestration: During the discussion	How will you encourage & support students in the discussion? How will you ensure that you elicit ideas from a variety of students?	Do you think students will be eager to participate in the discussion? Or, do you think it will be hard to get students to share their thinking?

Figure 2. Sample portion of the planning document for the Leading a Group Discussion microteaching.

3. <u>Analyze and Annotate:</u> Once the student teacher has taught and recorded their lesson highlighting the assigned CTP, they view the recording and edit the video in terms of length. These are true microteachings and must be edited down to 5-10 minutes, only including key parts of their teaching which highlights the CTP. We require brevity in microteaching videos for two main reasons: 1) To force the pre-service teacher to hone in on essential elements of practice, editing out the rest; and 2) A short video allows multiple viewings of the microteaching for deeper analysis from the student teacher and their peers in class. The

microteaching video is then uploaded to an online video assessment software tool, the tool

we use is called [GoReact](#) (2022). We've chosen GoReact because it is simple to use and

allows students to easily add notes or "annotations" to their own and peers' videos.
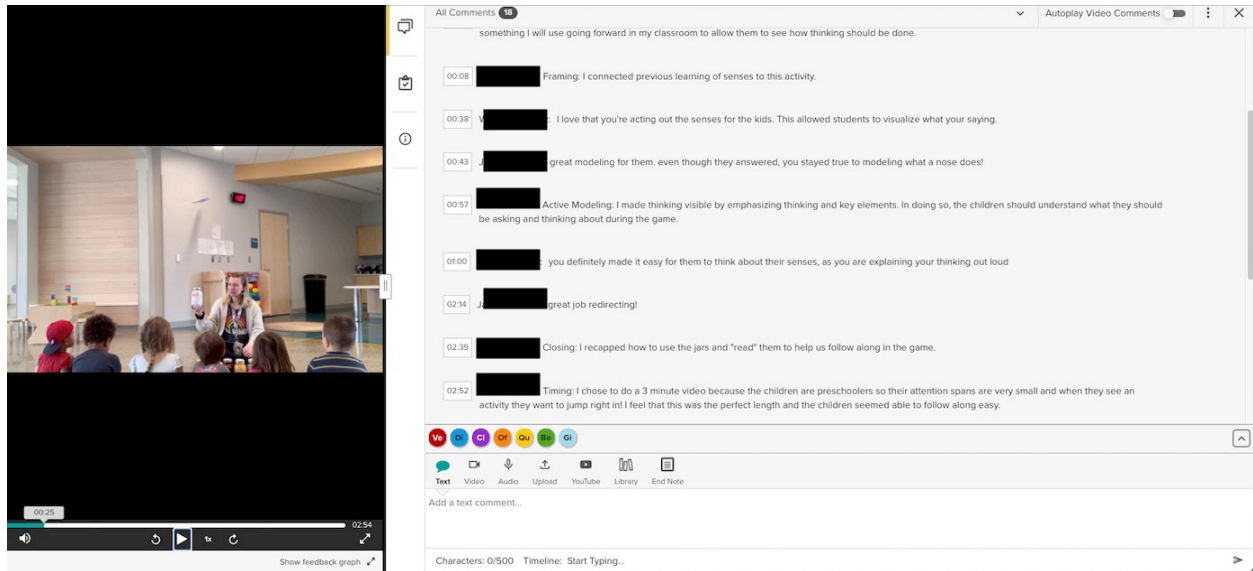

Figure 3: GoReact Screenshot showing annotations.

Once the microteaching video is the appropriate length, the student teacher analyzes the

video in terms of elements of the CTP (e.g., Leading a Group Discussion) as introduced in

the CTP's decomposition and reinforced in the planning document. This analysis includes

required "annotations" or time-stamped notes the student teacher will add directly to their

video using GoReact. The required annotations scaffold the student teacher's analysis,

calling their attention to each element of the CTP in their own teaching. The annotations also

include a simple introduction to their microteaching video as well as questions they have for

their peers to consider as they watch the video later in class. A portion of the required

annotations for our Leading a Group Discussion microteaching is included below:

Rolling Comments Throughout Video: Discuss elements of each of the following components of Core Teaching Practice #1 as they relate to your microteaching video. It is not necessary to comment on every item from the decomposition, this just gives you a variety of choices within each component to create annotations. **Label these annotations with the titles you see below**:

1. *Prepare* - Identifying the content point of the discussion • Selecting a discussable task or text • Anticipating student thinking • Considering whose thinking might be overrepresented in the discussion and adjusting the task to be open to multiple perspectives • Setting up independent or small group work with task or text • Monitoring student work • Identifying students to share thinking in whole group with attention to who and what is represented
2. *Framing/Launching* - Telling students the goal • Activating prior knowledge (if necessary) • Posing an open-ended question or issue related to the content point • Reviewing norms for discussion (as necessary) • Efficiently engaging students in the discussion Concluding • Supporting students to remember or make sense of content • Taking stock of where the class is in the discussion • Acknowledging student competence
3. *Orchestrating* - Encouraging and supporting students to participate • Eliciting multiple ideas • Probing students' thinking to clarify and expand student ideas • Orienting students to the contributions of others • Attending to whose ideas are being attributed and highlighted • Ensuring that students are attending, listening, and responding to the ideas of others • Supporting students in connecting ideas • Making strategic contributions • Using moves such as redirecting, revoicing, and highlighting to keep the discussion on track

Figure 4. Sample of required annotations for the Leading a Group Discussion microteaching

4. Peer Review: In small groups or pairs, student teachers examine each other's microteaching videos. Students are grouped based on similar grade level and/or content and all focused on the same CTP (e.g., Leading a Group Discussion). We vary the peer review process for each microteaching, but have settled on a procedure for the first one to ease students into the inevitable awkwardness of having peers watch and comment on their early teaching attempts. For the first peer review, students privately watch each other's microteaching videos, leaving constructive feedback for their peers as annotations directly on each other's microteaching videos, and then come together as a group to discuss. While at first students are nervous about this stage, they quickly come to realize that their peers face the same struggles with teaching as they do. They report enjoying these glimpses into other classrooms and finding the peer discussions helpful.

5. <u>Reflect:</u> After peer review, teacher candidates reflect on their microteaching experience, in particular what they learned about the CTP. As previously mentioned, one of the affordances of using microteaching with student teachers is that reflections are based on what they actually saw in the video of their teaching as opposed to what they remember from the experience. This leads to more accurate and focused reflections, less about the overall "feeling" of the lesson and more on specifics of the component of practice. At this point, we ask students to return to the theory, strategies, and exemplars discussed during student teaching seminar and in previous coursework and apply them to their actual teaching. Students are asked to watch their microteaching video again while considering what they've learned about the component of practice in the "Examine and Observe" part of the cycle and what they gleaned from their peer discussions to answer a series of questions focused on the CTP. Students then write responses to the reflection questions, again directly on their microteaching video in GoReact. Below are the reflection questions for our Leading a Group Discussion microteaching:

Reflection: Re-watch your microteaching video, reading annotations from your classmates. Respond to the following questions in final annotations **labeled "R1" (2, 3, 4)** at the end of your microteaching video. Be sure to refer to specific points in your video as evidence of your statements/explanations.

    R1: What work did you do to enable the discussion?
    R2: What did you learn about leading a discussion?
    R3: How did you assist students in keeping the discussion on track?
    R4: How will you use this in your future teaching?

Figure 4. Sample of reflection questions for the Leading a Group Discussion microteaching.

6. <u>Reteach:</u> The original Microteaching model developed at Stanford in the 1960s concluded with the pre-service teacher reteaching the same mini-lesson after receiving supervisor feedback. The goal was for the pre-service teacher to have another attempt at demonstrating the behaviors modeled by the expert teacher. Over the years, the reteach portion of

microteaching was largely dropped by teacher educators who found it difficult to spend so much time on one teaching skill (Cavanaugh, 2022). We have used reteach as an optional final step in our Microteaching Learning Cycle. While we do not use it for our first microteaching, Leading a Group Discussion, we have found it very helpful with our second CTP, Explaining and Modeling Content, Practices, and Strategies. We focus on the more difficult modeling portion of this CTP and find that our student teachers struggle with truly making their thinking visible to their students as modeling requires. For this reason, we have student teachers reteach this component of practice, but with different content. Therefore, the third microteaching in our student teaching seminar is called Modeling 2.0, and we lead our students through the Microteaching Learning Cycle again, planning for and enacting a new lesson they will teach in their placement, but again focused on the modeling component of practice. We believe that reteaching is an optional rather than a necessary part of the Microteaching Learning Cycle.

Additional Applications for the Microteaching Learning Cycle

Microteaching is a valuable tool to help teacher education move towards practice-based pedagogy. In this article, we have described the Microteaching Learning Cycle we use with student teachers, but it is certainly applicable to work with any level of pre-service or in-service teachers. Teaching methods classes frequently use a form of microteaching; in fact, the clear majority of literature on microteaching involves teacher education students in methods classes. For example, the literature shows that microteaching increases pre-service teachers' confidence and teaching self-efficacy (Arsal, 2015; Godek, 2016; Meutia, et al., 2018) and helps them engage in quality critical reflection of their teaching (Kourieos, 2016; Tuluce & Cecen, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2016). While student teachers record microteachings in their field

placements, methods classes usually involve the pre-service teacher recording themselves presenting a lesson to no one or teaching a willing adult. Other times pre-service teachers will create microteaching videos of themselves teaching their classmates. While not as authentic as teaching to a class of actual PK-12 students, the Microteaching Learning Cycle can be effective in any of these situations.

Conclusion

This paper explained our Microteaching Learning Cycle with specific reference to engaging student teachers in reflective practice of their enactment of Core Teaching Practices. Our experience with student teachers has shown the opportunity to authentically practice and reflect on their teaching skills to be a critical part of their preparation. The Microteaching Learning Cycle provides teacher candidates a space to actually *see* their teaching, specific moments of success and struggles, rather than simply reflecting on how they *thought* or *felt* the teaching went. Our hope is that others can see the value in this cycle and enact something similar within other teacher education programs.

References

Altuk,Y.G, Kaya,V.H., & Bahceci, D. (2012). A study on developing a 'microteaching scale' for student teachers. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,46*, 2964-2969.

Amobi, F.A. & Irwin, L. (2005). Implementing on-campus microteaching to elicit preservice teachers' reflection on teaching actions: Fresh perspectives on an established practice. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *9*(1), 27-34.

Arsal, Z. (2015). The Effects of microteaching on the critical thinking dispositions of pre-service teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 140-153.

Barnhart, T., & van Es, E. (2015). Studying teacher noticing: Examining the relationship among pre-service science teachers' ability to attend, analyze and respond to student thinking. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *45*, 83-93.

Cavanaugh, S. (2022). Microteaching: Theoretical origins and practice. *Educational Practice and Theory*, *44(1)*, 23-40.

Godek, Y. (2016). Science teacher trainees' microteaching experiences: A focus group study. *Educational Research and Reviews, 11*(16), 1473-1493.

GoReact. (2022). *GoReact video assessment software*. GoReact. https://get.goreact.com/

Hattie, J. (2009, 2016). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Johnson, H.J., & Cotterman, M.E. (2015). Developing preservice teachers' knowledge of science teaching through video clubs. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 26*, 393-417.

Kourieos, S. (2016). Video-mediated microteaching – A stimulus for reflection and teacher growth, *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(1), 65-80.

Lampert, M., Franke, M. L., Kazemi, E., Ghousseini, H., Turrou, A. C., Beasley, H., Cunard, A., & Crowe, K. (2013). Keeping it complex: Using rehearsals to support novice teacher learning of ambitious teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *64*(3), 226-243.

Lederman, N.G. & Lederman, J.S. (2019). Teaching and learning of nature of scientific knowledge and scientific inquiry: Building capacity through systematic research-based professional development. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 30*(7), 737-762.

Meutia, P.D., Elyza, F., & Yusnila (2018). Pre-Service teachers' performance post microteaching class in field experience program. *Englisia, 5*(2), 102-114.

McDonald, M., Kazemi, E., & Kavanagh, S. S. (2013). Core practices and pedagogies of teacher education: A call for a common language and collective activity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *64*(5), 378-386.

Michigan Department of Education. (n.d.). *Core teaching practices*. https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/educator_services/prep/core_teaching_practices.pdf?rev=13216382a9a949c293262f9c5e0fad99

Rich, P., & Hannafin, M. J. (2009). Video annotation tools: Technologies to scaffold, structure, and transform teacher reflection. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(1), 52–67.

Rosaen, C. L., Lundeberg, M., Cooper, M., Fritzen, A., & Terpstra, M. (2008). Noticing: How does investigation of video records change how teachers reflect on their experiences? *Journal of Teacher Education*, *59*(4), 347–360.

Sen, E.I. (2009). A Study on the effectiveness of peer microteaching in a teacher education program. *Education and Science, 34*(151), 165-174.

Sherin, M. G., & van Es, E. A. (2005). Using video to support teachers' ability to notice classroom interactions. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 13*(3), 475–91.

Sherin, M.G. & Han, S.Y. (2004). Teacher learning in the context of a video club. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 163-183.

Starr, J.R., & Strickland, S.K. (2007). Learning to observe: Using video to improve preservice mathematics teachers' ability to notice. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education,11*, 107-125.

Strong, W. (1972). Plugging in the minicourse. *English Education, 3*(2), 96-102.

Sydnor, J. (2016). Using video to enhance reflective practice: Student teachers' dialogic examination of their own teaching. *The New Educator*, *12*(1), 67-84.

Teacher Education by Design (2014). University of Washington College of Education. https://tedd.org/

TeachingWorks. (2022). *Our perspective: Teacher education*. The learning cycle. https://library.teachingworks.org/our-perspective/on-teacher-education/

Tripp, T. R., & Rich, P. J. (2012). The influence of video analysis on the process of teacher change. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(5), 728–39.

Tuluce, H.S., & Cecen, S. (2017). The use of video in microteaching: Affordances and constraints. *ELT Journal, 72*(1), 73-82.

Welsh, A. & Schaffer, C. (2016). Improving reflection: Using video to improve teacher candidate performance in the field. *The Field Experience Journal*, *18*, 1-19.

Wilson, J. (1975). *Educational theory and the preparation of teachers*. Slough, England: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Zhou, G., & Xu, J. (2017). Microteaching lesson study: An approach to prepare teacher candidates to teach science through inquiry. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics*, *Science and Technology*, *5*(1), 235-247.

Dr. Shane Cavanaugh is a professor of teacher education at Central Michigan University where she teaches educational psychology, student teaching seminar, and graduate courses. Her research interests include science education, microteaching as a pedagogical tool, and equity consciousness in education.
Dr. Kristina Rouech has worked with teacher candidates for the past 10 years. In this time, she has taught introduction to education, methods, student teaching seminar, and graduate curriculum and literacy courses. Her research has included literacy elements, methodology, dispositions, and learning communities within teacher education.

Teacher Candidate Perception of Preparation of Methods Courses

Kathleen Wagner and Jayson Evaniuck

Eastern New Mexico University

Abstract

Successful teacher education programs provide teacher candidates with meaningful field experiences connecting theory to practice. Teacher candidate perceptions of the student teaching experience give teacher educators insight into how to better prepare candidates for the classroom. This qualitative study investigates secondary education teacher candidate perceptions of the effectiveness of methods courses in preparing them for the student teaching experience. The researchers collected data after candidates completed their student teaching experience. Findings reveal that methods curriculum and expectations align with the student teaching requirements but are limited in scope. Meeting the needs of students through accommodations, modifications, and differentiated instruction is noted as domains where methods courses do not fully prepare candidates for the student teaching experience. In addition, the candidates perceive additional support in developing interpersonal assertiveness is necessary for methods courses. Field placement practices are also identified as an area of concern for candidates. This paper concludes by advocating for systemic program changes to provide candidates with meaningful field experiences.

Keywords: teacher candidate perception, field experience, secondary education methods, student teaching preparation

Teacher Candidate Perception of Preparation of Methods Courses

Teacher education programs provide teacher candidates with purposeful experiences to develop their pedagogical skills through effectively designed curricula and intentional field experiences in the preschool through twelfth grade (PreK-12) classroom. The scope and sequence of a teacher education program depends on the direct connection between theory and practice. Candidates apply theory learned in university classrooms to the practice they observe and experience in PreK-12 classrooms. Educational methods courses are designed to give candidates opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills through coursework and field experiences, which provide a transition to the full-time student teaching practicum. According to Clift and Brady (2005), student teaching offers a means for candidates to bridge the gap between theory and practice as they move from a "focus on belief toward a combined focus on belief and action" (p. 325).

Successful teacher education programs provide teacher candidates with a purposeful progression of field experiences. As candidates progress through the program, the expectations of their role in the field placement increase as educational theories are applied to teaching practice. Darling-Hammond (2016) contends that high-quality programs do not divorce the university coursework from pedagogy and that candidates "engage in a series of gradually lengthening placements" (p. 69). The effective scope and sequence of field experiences depend on the alignment of the coursework. Moreover, according to Darling-Hammond (2016), the focus on program improvement has been on connecting field experiences to coursework, program goals, and expert supervision. Successful teacher education programs are dependent on the transfer of knowledge in the university classroom to the pedagogical skills applied in the P-

12 classrooms. Therefore, insight on how well courses prepare candidates for student teaching is needed.

Literature Review

Nearly 40 years ago, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) astutely brought attention to the "two-worlds pitfall" present in teacher education in their seminal paper, "Pitfalls of Experience in Teacher Preparation." Preservice teachers complete field experience assignments for university assignments; however, dissonance between university learning and classroom teaching exists. The authors illustrated that success in a field experience-based university assignment is not necessarily directly informative for future teaching as university learning and classroom learning are distinctly different. Consequently, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) argued the strength of the cooperating teacher is pivotal in overcoming such dissonance. Later authors substantiated the importance of an excellent cooperating teacher (Grossman & Loeb, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2014). In his landmark book based on an extensive study of the teacher education programs in eight states, *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools*, John Goodlad (1990) deepened the existing call for quality field experiences integral for teacher education. Similarly, Guyton and McIntire (1990) argued for field experiences meaningfully connected to coursework. Many authors subsequently brought attention to the disconnects between field experience and teacher education coursework (Bullough et al., 1997; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Gehrke et al., 2014; Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner & Bier, 2015). Grossman et al. (2008) further identified such disconnects as contradictions to successful teacher education.

Germane to this current study, Zeichner (2010) developed a third space construct to overcome noted disconnects. For the current study, we find the third space construct particularly informative for our research direction. Regarding the third space, Zeichner (2010) referred to

59

these spaces as "…the creation of hybrid spaces in preservice teacher education programs that bring together school and university-based teacher educators and practitioner and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance the learning of prospective teachers" (p. 92). The "third space" is the place where college campus learning and PreK-12 schools come together. Zeichner (2010) also refered to "boundary crossings" as examples of the creation of the third space. Such boundary crossings are places where the innate gap between methods coursework and field experiences narrows thus mediating entry into the teaching profession. While a nostrum toward successful boundary crossings and the creation of the third space does not exist, previous research provides a way forward. Based on data from over 1000 prospective teachers, Ronfeldt and Reininger (2012) concluded the quality of the student teaching experience, rather than its duration, makes the most significant difference in preservice teacher development. Zeichner and Conklin (2005) confirmed that exemplary teacher education programs demonstrate that where field experiences are carefully coordinated with coursework and carefully mentored, teacher educators better accomplish their goals in preparing teachers to enact complex teaching practice. Darling Hammond (2014) echoed the importance of "coherence and integration" between coursework and clinical experiences. Darling-Hamond (2014) posited that field experiences are most commonly haphazard in coherence and integration. The call for enhanced continuity among teacher education coursework and field experience has extensive literature support (Burn & Mutton, 2015; Castle & Reilly, 2011; Darling Hammond et al., 2005; Dresden & Thompson, 2021; Zeichner, 2010).

Teacher candidates' perceptions of their student teaching can provide rich data for teacher educators to utilize for program improvements. However, candidate feedback can be limited by scope. Course evaluations are a common practice in institutions of higher education (Doyle,

1983; Saroyan & Amundsen, 2001). However, the feedback is given after the immediate experience and does not include a broader perspective of candidates' perception of the preparation experiences. After candidates complete student teaching, their feedback on educational methods courses can provide a more in-depth perspective. One insightful way to explore the coherence and integration between coursework and clinical experience is by evaluating teacher candidate perceptions. Unfortunately, candidate perceptions of teacher education programs based on field experiences remain underexplored in teacher education. Despite the limitations within the literature, the topic is a fruitful frontier for capturing Zeichner's (2010) notable yet challenging third space. One study that attempts to capture the coherence between teacher education coursework and clinical experiences is a study done by Grossman et al. (2008). The researchers analyzed survey responses from 248 K-6 teacher candidates completing educator preparation programs at 15 different programs in New York City regarding their perceptions of coherence between the coursework and clinical components of their preparation. Grossman et al. (2008) findings suggested the need for greater programmatic control over the design of the field experience preservice teachers receive, cooperating teachers, and alignment between university supervisors and program faculty. The authors echoed Ronfeldt and Reininger's (2012) conclusion that the quality of field experience hours is more important than quantity. Of relevance to the current study, Grossman et al. (2008) concluded that thoughtfully and purposefully designed assignments linking coursework and fieldwork are indispensable.

Ultimately, this study aims to enhance the quality and integration of methods coursework with field experiences while engendering reflective practitioners among our secondary teacher candidates (Schön, 1983; Burn & Mutton, 2014; Grossman et al., 2008). Despite abundant literature supporting the value of clinical experiences for teacher candidates, empirical studies

investigating such benefits are few (Allsopp et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Grossman et al., 2008; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). We believe this study can potentially engender boundary crossing (Zeichner, 2010) that directly addresses Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann's (1985) two separate worlds construct within our program, specifically, the two worlds of secondary methods coursework and field experiences, particularly student teaching.

Methodology

Rationale

This study aimed to provide further insight into how educational methods courses in an undergraduate, traditional secondary education program prepare candidates for student teaching. It is indispensable to capture candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of methods course preparation. We believe that secondary education candidates who recently completed student teaching have a unique insight into the effectiveness of their methods coursework. The need to narrow the gap between teaching methods courses and student teaching is an established and persistent challenge noted in the research (Bullough et al., 1997; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Grossman et al., 2008; Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner & Bier, 2015). We aim to enhance coordination between methods coursework and field experiences (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). Correspondingly, our study design aims to improve the cohesion between secondary methods course content and the student teaching experience within our unique context.

Participants

For the current study, we were involved with the participants at every level of preparation in their teacher education program (TEP) due to the institution's small program size. We taught the candidates in foundations educational coursework taken during their sophomore and junior years and secondary methods coursework taken during the their junior or senior years. Due to the

small size of the program and close relationships between candidates and the instructors, we gained entry naturalistically (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

For this qualitative study, we selected participants using typical, purposeful sampling methods (Creswell, 2005). We believe the selected candidates represent the typical experience in our secondary methods classes and subsequent student teaching experience. While these candidates have a typical secondary TEP experience in pacing and participation, we viewed the selected participants as an exceptional research and program improvement opportunity. The participants exhibited an extraordinary combination of thoughtfulness, comfortability with instructors, friendship with one another, and exemplariness of candidates. We believe such a cohort was ideal for thick description within a focus group setting. We invited these Fall 2021 secondary methods classes (SED 402 and SED 405) to attend a focus group after their TEP completion ceremony on the Friday before Spring 2022 graduation. The response rate was 85%, with 11 of the 13 candidates choosing to participate. The institution is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution in a rural region of a southwestern state. The participant population reflected the region's demographics, with six of the 11 participants identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Candidates provided informed consent before beginning the focus group.

Data Collection

As previously noted, the timing of this study was ideal for yielding thick descriptive data toward programmatic improvement. Furthermore, the TEP Ceremony and Graduation brought candidates back to town, enhancing participation rates. Due to the close relationship between instructors and the candidates and the intimate program size, we were confident participants would provide thick descriptions within the data collection. Furthermore, from previous conversations, the candidates were willing to engage regarding program feedback.

Our primary qualitative data collection source was a focus group design. We utilized a simplified open-ended question design due to our well-established relationships with the candidates and our desire for them to have the freedom and space to address the questions (Creswell, 2007). Candidates were also free to move the discussion based on their experiences. Question one took nearly nine minutes for the group to explore, while question two took the longest at 65 minutes, with a concluding third question at almost 14 minutes. Our three questions were: (1) How and in what ways did SED 402 and 405 prepare you for your student teaching? (2) How and in what ways could SED 402 and 405 better prepare you for your student teaching experience? (3) What advice would you give teacher candidates for student teaching next semester?

We listened and captured detailed field notes while recording the focus group conversation with electronic devices for later data transcription. The field notes were an essential source of data during the coding process. An additional data source was a brief 18-item Likert instrument that captured the candidates' perceptions of their level of preparation for student teaching. We analyzed this instrument thematically to ground the qualitative focus group data in reality (Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

We analyzed the focus group transcripts and the field notes repetitively toward developing a coding framework utilizing Creswell's (2007) five steps. We independently generated codes while reading through the data. Data were inductively analyzed across three sources: field notes, field study transcripts, and the survey instrument, thus facilitating the triangulation of data (Glesne, 2006). Once we generated a lengthy list of independent codes, we

worked collaboratively over a series of meetings to reduce the redundancy of the codes and ultimately collapse the codes into four agreed-upon themes.

We were particularly interested in recurring themes and data within the purview of a methods class for teacher candidate preparation. We targeted findings that directly enhanced the quality of our methods coursework and corresponding practicum experience as such results are within our control to improve course design. Recurring data such as preparing students for school context unique situations such as "policies for band eligibility" or "school policies for disciplinary referrals" were removed from the thematic analysis since they are outside of a methods course preparation purview. Data less germane to coursework, yet relevant to the institution's Teacher Education Office (TEO) were collected for sharing with the TEO later. We noted findings that lacked recurrence, yet provided important insight for the instructors' teaching, course design, or field experience alignment.

Trustworthiness of Findings

We believe this study fulfills the needed trustworthiness and credibility fitting of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The combination of multiple researchers and triangulation among and between various data sources enhances the trustworthiness of data (Glesne, 2006). Particularly, our decision to code data independently before reducing codes and developing themes improved analysis accuracy through peer review. The utilization of member checks enhanced the credibility of the findings. Two participants in the focus group were asked to review the accuracy of the results (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Based on feedback from the candidates, we incorporated their clarifications into the findings.

Findings

The data revealed four prevalent themes of teacher candidates' perception of their preparation during methods courses for the student teaching experience. The curricula and expectations of the methods courses supported the transition to student teaching but were limited in scope. Data indicated that candidates found it difficult to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities. In addition, candidate perception of their teacher preparation was construed as training that resulted in unrealistic expectations. Finally, field placement contexts and structures were challenging for candidates.

Methods Curriculum and Expectations

Modeling of Effective Pedagogical Skills

Candidates noted the purposeful modeling of effective pedagogical skills by methods instructors. Mr. Clark emphasized that the instructors were successful at "helping us identify what good teaching can look like." Moreover, Ms. Diaz discussed how effective pedagogy was modeled. Mr. Clark remarked on how tools were provided along with the use of those tools. He also noted on the effectiveness of collaboration between the two professors, which served as a positive model. Furthermore, Ms. Diaz emphasized that the instructors were positive resources during the student teaching experience. She felt she could ask questions and "use the professors as resources, like seriously."

Alignment of Assignments and Expectations

Candidates discussed alignment between methods assignments and student teaching assignments. According to Mr. Clark, there was "overlap in terms of things [assignments] that are required to do during student teaching." He identified the alignment and the preparation for student teaching, especially in the area of classroom management. Ms. Ortega agreed that the

methods course supported her classroom management skills and said that she "felt very well prepared for nineth through twelfth grade management." Mr. Tate added that he "felt very well prepared for the PLT [Principles of Learning and Teaching] Praxis [exam]" in the area of formative assessment. Ms. Alvarez noted that she applied what she learned about formative assessment and was able to "turn the students into their own thinkers using metacognition." Although data revealed alignment in some areas, other areas need support.

Limitations of Coursework Applications

According to the data, candidates desired additional support. Ms. Alvarez asked, "How do you make grading manageable? How do you make it not a beast that needs to be tamed? How do you, how does it not make you cry?" However, she added that she "started to figure out my own tools but I still feel like, because I had all that grading, [I had] burnout at the beginning of the semester." Mr. Clark remarked that "structured practice" would have been helpful, "if I was able to have an assignment or something where I practice differentiated instruction with a student." Ms. Alvarez went on to say that "maybe interviewing more than one student, gathering more data from the students, and then tying it into a bigger project." When discussing the challenges of handling student misbehavior, Mr. Clark advocated for, "role play and practice being assertive or even practice having these hard conversations with students where you must correct their behavior...role play where you must actually articulate the language that you use."

Lack of Mediated Entry and Structure of the Field Experience

When asked about the difference between their field experience during methods and other field experiences, Mr. Tate commented, "I don't think the change is definitive for us." Ms. Ortega agreed, "When I went to the practicum, I was still doing the exact same thing in observations [beginning field experience]." Ms. Alverez discussed how "it was very scary...the practicum

experience. I really didn't talk in that class until I had to teach my first lesson. After I taught my

first lesson, it was a little bit more comfortable." She concluded by suggesting that candidate

teach lessons prior to the lesson observation completed by the methods professors.

Meeting Student Needs

Lack of Preparation in Differentiated Instruction

According to the questionnaire (Appendix A), only 43% of the candidates felt prepared to

differentiate instruction, and 43% indicated they were *Somewhat Prepared*. However, 14%

reported that they were *Not Prepared* to differentiate instruction. Differentiated instruction and

interacting with parents were the only two actions on the survey that candidates marked as *Not

Prepared*. Ms. Diaz shared that the practice of differentiating instruction for 30 students was

difficult. Ms. Alvarez added, "we learned about different instruction. We looked at different

methods...but I think I need more practice with differentiated instruction because trying to

engage *all* [participant emphasis] my students is definitely a struggle for me." As previously

discussed, Mr. Clark advocated for more "structured practice" in differentiated instruction.

Lack of Preparation in Working with Students with Special Needs

Candidates passionately discussed their concerns and challenges in working successfully

with students with special needs. In regard to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Ms.

Ortega disclosed, "I didn't know how to read it, but it did have her [student] accommodations."

She discussed how her cooperating teacher used the IEP. "I didn't know how to interpret it or

how to make that kind of judgment." Mr. Clark remarked, "I definitely feel most insecure in that

area even now. I would love more experience" and advocated for "an opportunity to work with

somebody with an IEP" during methods. Ms. Diaz agreed, "we learned how to get [access] the

IEPs...I definitely needed to...know what to do with it...having that clear image on how to

approach it as well as just what to do with them [IEP]." Adding a special education class to the SED TEP was suggested. Ms. Ortega noted that, "When issues or situations [special education] come up [in content methods classes], it was hard to navigate." Mr. Clark shared that his content methods instructor did not address students with special needs and emphasized that he would need to do extra research to be prepared for his first year of teaching.

Interpersonal Assertiveness

Handling Student Misbehavior

Mr. Tate commented on the difficulties of "managing students kids we have no relationship with, especially outside of our classroom...in the halls before class." His concern was echoed by Ms. Ortega. She maintained, "management outside of the classroom...I had absolutely no relationship with the students, so even when I tried to tell him something...they were like, 'who are you?'" Candidates conveyed apprehensiveness when reacting to student misbehavior. Ms. Garcia and Ms. Diaz encountered problems with students sleeping and were uncertain about how to address the issue. Ms. Garcia remarked, "that was my biggest issue because I'm not going to wake up a student five times in class." Ms. Diaz indicated that "it's more distracting to keep waking them up." Furthermore, Mr. Clark posed several questions on handling student misbehavior, "How to read the bull, moments where you can identify when a student is being genuine, and student is just giving you bull... How do you detect lies?" He suggested that more time in the methods classes could be devoted to discussing how to alter student behavior and how to handle inconsistencies of behavior expectations among teachers. The inconsistency of expectations among teachers was also noted by Ms. Diaz, "I had a parent tell me that you're the only teacher that makes them do that [expect participation in the lesson

every day]." When discussing the issues of being assertive and handling student misbehavior during student teaching, Mr. Clark stressed that "we're becoming a different person."

Navigating Professional Relationships

Ms. Ortega commented that "professional level disagreements...relationships in general" is an area of further development. Mr. Clark interjected that he was "very prepared in terms of the content that we were given [in methods], and a lot of my struggles in student teaching felt like things that were supposed to be the struggles of student teaching." Although Mr. Clark reiterated that the purpose of student teaching was to practice developing professional relationships, he agreed that learning how to navigate professional relationships in methods would be helpful, especially working with administrators. Mr. Tate added that interactions with administrators before student teaching would be beneficial. The relationship with administration was also noted by Ms. Diaz, who agreed and indicated that she was not prepared to handle a situation when an administrator did not support her when she wrote a referral for a student, "without that administrative support...how do you have those conversations?" Mr. Clark disclosed that "I played so many mind games with myself" when it came to professional relationships. However, he emphasized that "you have to go in with a fresh slate every day" to navigate professional relationships.

Field Placement Challenges

Mentorship Disparities

Candidates voiced how they did not receive mentorship at times during their student teaching. Mr. Tate remarked on the difficulty of his cooperating teacher being gone the first week of student teaching, "I had figured out a lot of my own ideas." Ms. Diaz, who completed her student teaching as a full-time substitute teacher, added, "coming in and not having a

curriculum or stuff set and having to do those pretty much on the fly because...I didn't know what I was taking over." She admitted, "I feel like I would have been less stressed, doing student teaching [traditionally]…you've got that guide with you at the time." Mr. Tate added that "we [University] can do a better job of screening our cooperating teachers." However, Ms. Garcia, who was the only candidate to highlight active mentorship during her student teaching, revealed that she had a positive experience because she worked collaboratively with her cooperting teacher, expeically on how to handle student misbehavior and maintain a healthy work/life balance. Ms. Diaz suggested that cooperating teachers sign an agreement that denotes the expectations of preparing a candidate during methods for student teaching. Ms. Ortega contended that not all cooperating teachers are willing to allow candidates to teach a minimum of three classes during methods. She questioned the use of the term "cooperating."

Lack of Field Experience Expectations and Procedures

The data denotes the lack of clarity in the expectations of the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate during methods. Ms. Alvarez shared that it was difficult to tell her cooperating teacher that she needed to be more involved in the classroom. Mr. Clark posited that candidates are held responsible to communicate the expectations to the cooperating teacher, which leads to the lack of clarity. Ms. Ortega added that lack of procedures existed also in student teaching that led to miscommunication between the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and her. Besides a lack of expectations within a field experience, candidates perceived a lack of clarity across field experiences. "It might be nice for the cooperating teachers to be a little bit more informed on the difference between observation and practicum and student teaching. Outlining all three; that they're very different," noted Mr. Tate.

Discussion

71

The first theme of methods curriculum and expectations centered on the impact of our coursework on pedagogical skills, alignment of assignments and expectations, limitations of coursework applications, and lack of mediated entry and structure of the field experience. Overwhelmingly, teacher candidates denote the modeling nature of the method course andragogy and the importance of access to their professors for continued professional development. We believe the modeling nature of the teaching reinforced the perceived approachability of the professors, thus, underscoring Broudy's (1972) construct of the importance of heuristic teaching.

The candidates denoted alignment between the methods assignments and the expectations of the student teaching experience. The candidates provided an affirmation of dovetailing methods assignments to student teaching and, ultimately, the profession. For example, after analyzing the Principles of Learning and Teaching Praxis exam, the SED 402 Instruction and Assessment methods course curriculum was adjusted to support deficient domains. Mr. Tate's response confirmed the efficacy of these changes. Despite such affirmations, the candidates identified several limitations in the applicability of coursework. One area of weakness is not extending coursework further. For example, providing structured practice for differentiated instruction and extending classroom management case studies to role play would support candidate development. Based on these findings, such revisions potentially mediate entry into teaching for our students by providing boundary crossings across the third space (Zeichner, 2010).

In retrospect, preparation in working with students with special needs was a resounding and recurring theme. Candidates felt ill-prepared to work in inclusive environments, which hindered their perceived effectiveness. We believe the implications of this particular theme are profound. Candidates take one special education course before methods. However, the course is

not specific to the secondary education context. Consequently, revisions to the current methods curriculum and considerations to the program expectations are necessary. The responsibility lies with the methods professors to integrate activities aimed at addressing modification and accommodation within the candidates' content areas. While this is a step in the right direction, more systemic change is needed to prepare candidates effectively to work in inclusive environments.

Although candidates felt apprehensive in their interpersonal assertiveness, student teaching provides an authentic context for practice and development. We still ask whether targeted approaches to inculcate assertiveness within our methods courses exist. Addressing student misbehavior with assertiveness is a substantial obstacle for our candidates. Integrating role play within methods coursework will potentially provide needed practice in this professional skill. In addition, role play has the potential to help candidates develop their professional interpersonal skills by practicing how to navigate interactions with professionals. However, we believe that the quality of the mentorship the cooperating teacher (CT) provides helps develop and empower our candidates' assertiveness. We noted that the only candidate in our study who spoke of a nourishing mentor relationship with her CT demonstrated extensive growth in her confidence and self-efficacy over one year from practicum to student teaching. We believe that effective mentorship resulted in her profound development in assertiveness. This affirms the importance of meaningful field experience placements.

Effective field experience placements provide the context for candidates to practice and develop pedagogical skills. However, candidates expressed the lack of communication between the university and the public school and the need for explicit expectations for candidates in the field experiences throughout their program. Systemic refinement is necessary to address these

issues, which supports Zeichner's (2010) "boundary crossing" to create a third space to support candidate development and minimize the gap between theory and practice. Furthermore, candidates did not believe there was a scope and sequence to the field experience requirements throughout their program. Such structural limitations caused a further disconnect, which Grossman et al. (2008) warn contradicts successful teacher education.

Limitations

Although the study provided rich data into the candidates' perceptions on how well the secondary methods courses prepared them for student teaching, limitations are noted in the study. The structure of the focus group could have limited participation. If we had divided the participants into two groups, more opportunities would have been provided, especially for more reserved participants. Moreover, the methods courses' professors collected the data, which could be perceived as a limitation if candidates did not want to offend their professors. Finally, the timing of the focus group at the reunion event could have impacted the data. Because candidates were on campus for graduation, the circumstances could have affected emotions and attitudes. While we do not believe these findings are appropriate to generalize to another program, we think the principles within the findings and discussion sections maintain transferability to potentially inform others interested in preparing professional teachers.

This study further supports the importance of effectively preparing teacher candidates with meaningful field experiences to develop pedagogical skills throughout a teacher education program. Candidate perceptions provide rich data in understanding the impact of methods courses on the student teaching experience. Intentional applications of theory to practice are necessary during methods courses. While the student teaching experience provides the context for candidates to develop pedagogical skills, methods courses are the bridge between the

university classroom and the PreK-12 classroom prior to student teaching. More research is needed on how and in what ways methods courses in a teacher education program prepare candidates for student teaching.

Appendix A
SED Teacher Candidate Feedback: Questions and Topics Chart

You will be provided with a hard copy of the Fall 2021 course schedules for SED 402 and SED 405. We encourage to write on the course schedules during the focus group discussion.

1. How and in what ways did SED 402 and/or 405 prepare you for your student teaching experience?
2. How and in what ways could SED 402 and/or 405 better prepare you for your student teaching experience?
3. What advice would you give teacher candidates who are student teaching next semester?
4. Using the chart below, identify your level of preparation:

Actions	Not prepared	Somewhat prepared	Prepared	Well-prepared
Managing the classroom				
Planning lessons				
Using formative assessment				
Maintaining classroom procedures				
Using peer assessment				
Differentiating instruction				
Engaging students in self-assessment				
Using assessment to improve teaching				
Supporting every student in meeting rigorous learning objectives				
Engaging students in learning				
Applying knowledge in meaningful ways				
Using a variety of instructional strategies				
Creating a positive learning environment				
Reflecting on your teaching				
Collaborating with others				
Using evidence to improve your practice				
Adapting practice to meet the needs of each learner				
Interacting with parents				

References

Allsopp, D. H., DeMarie, D., Alvarez-McHatton, P., & Doone, E. (2006). Bridging the gap between theory and practice: Connecting courses with field experiences. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *33*(1), 19-35.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.)*.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Broudy, H. S. (1972). Didactics, heuristics, and philetics. *Educational Theory*, *22*(3), 251-261.

Bullough Jr, R. V., Birrell, J. R., Young, J., Clark, D. C., Erickson, L., Earle, R. S., Campbell, J.F., Hansen L. & Egan, M. W. (1999). Paradise unrealized: Teacher educators and the costs and benefits of school/university partnerships. *Journal of teacher education*, *50*(5), 381-390.

Burn, K., & Mutton, T. (2015). A review of 'research-informed clinical practice' in initial teacher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, *41*(2), 217–233. doi:10.1080/03054985.2015.1020104

Castle, S., & Reilly, K. A. (2011). Impact of professional development school preparation on teacher candidates. *Teachers College Record*, *113*(14), 337–371.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Prentice Hall

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Clift, R. T. & Brady, P. (2005). Research on method courses and field experiences. In Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education.* (pp. 477-548). *American*

Educational Research Association.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs.* Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57,* 1-15.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2014). Strengthening clinical preparation: The holy grail of teacher education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *89*(4), 547–561. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2014.939009

Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Empowered educators: How high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world.* Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hammerness, K., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. (2005). The design of teacher education programs. In L. Darling-Hammond, J. Bransford, P. LePage, K. Hammerness, & H. Duffy (Eds.) *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 390–441). Jossey-Bass.

Doyle, K. O. (1983). *Evaluating teaching.* Lexington Books.

Dresden, J., & Thompson, K. F. (2021). Looking closely at clinical practice: A clear-eyed vision for the future of teacher education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *96*(1), 8-21. doi: 10.1080/0161956X.2020.1864242

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Buchmann, M. (1985). Pitfalls of experience in teacher preparation. *Teachers College Record*, *87*(1), 53-65.

Gehrke, R. S., Cocchiarella, M., Harris, P., & Pucket, K. (2014). Field experiences and perceptions of inclusion: Varying context, structures, and interpretations. *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education, 15*(2), 85-93

Goodlad, J. (1990). *Teachers for our nation's schools. San Francisco*: Jossey-Bass.

Grossman, P., & Loeb, S. (2008). *Taking stock: An examination of alternative certification*. Harvard Education Press.

Grossman, P., Hammerness, K. M., McDonald, M., & Ronfeldt, M. (2008). Constructing coherence: Structural predictors of perceptions of coherence in NYC teacher education programs. *Journal of teacher education*, *59*(4), 273-287. doi:10.1177/0022487108322127

Guyton, E., & McIntyre, D. J. (1990). Student teaching and school experiences. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 514-535). Macmillan.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Ronfeldt, M., & Reininger, M. (2012). More or better student teaching? *Teaching and teacher education*, *28*(8), 1091-1106.

Saroyan, A., & Amundsen, C. (2001). Evaluating university teaching: Time to take stock. Assessment & Evaluation in High Education, *26*(4), 341-353.

Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. Jossey-Bass.

Zeichner, K. M. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college- and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1–2), 89–99. doi:10.1177/0022487109347671

Zeichner, K. M. (2009). Professional development schools in a culture of evidence and accountability. In *Teacher Education and the Struggle for Social Justice* (pp. 64-73). Routledge.

Zeichner, K.M. & Bier, M. (2015). Opportunities and pitfalls in the turn toward clinical

experience in US teacher education. In *Rethinking Field Experiences in Preservice*

Teacher Preparation (pp. 38-64). Ed. Etta Hollins. Routledge.

Zeichner, K. M., & Conklin, H. G. (2005). Teacher education programs. *Studying teacher*

education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education, 645-735.

Kathleen Wagner has been a teacher educator for 15 years and teaches courses with a field experience component. Her research focuses on candidate perspectives. In addition to supporting teacher candidates in making the connection of theory to practice in the university classroom, she also supervises candidates during field experiences.
Jayson Evaniuck focuses his research on educational foundations and secondary teaching methodology. Before his work in teacher education, he spent 16 years teaching high school history and geography in Memphis, Tennessee. He is particularly interested in the thought and work of Harry Broudy, aesthetics education, curriculum history, and social studies education.