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“Focus in the Chaos: ” Cooperating Teachers’ Perceptions of a Structured Conferencing Guide

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“FOCUS IN THE CHAOS:” COOPERATING TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF A STRUCTURED CONFERENCING GUIDE

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121 Pages

The proposed dissertation follows a three article format. The articles represent two distinct but interrelated strands of research; the first article examines the role of a cooperating teacher as an expert and co-learner. The second article is an exploratory case study examining the use of a structured mentoring guide, The Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG), to support the work of cooperating teachers. The third is a practitioner article for teacher educators and cooperating teachers that describes the creation and research behind the REG; it includes how to use the guide with student teachers as well.

KEYWORDS: cooperating teacher, student teaching, clinical practices, student teacher

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This dissertation is dedicated to my three daughters. I hope I have shown you the power of hard work and dedication. May you be lifelong learners and follow your dreams.

S.E.H.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The dissertation presented here includes three articles with a through line that addresses cooperating teachers' relationship with student teachers and their connection to a teacher education program throughout the student teaching experience. This introductory chapter sets the stage for the three articles. It begins with a discussion of the reasoning behind the dissertation format, its significance, and a description of the three articles.

The traditional five-chapter dissertation consists of five extensive chapters that explain a single research study: introduction, literature review, methods, results, and conclusions (Calabrese, 2006). However, critics have voiced concerns over the limitations of this customary format. Duke and Beck (1999) argued that the dissertation as a genre has a limited audience, hinders dissemination, and lacks generalizability. They assert the traditional dissertation format "is ill-suited to the task of training doctoral students in the communicative aspects of educational research and is largely ineffectual as means of contributing knowledge to the field" (Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 31). An alternative format includes that of the three-article dissertation. Krathwohl (1994) proposed the dissertation as a series or set of articles ready for publication. This option addresses the problem of limited readership and gives doctoral candidates real-world experience in writing publishable scholarship. The ability to turn thoughts and findings into publishable products is a fundamental skill that doctoral candidates ideally learn before graduation (DeJong et al., 1996). My research, formatted in three distinct articles, will focus on cooperating teachers' perceptions of the use of a Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG) that focuses on bridging the gap between university and K-12 schools and building reciprocal relationships so that all parties involved can make the most of the student teaching experience.

Significance

The student teaching experience is arguably the most important time in the schooling of a preservice teacher (Henry & Weber, 2010). However, as noted by Darling-Hammond (2006), "Often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work" (p. 308). The main support person for a student teacher within the student teaching experience is the cooperating teacher. More than two decades ago, Clarke (2001) reported that even though cooperating teachers play a major role in preparing new teachers, the various ways in which they are prepared and supported deserves critical attention, this holds true today. The aim of my work is to better support cooperating teachers in their significant work with student teachers.

Article 1

The first article is a literature review focused on exploring the relationship that is formed within the student teaching experience and how two common mentoring styles of cooperating teachers lead to different types of relationships. The two opposing models of cooperating teachers discussed are that of an expert and that of a co-learner. Ideally, these opposing models are carried out in tandem to create mutually beneficial relationships. An investigation of the importance of non-hierarchal relationships, those found in relationships built on collaboration and reciprocity, within the student teaching experience is carried out.

This article will be submitted to *Action in Teacher Education,* an official publication of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). This is an international, peer-reviewed journal that publishes four issues per year.

Article 2

The second article is a qualitative exploratory case study investigating the use of the Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG) with cooperating teachers. The purpose was to explore the meaning and knowledge constructed by cooperating teachers and how they made sense of their experiences as a mentor through the use of the REG. The following research questions guided this work:

> **RQ1.** What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of the influence of a structured mentoring tool (REG) in facilitating conversations and fostering connectedness to the teacher education program?
>
> **RQ2.** How does weekly use of a structured mentoring tool (REG) influence a cooperating teacher's perceptions of the relationship dynamics between themself and their student teacher?

Participants were cooperating teachers in Central Illinois schools that partner with the university. Data will be gathered through bi-weekly questionnaires and interviews. This article will be submitted to the *Journal of Teacher Education (JTE)* at the completion of the dissertation process.

Article 3

The third article applies the information from the first two articles into a practitioner-focused article for cooperating teachers and teacher educators. This article will be submitted to *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice* after completing the dissertation process. This double-anonymized, peer-reviewed journal shares innovative practices, highlights action research and promotes collaborative inquiry.

This paper will focus on the creation of the REG and all the background research that served as a foundation for the weekly questions. The article will conclude with how to use it and its implications for teacher education programs. The REG weekly questions will be presented as an appendix. A limitation of this resource is that it is based on the Danielson Framework, edTPA, and other relevant topics that we focus on at ISU, not all teacher education programs utilize these same frameworks or assessments, so the questions may not fit the mission of all programs. The overarching purpose is to share information with cooperating teachers and teacher educators so they can learn how to create a reflection guide for their own program or use the REG with their student teachers. This work is important for teacher educators because it focuses on important topics in teacher education. Furthermore, it encourages open communication and reflection during the student teaching experience.

CHAPTER II: CTS: EXPERTS OR CO-LEARNERS?

Student teaching is the culminating field experience for preservice teachers and is viewed by many as the most important part of a preservice teacher's education (Baum & Korth, 2013, Zeichner, 2010; McIntyre et al., 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987). The few short months spent as a student teacher may have a greater impact on the professional skills and potential of a preservice teacher than any other part of their undergraduate schooling (Henry & Weber, 2010). Student teaching is a complicated emotional and interpersonal experience that is often critically important to the making of a teacher (Koerner et al., 2002). During this crucial time of teacher preparation, a teaching candidate has the unique opportunity to be mentored through working closely with a cooperating teacher (CT). A CT is an in-service teacher who agrees to supervise a student teacher by working closely with them for a sustained length of time, often between three weeks to four months. CTs provide individualized instruction within a classroom context and play a major role during the student teaching experience.

CTs came about as teacher preparation moved away from normal schools to laboratory schools in the 1950s, then to public schools in the 1960s and 1970s. Due to the number of "baby boomers" entering school, there was a need for many more teachers (Houston, 2008). A major shift took place, and schoolteachers had to begin assisting those in higher education to prepare preservice teachers (Clarke et al., 2014). Therefore, CTs were regarded as *cooperating* with the university in the education of teachers (Houston, 2008).

In order for preservice teachers to be sufficiently prepared for the challenges of the teaching profession, it is vital that they receive comprehensive preservice training (Pungur, 2007). Although great emphasis is placed on the importance of the student teaching experience and its influence on preservice teachers, the lack of training for CTs is well documented (Butler

& Cuenca, 2012; Clarke et al., 2014; Lafferty, 2018). In many cases, universities do not provide training sessions for CTs (Lafferty, 2018), and CTs are left to rely on their own student teaching experiences to influence their work with their student teachers (Koerner, 1992; Wang & Odell, 2002). Furthermore, increased demands and low compensation make it difficult for CTs to have time to attend professional development (Fives, et al., 2016).

The role of a CT is one of the most influential in teacher education (Henry & Weber, 2010), and it is distinctive in that it includes the need for both excellent classroom expertise and well-honed communication skills for working with adult learners (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003). Weiss and Weiss (2001) argue that "CTs are the most powerful influence on the quality of the student teaching experience and often shape what student teachers learn by the way they mentor" (p. 134).

If CTs are indeed one of the most powerful forces in teacher education, then we must recognize how their mentoring styles have a major influence over the student teaching experience. Whether through early field experiences, clinical experiences, or student teaching, the work of CTs is instrumental in preparing preservice teachers for their future work in education. It is imperative that CTs are aware of their influence, power, and the importance of their role in order to be as effective as possible when working with preservice teachers.

With the importance of CTs recognized, this review of literature is valuable because of the immense role CTs play in the education of preservice teachers. The aim of this conceptual review is to explore the roles of CTs, with a focus on CTs as experts versus co-learners, and an examination of how two different mentoring styles of CTs affects the relationship between CTs and student teachers within the student teaching context.

Method

In this article, a conceptual review of the literature was carried out. Kennedy (2007) suggests that conceptual reviews "share an interest in gaining new insights into an issue" (p. 139). Additionally, conceptual reviews explore how a topic has been represented in the literature; what approaches have been used in its study; and what areas of contest are emerging (Fitzgerald & Palincsar, 227, p. 229). According to the guidelines from the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Standards for reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications, "Reporting should include a review of the relevant scholarship that bears directly on the topic of the report. It should include a clear statement of the criteria used to identify and select the relevant scholarship in which the study is grounded" (Duran, et al., 2006, p. 3). With this in mind I started with a broad approach, gathering materials through both ERIC and Google Scholar. While my research was focused on CTs, I expanded my search to include mentor teachers as well. The terms 'mentor' and 'mentoring' are frequently used in teacher education literature to refer to various individuals and processes that share the goal of improving a teacher's practice (Matsko, 2020).

This is by no means an exhaustive review, I limited my literature search to empirical studies, conceptual pieces, and literature reviews published between 2000 and 2022 in order to stay relatively current in teacher education research. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) identified this as "a time frame [that] coincided with new accountability expectations and the emerging policy focus on teacher quality/teacher preparation" (p. 12). Given the long history of teacher education, I occasionally included works from seminal authors outside the timeframe due to the timelessness and relevance of their work. Examples include Collins, et al., 1991; Feiman-

Nemser, 1998; Fosnot, 1989; Schön, 1983; and Vygotsky, 1978. These seminal works have been frequently cited in other studies and offer a higher level of understanding in the field of education (Elon University, 2022). The aims of this review were to explore the various roles of CTs and then compare how two different approaches to mentoring, expert, and co-learner, look within the student teaching context. This review is guided by the following research questions: What roles do CTs fulfill in their mentoring of student teachers? How does a CT as an expert differ from a CT as a co-learner? What impact do these two different mentoring models have on the student teaching experience?

Roles of CTs

The body of research on CTs is large and includes many aspects of the student teaching experience, including the roles of CTs. Several studies have been conducted that reveal the multitude of roles CTs enact during their work with student teachers (see Table 1). Unfortunately for all parties involved in the student teaching experience, a lack of definitional clarity about the roles of CTs exists due, in part, to the perception of clinical teacher education as an uncomplicated and self-evident activity (Zeichner, 2005). According to Butler & Cuenca (2012), a "sink-or-swim" approach, where CTs are left to fend for themselves, is often taken to prepare mentor teachers, leaving CTs unaware of their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, Ganser (1996) posited that there is a lack of clarity in defining the roles of CTs, and the result is a wide variance in the ways in which CTs and student teachers interact.

While CTs may not always have explicit roles and responsibilities communicated to them from universities, research has been carried out that attempts to conceptualize the roles they assume. Table 1 organizes the roles by author, showing a wide variety of conceptualizations and

varied range of specificity. Similarities and differences within these seven articles will be explored in this section and throughout the review of the literature.

Table 1
Roles of CTs by Author

Authors	CT Roles
Clarke, et al. (2014)	Providers of Feedback, Gatekeepers of the Profession, Modelers of Practice, Supporters of Reflection, Gleaners of Knowledge, Purveyors of Context, Conveners of Relation, Agents of Socialization, Advocates of the Practical, Abiders of Change, and Teachers of Children
Payant and Murphy (2012)	Communicator, Demystifier, Catalyst for identity shifts, and Mentor
Butler and Cuenca (2012)	Instructional coach, Emotional support system, and Socializing agent.
Glenn (2006)	Model, Mentor
Graham (2006)	Maestros, Mentors
Matsko, et al., (2020)	Model, Coach
Koerner, et al., (2002)	Role model, Mentor
Feiman-Nemser (1998, 2001)	"Educative" mentor

Roles can be as simple as viewing CTs as models or mentors (Glenn, 2006), to as complex as Clarke, et al.'s (2014) 11 specific roles carried out by CTs. To better understand the various roles of CTs, Clarke et al. (2014) carried out an extensive literature review on CTs by systematically examining over 400 papers and articles covering 60 years of research. The three commonly held assumptions were rather broad, so a further review was carried out using Brodie, Cowling, and Nissen's (2009) notion of categories of participation as a guiding frame. A further review found eleven specific categories that suggest the variety of ways that CTs participate in teacher education. These categories are listed in Table 1 and will be discussed in the expert and co-learning research sections.

The three common conceptions that broadly characterized the roles of CT participation in teacher education placed CTs on a continuum of their levels of participation, ranging from low to high. On the low end of participation, the CT serves as a classroom placeholder or an absentee landlord (Clarke et al., 2014). In the middle of the continuum, the CT is a supervisor of practica who oversees the work of the student teacher but is not overly engaged, this is similar to the role of a model (Clarke, et al., 2014). On the high end of participation, the CT is seen as a coach and teacher educator, someone who is engaging, works closely with the preservice teacher, and provides guidance to help facilitate development and growth (Clarke, et al., 2014). The roles found in Table 1 fall within the middle to high end of the continuum of participation and will be discussed in further detail.

One role that is seen consistently throughout the research is that of a model. Modeling is one of the key mentoring strategies expected of CTs by universities (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Effective CTs model examples of good practice for their student teachers to observe, evaluate, and emulate (Koerner, et al., 2002). Modeling falls in the middle of the levels of participation due to the unidirectional interaction of the CT providing examples of practice to be observed (Clarke, et al., 2014). Glenn (2006) used the term “maestros” to delineate CTs who viewed their role solely as one of modeling effective practices. Additionally, Matsko et al. (2020) more specifically refers to the role of CT as a model as someone who engages in effective instructional practices that benefits student teachers primarily through observation. Modeling is most certainly a role of CTs. However, there are much more complexities involved in the preparation of future educators.

Teacher educators are found on the high end of the levels of participation. The roles of teacher educators include mentoring and coaching. Mentoring has gained popularity as a strategy

to assist student teachers in learning to teach. However, contradictory notions regarding the nature of mentoring exist, causing confusion for those involved (Ambrosetti, 2010). Mentors not only help student teachers with teaching practices but go a step further to help them develop as professionals, focusing on reflection, relationships, collaboration, and emotional support (Glenn, 2006). The ability of a CT to assume a variety of mentor roles such as modeling, supporting, challenging, facilitating, and evaluating, coupled with the skill of knowing which situations call for a particular role, is imperative (Ambrosetti, 2014). The role of a mentor is complex and will be discussed in more detail throughout this review as the main role of a CT.

Furthermore, CTs mentoring practices can be viewed as coaching, where student teacher growth is promoted through intentionally targeting learning and collaborative work between the student teacher and CT with a focus on meaningful feedback and collaboration (Matsko, et al., 2020). An example of coaching is found in Feiman-Nemser's (1998, 2001) work on "educative" mentoring which highlights the importance of not only supporting a student teacher in improving their teaching practice but also in cultivating their habits and capacities to continue to learn from their own practice. Another definition comes from Hoffman et al. (2015), who referred to coaching as "using talk around practice not only to describe their own decision-making and reflection but also to nurture the learning of the preservice teachers… directed toward growth" (p. 100). Coaching tends to focus more on supporting growth when compared to mentoring, but mentoring is the term seen most in the literature when it comes to a CT supporting their student teacher. Through this review of the literature, the term mentor will be used to delineate high levels of participation and a CT as a teacher educator.

CTs, within mentoring relationships, serve in a multi-faceted role. Sato (2008) described mentoring as a messy business; however, it plays a large role in the education of preservice

teachers and a deeper look will help teacher educators and CTs understand the importance of the role.

Importance of Relationships

A mentor encompasses many roles, and the nature of the relationship between the CT and the student teacher within the mentoring context contributes to the influence of those roles. Relationships are important for developing trust and establishing confidence and effective communication within the student teaching experience (Koerner, et al., 2002). Research shows that the mentor-mentee relationship develops as a result of various expectations of the experience (Cherian, 2006; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Martin, 1997; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008).

The quality of the relationship between the CT and the student teacher is a critical factor in the student teacher's satisfaction and success during the student teaching experience (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003, p. 27). When CTs and student teachers take the time to learn about one another and listen to each other's ideas, successful, reciprocal relationships can be formed.

Bullock (2017) asserts that the quality of the relationship between the CT and student teacher is the most significant factor in determining the quality of the student teacher's learning experience (p. 180). Successful mentoring relationships are extremely important in developing student teachers into effective practitioners (Russell & Russell, 2011). When CTs effectively support their student teachers, the student teachers in turn grow into successful teachers and the students benefit (Schweinberg, 2015). Teachers and students must have positive and trusting relationships in place to promote learning, the same holds true for CTs and student teachers. According to Turban and Lee (2007), when the relationship between a CT and student teacher is successful, both parties experience growth, learning, and development. This mutually beneficial relationship exits to convey knowledge, skills, and attitudes through demonstration,

conversation, and coaching (Jones, et al., 2014). However, this type of relationship can be difficult to build due to power differentials between the CTs and student teachers. Differences between the CT as an expert versus a co-learner and hierarchal relationships versus reciprocal relationships within the student teaching experience will be explored.

Theoretical Lenses

Framing my perspective on CTs mentoring roles is the belief that mentoring is a social practice. Theory will be explored from both the perspective of CTs as experts and CTs as co-learners.

Theoretical Lenses: CTs as Experts

Behaviorism. Behaviorists like Watson, Thorndike, Skinner, and Pavlov suggested that "learning is a change in observable behavior caused by external stimuli in the environment" (Skinner, 1974). Behaviorism relies on a process of reinforcement to increase the chance of repetition of a desired behavior and emphasizes low level learning, such as memorization over high-level thinking skills (Ahmad, et al., 2020). This theory of teaching and learning carry over to the student teaching experience when the CT is viewed as the expert who is transferring their knowledge of teaching to the novice student teacher through modeling. Furthermore, in behaviorism the student teacher is influenced by external factors more than internal growth. An example of an external factor includes a student teacher working to please their CT to earn a good grade rather than exploring different teaching methods and lesson ideas.

One specific theory within behaviorism that place the teacher in the position holding all the knowledge is the instructionist theory. The theory of instructionism maintains that knowledge should be transferred directly into the mind of the learner from the instructor and refers to a collection of educational practices that are teacher-focused, skill-based, product-oriented, non-

interactive, and highly prescribed (Jonassen, 1996). This can be seen when a CT expects a student teacher to observe them and then replicate their practices rather than having the freedom to use their own methods. Within this situation the CT is viewed as the expert due to their experiences in the classroom being duplicated without explanation or student teacher input.

Critiques of behaviorism exist due to its overly simple explanations of human behavior from a strictly scientific standpoint (McLeod, 2020). It is argued that this learning theory has negatively affected education because of its emphasis on memorization, drilling of facts, external locus of control, and a focus on habit formation (Hinduja, 2021). Furthermore, significant factors such as emotions, expectations, and higher-level motivation are not considered (McLeod, 2020). Overall, behaviorism does not take in to account the social-emotional aspects of education and does not promote higher-level thinking or authentic learning experiences, which are both key within the student teaching context.

Social Cognitive Theory. Social cognitive theory emphasizes learning from the social environment (Shunk & Usher, 2012) and revolves around the process of knowledge acquisition associated with the observation of models (Bandura, 1986). Modeling fits into social cognitive theory because it places the CT as the "expert," the person holding the knowledge, and provides a model of effective practice. Effective modeling is imperative within the student teaching experience because it demonstrates general teaching strategies for the student teacher (Bandura, 1988). According to Graham (2006), learning to teach is a multidimensional and intellectual endeavor. Therefore, CTs must enact roles that go beyond simply modeling. This will be discussed further in the co-learning section.

Theoretical Lenses: CTs as Co-Learners

Social Constructivism. Social constructivism is a type of cognitive constructivism that emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning under the guidance of a facilitator or in collaboration with others (Akpan et al., 2020). This theory aligns with mentoring within the student teaching experience due to the collaborative nature of the relationship and the guidance that is provided by the CT. Social Constructivism recognizes the social aspect of learning and the use of conversation, interaction with others, and the application of knowledge as an essential aspect of learning and a means to achieve learning objectives (Akpan et al., 2020). Central to the model of mentoring is the idea that novices learn through engagement and social interactions, including modeling and coaching that enable them to practice skills they could not perform on their own (Vygotsky, 1978). It is argued by constructivists that classroom practices of instructionist models, as discussed above, neither consider the interaction of new and prior knowledge nor facilitate conversation essential in internalizing and deep learning (Hinduja, 2021). Fosnot (1989) argued for a constructivist approach for teacher education that builds on the belief that knowledge is constructed by learners through a process incorporating reflection, inquiry, and action within the context of practice.

> Rather than dispensing a list of prescribed methods of instruction to preservice teachers for them to use, these teacher candidates themselves…need to be part of a community that actively works with them as learners and then allows the experience to be dissected, evaluated, and reflected upon in order for principles of pedagogy and action to be constructed (Fosnot, 1989, p. 21).

Legitimate Peripheral Participation & Community of Practice. Another way to view the mentoring interactions during the student teaching experience is through the lens of

legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). LPP views learning as a contextual social phenomenon whereby a newcomer, the student teacher, becomes an experienced member of a community of practice as they gain mastery through participation in that community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A community of practice is a group of people who engage in a process of collective learning. Three critical elements must be present to result in a community of practice: mutual engagement, a shared task or interest and a resulting identity; joint enterprise, a common set of community standards and expectations; and shared repertoire, a common vocabulary that differentiates the community of practice from others (Dennen & Burner, 2008). The university, CT, and student teacher relationship certainly embody these elements, making them a perfect example of a community of practice. These theories tie closely to high levels of participation and co-learning because the student teacher and CT come from two different communities, each with their own ways of making sense of teaching and learning (Wenger, 1998), and ideally learn about teaching and teaching-related activities together, as equals (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). Learning in a community of practice is not limited to novices, it is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone (Wenger, 2011). The co-learning model, within a community of practice, encourages learning for both the student teacher and CT.

CT as Expert

Davies (2005) suggests any individual who holds the power to sanction another into a community is legitimized as being at the top of that community. In placing student teachers with CTs, teacher education as an institution signals the status of mentor teachers as experts of practice (Butler & Cuenca, 2012, p. 297). An expert is defined as a person with a high level of knowledge or skill relating to a particular subject or activity (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). In the student teaching context, the CT can be viewed as an expert because they have more

professional experience than the student teacher, and typically takes leadership within the relationship (Ambrosetti, et al., 2014). This type of relationship can be viewed as hierarchal or asymmetrical because we tend to believe experience equals expertise.

Due to the complex nature of the student teaching experience and the fact that CTs hold supervisory and evaluative roles, power dynamics tend to be complicated between CTs and student teachers (Chiavola, 2021). Research on the student teaching experience shows that the most common, "traditional," approach to student teaching is the master–apprenticeship model of teacher preparation, where CTs model their practice, emphasize management strategies, and give evaluative feedback to preservice teachers (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Clarke, et al., 2014; Wang & Odell, 2002). In this model, classroom teachers are positioned as experts and preservice teachers are expected to replicate the practice of their mentor teachers. This situation creates a hierarchy that privileges mentor teacher knowledge (Clarke et al., 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Wang & Odell, 2002; Zeichner, 2010).

When CTs assume the dominant role, an environment for possible power struggles between themselves and their student teacher is created (Awaya et al., 2003). Research shows that a relationship based on hierarchy and power rarely cultivates connectedness and/or productive outcomes (Ambrosetti, 2012). Similarly, Guise et al. (2017) found that when the CT and student teacher engaged in a traditional student teaching experience, the expert/novice power dynamic limited their ability to engage in reflective practices. The absence of reflective practices led to a lack of collaboration that worsened the power dynamic that existed between the two teachers (Chiavola, 2021). It is important to note that CTs may exercise power over their student teacher without realizing they are doing so (Anderson, 2007), therefore unconsciously creating uneven power dynamics that affect the relationship within the student teaching experience. Due

to their experience, CTs hold more knowledge and are viewed as experts; however, there is the possibility for more reciprocal relationships.

CT as Co-Learner

As an alternative to the traditional structures of student teaching mentioned above, co-learning is a promising model of learning that takes the CT out of the expert role. Co-learning differs from co-teaching and co-planning and not as much literature is available on this topic. It is believed that such an approach has the ability to break down traditional boundaries between university-based teacher preparation and classroom teaching contexts and therefore counter the traditional master-apprenticeship, expert model discussed above (Canipe & Gunckel, 2013; Gunckel & Wood 2016; Turner & Blackburn, 2016). Co-learning activities engage CTs and student teachers in authentic teaching-related activities, such as analyzing student thinking or curriculum materials, that require both parties to draw on each other's strengths to negotiate shared meanings together (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). Furthermore, co-learning attempts to disrupt the hierarchical relationships typically found in student teaching by working to diminish the theory–practice divide, providing CTs with support in their roles as mentors, and engaging preservice and mentor teachers together in a more reciprocal relationship.

This model transfers well to the relationships and learning that takes place within the student teaching experience between the CT and student teacher. While some level of modeling and observation are still necessary, the idea of lessening the power dynamic and encouraging learning on both sides could be beneficial to all stakeholders. In a reciprocal mentoring relationship CTs and student teachers are involved in a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills, where both parties bring their own expertise to the relationship (Allen, 2007). Reciprocity

is crucial for successful mentoring, both CTs and student teachers should have a voice and grow throughout the student teaching experience (Ambrosettti & Dekkers, 2010).

This model is a promising addition to the student teaching experience due to its ability to promote growth and reciprocity between both parties. While co-learning, as specified in the research, involves particular tasks or joint events in analyzing curriculum, its overall purpose, of supporting mentor and preservice teachers in connecting principle- and practical-based discourses (Gunkel & Wood, 2016) is transferable to the relationship built within the student teaching context. A broad overview of this model shows the co-learning tasks supported the preservice teacher and mentor teachers in learning from and with each other and for building a more shared understanding of both the practical problems teachers face in the classroom and the ways that research-based principles can inform solutions (Canipe & Gunkel, 2020, p. 117; Gorodetsky & Barak, 2008; Koballa et al., 2008; Zeichner 2010.) A focus on meaningful conversations where both CTs and student teachers learn is imperative.

Roles of CTs as Experts

Returning to Clarke, et al.'s (2014) levels of participation, the middle level is what is viewed as the more "traditional" role of the CT, that of a supervisor. In this conception, the relationship is hierarchical whereas the CT holds the power and is defined in terms of what they can offer the student teacher (Clarke, et al., 2014). Eight of the eleven categories place the CT in the position of being the expert and imparting knowledge upon their student teacher.

These categories of participation are enacted throughout the student teaching experience. First, as gatekeepers of the profession, CTs regularly provide evaluations of their student teachers. This happens formatively throughout the experience and summatively at the end of the experience. These evaluations control a student teachers' entry to the profession and influence

licensure. Due to the high-stakes nature of the evaluations, CTs are positioned as the expert, however, CTs may not be able to reliably assess their student teacher due to lack of knowledge or appropriate assessment tools (Clarke, et al., 2014). Second, as modelers of practice, CTs teach while their student teacher observes and mimics them. While modeling is ideally used at the beginning of the student teaching experience, concerns arise when modeling becomes the primary teaching strategy and the CTs fails to move to a more reflective and independent way of engaging with their student teacher (Clarke, et al., 2014). Third, as providers of feedback, CTs often critique their student teachers' performance. However, Clarke et al. (2014) found the quality of feedback to be problematic in that it was heavily focused on positive affirmations and lacking in reflection, with too much emphasis on the what and not the why. Fourth, as purveyors of context, CTs share information about cultural and political realities of the classroom and community. Context is a powerful contributor to the overall student teaching experience and CTs are in the best position to ensure this is communicated to their student teacher. Fifth, CTs are powerful agents of socialization as they have a large influence on how student teachers come to know and participate in the teaching profession. Sixth, as advocates of the practical, CTs are expected to provide first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a classroom. While this is an important aspect, it is noted that a singular focus on the practical do not always ensure the development of wise and thoughtful teachers (Phelan, 2005).

Throughout these eight categories there are examples of power being in the hands of the CT. Seventh, as abiders of change, CTs tolerate many unacknowledged dimensions of their supervisory practice, such as disruption and change to their everyday work (Clarke, et al., 2014). This category acknowledges the hidden dimensions of a CT's work with their student teacher, the displacement that occurs when a student teacher takes over and the shift in identity that may take

place as a result. Finally, CTs are first and foremost the teachers of children this is something that is often overlooked and unacknowledged (Evans & Abbott, 1997). CTs may be affected by the tensions inherent in balancing conflicting responsibilities to their classroom students and their student teachers (Clarke, et al., 2014). Furthermore, different skillsets are needed to teach K12 students and adult learners/student teachers, the assumption that experienced teachers of children can also be teachers of teachers constrains the effectiveness of the field experience (Lafferty, 2018). The focus on the CT holding the information and transmitting it to their student teacher is a sign of an expert educating a novice and therefore a hierarchical relationship. Furthermore, the hidden dimensions and CT as the head of both the classroom and student teaching experience place them in a position of the expert.

The CT as an expert has also been studied in terms of power. Anderson (2007) sought a better understanding of the influence of CTs' power within the student teaching experience. Through a mixed methods study, 56 student teachers and 48 CTs answered pre- and post-practicum questionnaires, additionally, 12 student teachers and 12 CTs were interviewed. A phenomenological lens was used to explore the roles of power and compliance in the student teacher/CT relationship. Through questionnaires and interviews, the role of power in CTs' influence on student teachers' change was examined. Emergent themes were repeatedly challenged and analyzed. Results of the post-practicum questionnaire suggest, overall, student teachers had positive experiences working with their CTs and were influenced by being supported rather than pressured (Anderson, 2007, p. 311).

One meaningful finding included that student teachers believed their CT had a significant influence on their development. This was triangulated through the Likert-type questions, short answer questions, and interviews. CT power was exercised through their evaluations, rewards,

distribution of knowledge, vested authority, and charisma (Anderson, 2007). Additionally, short answer and interview data found that student teachers were frequently concerned with conforming to and seeking to please their CTs. From the perspective of the CT, most did not recognize the potential they had to influence student teacher's behavior or the power they held due to being an expert. Rather, they expressed a sense of responsibility toward helping their student teachers grow. Overall, this study suggests that CTs have a tremendous power to shape the actions, intentions, and beliefs of their student teachers, yet most did not exercise that power (Anderson, 2007, p. 321). Suggestions for use of this finding include informing CTs of the power they hold and how their actions often lead to hierarchical relationships rather than collegial relationships (Ganser, 1999).

A study by Smith (2007) examined how the expert and novice roles carried out by CTs and student teachers created challenges in their collaborative planning conversations. This ethnographic, 4-month case study used several analytical frameworks, including sociolinguistics, speech act theory, and discourse analysis, to uncover the challenges faced by a CT and a student teacher as they carried out their roles as expert and novice planners. Data collection included interviews, audiotaped and videotaped co-planning conversations, and private viewings of the videotaped sessions with the CT and student teacher. Data analysis of the expert-novice planning script focused on verbal and interactional involvement, discourse, planning topics, and nonverbal behavior. Interpretation of the data suggests a complex story of negotiation, tension, and resistance as an expert teacher and a novice teacher try to negotiate contrasting visions of teaching (Smith, 2007, p. 92). Due to the hierarchical relationship, positioning the CT as expert, tension and struggles were found in the planning conversations. This led to conversations that were focused on politeness and keeping the peace rather than the student teacher having their

voice heard. Additionally, it was found that the evaluative nature of the CT caused conflict. The author argues, "issues of conflict and power could be largely eliminated if teacher preparation programs removed evaluation from the CT's role" (Smith, 2007, p. 100). This is not a practical solution because CTs are in the ideal role to evaluate the performance of their student teachers. However, it demonstrates the large role evaluation has in the hierarchal relationships within the student teaching experience. The study suggests teacher education programs equip CTs and student teachers with tools to engage in open conversations, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, professional development for CTs to learn to facilitate planning and explore practices different from their own; engage in discussions that explore their own teaching ideas; explore questions and uncertainties about teaching; and assist novices who bring new ideas to the table (Smith, 2007, p. 103).

These studies represent a small segment of research that demonstrates the complex and contradictory nature of the role of a CT and relationships between a CT and student teacher. Due to the expertise and evaluative role of the CT, hierarchal relationships are commonplace. Student teachers report that they want caring, nurturing CTs who will act as mentors allowing student teachers to practice their craft; yet CTs must also provide the final evaluations that determine if the student teachers pass and receive their teaching certifications (Anderson, 2007).

Suggestions for making the *CT as expert* model more successful during the student teaching experience include CTs finding an appropriate balance in which student teachers are able to have freedom to explore their own roles as a teacher without feeling either overlooked or under supported (Chiavola, 2021). Furthermore, CTs must be mindful of the ways power plays a role in their relationships with their student teachers and engage in reciprocal learning process where both participants have expertise to share. As reflected in the majority of CT research,

training or preparation for CTs is imperative. Student teachers felt more likely to have decision-making power to enact strategies and ideas when the CT tried to create a relationship based less on power and more on collaboration and opportunity (Chiavola, 2021). According to Ganser (1999), CTs should be aware that many of their actions, from evaluations and positive affirmations to their inherent vested authority and reverence, perpetuate the power differential and often lead to hierarchical rather than collegial relationships. Ideally, CTs should be consciously aware of the power they hold in order to create reciprocal relationships with their student teachers and benefit all parties involved. Due to the importance of relationships within the student teaching experience, CTs must learn more about mentoring and power dynamics in order to be as effective as possible.

Roles of CTs as Co-Learners

Returning to the Clarke et al. (2014) literature review, there are three categories of participation that position the CT in place of mutual learning and growth. First, as supporters of reflection, CTs guide their student teachers to frame and reframe practice in light of past experience or new knowledge (Schon, 1983, 1987). While this focus on reflection could easily place the CT in the power role, ideally in supporting reflection, a CT will deepen their educative impact by sharing their point of view and listening to their student teacher's point of view. When CTs encourage student teacher reflection, their own practice is influenced by broader and more generative perspectives as well (Smith, 1991). Second, as conveners of relation, the nature of the relationship a CT is able to form with their student teacher is important. Clarke (2006) found that CTs felt that establishing a personal connection with a student teacher was a precursor to being an effective mentor. Third, CTs are gleaners of knowledge, recognizing that through a reciprocal relationship with a student teacher, they are gaining professional development throughout the

student teaching experience. A key motivator for becoming a CT is an increase in professional knowledge as a result of interaction with someone who is learning to teach (Clarke, 2006; Wilhelm, 2007). The student teaching experience can be a great learning experience for the CT as long as they are open to the expertise a student teacher brings to the experience. When CTs focus on building a relationship with their student teacher and, furthermore, realize they can learn from the experience, a shift in perspective should take place, and a reciprocal relationship is possible.

Canipe and Gunckel (2020) examined elementary student teacher and CT conversations during a co-learning task of analyzing children's science ideas. Participants in this study were from two cohorts of preservice teachers and CTs, a total of 20 preservice teachers and 23 CTs took part. The co-learning task carried out in the study had CTs and preservice teachers working in groups of four to six and focused on their conversations regarding a science talk in a first-grade classroom that had happened earlier in a methods course. For the task, the groups viewed two video clips of the science talk and then discussed the children's ideas about the science experiment. The purpose was to provide the groups with the opportunity to make sense of children's ideas regarding science. Data was comprised of recorded conversations, with a total of 17 conversations being analyzed. The conversations were transcribed and coded by ways that the CT and student teachers participated in the conversations, not by meanings that were being made or learning that was happening. Wenger's (1998) modes of belonging framework was used to analyze group conversations. Modes of belonging are ways of interacting with others to negotiate meanings from experiences. The three modes include engagement, imagination, and alignment. These may take place at any given moment during the negotiation of meaning, and a person may be either a participant or a nonparticipant (Wenger, 1998).

The data analysis showed that, for the most part, the CTs' participation included dominating the negotiations. The CTs used engagement, imagination, and alignment to participate in the negotiations in ways that enabled them to get their ideas taken up by the group more often than preservice teachers were able to do (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020, p. 89). For preservice teachers, engagement and alignment led to nonparticipation in negotiations because their ideas were discounted or marginalized. However, there were moments when the preservice teachers were able to make contributions that were received by the CTs. The overall findings from this study show how difficult it is to disrupt the CT-student teacher hierarchy (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). It is suggested that what may appear as CTs and student teachers working together amiably may actually be the CT controlling the group sense-making process (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020, p. 89).

This study recommends that attention must be paid to the conversations being had between the CT and student teacher. Both parties must have equitable opportunities to participate in the negotiation of meanings. Because hierarchy is ingrained in these relationships, efforts are needed for CTs and student teachers to find new ways to interact when working together. Furthermore, CTs' perceptions of student teachers needs to shift from the novice view to seeing them as people who are capable of having valuable ideas (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020, p. 91).

An additional study on co-learning by Turner and Blackburn (2016) aimed to examine cooperative teachers' and preservice teachers' perspectives on their experiences in co-learning events. The events were designed to maximize co-construction of knowledge and lessen the gap between theory and practice. Sixteen preservice teachers and 22 CTs participated by attending co-learning events associated with math and science methods courses. Data were collected through individual and focus group interviews with preservice teachers and CTs. Findings

include that CTs noted the co-learning events helped them connect with and build relationships with their preservice teacher candidates, which therefore supported their ability to serve as a CT and take on a mentor role (Turner & Blackburn, 2016). Student teachers, who often want to have clear solutions to problems of practice, welcomed contradictory perspectives in some cases, but in other desired direct instruction from the CTs. Additionally, it was mentioned that some student teachers were looking for CTs to serve in an expert role rather than the role of a co-learner (Turner & Blackburn, 2016). This is proof that hierarchical relationships are imbedded in the ways we view the student teaching experience. Many participants found it useful to hear multiple points of view and seemed to recognize the connections between the methods course and practicalities of the real-world classroom. Overall, the authors found purposefully engaging CTs and preservice teachers in co-learning activities may have the potential to support the development of educative mentoring interactions (Turner & Blackburn, 2016). The use of co-learning activities reinforces the idea that CTs are able to learn from their preservice teachers and build relationships through open communication and generation of new ideas, however, a shift in the perspectives of the CT-student teacher relationship is needed for some.

Contradictions

Thus far two different models of CT-student teacher relationships have been described. However, it must be acknowledged that there is not a one size fits all model. Different personalities, teaching styles, and supervisory beliefs contribute to CTs' approaches to working with their student teachers. Likewise, student teachers' desires range from wanting the freedom to make choices to preferring a more directive approach from their CTs. Eby, Rhodes, and Allen (2007) found that mentoring relationships are more commonly both reciprocal and asymmetrical,

meaning that there are shared responsibilities between the participants, but one participant may be more experienced and take the lead within the relationship.

In a case study by Draves (2008), three CT-student teacher pairs were examined within their student teaching experience in music education. Through formal interviews and four email prompts, data were collected, coded, and analyzed for emerging themes regarding CT relationships with their student teachers. The theme that emerged as best describing the relationships between CTs and student teachers was power. Additional codes included: the motivation of student teachers, student-teacher relationships, team-teaching relationships, and collaborative partnerships. Of the three pairs studied, one CT-student teacher pair followed the more "traditional" model of student teaching, where the CT was the model, and the student teacher remained the "student" who observed and shadowed the CT's practice. The other two CTs studied preferred collaborative partnerships, shared responsibility, and equal relationships with their student teachers. Power structures were viewed on a continuum of least power sharing to most power sharing relationships and collaborative partnerships. On the most power sharing end, CTs shared instructional and professional responsibilities with their student teachers. These collaborative partnerships promoted mutual learning, benefiting both parties, and led to reciprocal relationships (Veal & Rikard, 1998). This study is a good example of the different preferences of CTs; however, it did not discuss the outcomes of the student teachers. Additional research is needed regarding how successful the student teachers were based on the type of mentoring provided by their CT.

CTs are both experts and co-learners, as in the models discussed here. While these roles are in opposition to one another, it is likely that a combination of these roles are carried out during the student teaching experience. Ideally, in the beginning, a CT should work to diligently

build a positive and supportive relationship with their student teacher and serve as a model for the student teacher to observe. Over time, as the student teacher becomes familiar with the classroom, they should pick up responsibility and eventually take on the role of the full-time teacher. Meanwhile, as the student teacher learns from the CT, the CT should be learning from the student teacher. It is difficult to balance the roles, but possible. Ideally, the mutuality of the relationship offsets hierarchical factors that may emerge, such as power struggles (Ambrosetti, 2012, p. 225).

As we have seen above, hierarchy can play a major role in the relationships between a CT and a student teacher. When CTs make an effort to create a relationship based on collaboration and opportunity, student teachers are more likely to feel they have a voice and power in the classroom (Chivoloa, 2020).

Conclusion

Successful CTs should be both the expert and the co-learner. The relationship between the student teacher and the CT is complex because of the many roles of a CT and the tendency to view the CT as the person holding the knowledge in the relationship. It is both an expert/novice relationship and a collaborative/mutually beneficial one. It is intimate and involves daily lived working experiences, but still distant in that it is a professional dynamic (Chiavola, 2021). A shift in our beliefs regarding mentoring relationships may be a step in the right direction towards more mutually beneficial relationships during the student teaching experience. If we acknowledge the complexities, we can work towards creating more support for both CTs and student teachers as they navigate a multifaceted relationship.

These findings encourage further research on mentoring roles in the student teaching context through focusing on ways to build reciprocal relationships between a CT and student

teacher. Additionally, a deeper look should be taken into how co-learning tasks could be used more broadly in the student teaching context to support learning and growth for all parties involved.

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CHAPTER III: "FOCUS IN THE CHAOS:" COOPERATING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A STRUCTURED CONFERENCING GUIDE

A central component of teacher preparation is the clinical field experience known as student teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; McIntyre et al., 1996; Zeichner, 2010; Baum & Korth, 2013). Many teachers have claimed that the time spent as a student teacher may have a greater impact on the professional skills and potential of a pre-service teacher than any other part of their undergraduate schooling (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Henry & Weber, 2010). Student teaching provides preservice teachers the opportunity to grow as educators by learning from those who are more knowledgeable and experienced. This learning experience includes taking risks and failing without becoming failures (Glenn, 2006). While this experience appears invaluable and straightforward, it is not as simple as it seems. The student teaching experience is multifaceted, as it is a complex space that connects a theory-based university with a practical, real-world classroom, and incorporates an assortment of people with varied histories, understandings, beliefs, and perspectives on teaching and learning (Valencia et al., 2009).

The student teaching experience is one of the few times a teaching candidate has the unique opportunity of working closely for a sustained amount of time with another teacher (i.e., cooperating teacher). This role is among the most influential in teacher education (Henry & Weber, 2010) because cooperating teachers have the most contact and communication with the student teachers throughout the experience (Kasperbauer & Roberts, 2007, p. 32). However, do the skills and knowledge associated with teaching children extend into mentoring expertise? Fulfilling the role of a cooperating teacher in field experiences requires specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities (Clarke, 2007), and unfortunately, cooperating teachers are rarely provided the necessary support they need to become effective mentors (Valencia et al., 2009, Zeichner, 2010). Typically,

there is a lack of professional development for the cooperating teacher; therefore, they must rely on their intuition and draw on their own experiences as a student teacher. The lack of professional readiness of a cooperating teacher results in variability in the quality of clinical experiences for student teachers (Clarke, 2007) and moreover, substantial implications for teacher preparation programs and the broader profession of education (Thompson & Schademan, 2019).

Understanding the needs of cooperating teachers is crucial due to the significance of the student teaching experience in preparing future educators. To inform an understanding of how to effectively support cooperating teachers, a set of weekly discussion questions were developed. These questions are identified in this study as the Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG). The REG is a structured conferencing tool that facilitates conversations between a student teacher and cooperating teacher during 14 weeks of a student teaching experience. This study aimed to explore how the use of the REG affected the needs of cooperating teachers, which were derived from existing literature, and the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Needs of Cooperating Teachers

With a focus on improving the student teaching experience through supporting cooperating teachers in their role as teacher educators, the perspective of cooperating teachers is necessary (Kahn, 2012). Thus, central to this study was the examination of the needs of cooperating teachers, from their point of view. Need identification was imperative in the creation of the REG to ensure relevant themes of support were included. A review of the literature showed three areas of need for cooperating teachers, a need for connection to the university, a need for interpersonal relationships skills, and a need for conferencing skills when working with student teachers.

Connection to the University

As important as the student teaching experience is, there can often be a disconnect between university coursework and the student teaching experience (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Gall & Acheson, 2011). This disconnect includes cooperating teachers' unawareness of what their student teachers have learned in their coursework and uninformed about the terminology and vocabulary used at the university level. This disconnect creates conflict and confusion for pre-service teachers. Darling-Hammond (2006) posited: "Often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work" (p. 308). It is common for cooperating teachers to know very little about the specifics of the methods and foundations courses that their student teachers have completed on campus, and conversely, university instructors often know very little about the specific practices used in the classrooms where their students are placed (Zeichner, 2010, p. 91). This is not a new problem, as this gap was referred to as the *two-worlds pitfall* by Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann in 1985.

In his 1997 study, Kahn interviewed 20 cooperating teachers on their experiences as cooperating teachers and their beliefs on what it would take to become better cooperating teachers. He found cooperating teachers wanted more two-way interactions between the university and themselves and wanted to be more informed regarding methods course content. Additionally, he found cooperating teachers viewed the university as a resource for services and information rather than a partner in the student teaching process. Often, cooperating teachers felt "out of the loop" and desired stronger communication from the university (Kahn, 2001).

An additional sequential, explanatory mixed-methods study of 26 Physical Education teachers carried out by Franks and Krause (2020) revealed that cooperating teachers desired greater communication between the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university. In addition, they wished they had more information and knowledge about their student teachers' education, such as, program curriculum, students' previous teaching experience, and students' content knowledge (Franks & Krause, 2020). These findings confirm the pervasive issue of disconnect found within the student teaching context. The more certain cooperating teachers are about the ways in which they can support student teachers, the less potential there is for dissonance among university and field-based teacher educators who are collectively responsible for the education of pre-service teachers (Butler & Cuenca, 2014).

Interpersonal Relationship Skills

Due to the amount of time a student teacher and cooperating teacher spend together, it is imperative for the pair to have a positive working relationship. According to Turban and Lee (2007), mentoring relationships are most effective when both individuals in the relationship feel comfortable opening up to the other person and sharing aspects of themselves, as this is the basis of interpersonal relationships. When the relationship is successful, both parties experience growth, learning, and development (Turban & Lee, 2007). However, the opposite is true as well, a dysfunctional relationship leads to a negative student teaching experience. One way to help establish better interpersonal relationships and lower instances of conflict between cooperating teachers and their student teachers is through dedicated time for reflection (Denis, 2017). This reflection time allows for open communication. Communication leads to trust, and trust is essential for a positive student teaching experience (Jones et al., 2014).

The student teaching process is inherently complex and student teachers and cooperating teachers often struggle to find a balance of power within the relationship and process (Chiavola, 2021). Due to cooperating teachers' experience in the classroom, as well as their supervisory role, they maintain the authority in the classroom. This may lead to a sense of powerlessness and amenableness in a student teacher in order to maintain a positive relationship with their cooperating teacher, particularly if formal evaluations are involved (Anderson, 2007). Stanulis and Russell (2000) found that the key aspect at the beginning of the field placement was the building of a relationship between the cooperating teacher and pre-service teacher. It was found that a trusting and communicative relationship led pre-service teachers to feel encouraged to take risks in their teaching and therefore led to greater learning. Cooperating teachers play a critical role in developing a caring learning environment by providing opportunities for conversations that allow both trust and communication to develop in an environment that welcomes taking risks (Stanulis & Russell, 2000).

Another perspective comes from Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) who carried out a two-part project entitled the 'Voice of School Advisors" (VOSA). Phase one included a general survey on cooperating teachers' backgrounds and beliefs, and phase two employed the Teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI). TPI is used to differentiate between five perspectives on teaching: Transmission, Developmental, Apprenticeship, Nurturing, and Social Reform. The Transmission Perspective describes effective teaching as content mastery and a stable body of knowledge of the instructor. The Developmental Perspective describes that effective teaching begins with the learners' prior knowledge of the content and skills and builds upon simple forms of thinking to reach more complex thoughts and skills. The Apprenticeship Perspective asserts effective teachers are experienced practitioners of what they are teaching who are committed to learners

observing them and then engaging in authentic tasks. The Nurturing Perspective includes educators who care deeply about their learners and are committed to the whole person, not just the intellect of their learners. The Social Reform Perspective views effective teaching as the pursuit of social change, the content and learners come behind a commitment to large-scale change in society (Pratt & Colins, 2000). The researchers found that 64% of cooperating teachers had Nurturing as either their top or combined dominant perspective. From this perspective, good teachers "care about their students, promote a climate of caring and trust, help people set challenging but achievable goals, and support learners' efforts as well as their achievements" (Pratt et al., 2001a, b, p.8). Given the personal nature of the cooperating teacher and student teacher relationship, this finding is particularly important. If nothing else, an environment of trust and care that a Nurturing perspective provides increases the possibility of a positive relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

Conferencing Skills

While it may seem that the conversations between cooperating teachers and student teachers should be commonplace (Sheridan & Young, 2017), it is often not that simple. Due to the unique individual and institutional expectations brought to the student teaching experience by both the student teacher and cooperating teacher, communication is essential for success (Denis, 2015). Cooperating teachers are regularly confronted with three typical dilemmas: to help the student teacher or evaluate them, to transmit their own knowledge or to help them think for themselves, and to help them teach or to learn how to teach (Chalies & Durand, 2000, as cited in Chalies et al., 2004). These dilemmas play out in the quality of the conferences and communication between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. Moreover, research shows

that cooperating teachers do most of the talking and directing in conferences with student teachers (Bullough, et al., 2002).

In their discussion of training mentor teachers, Gagen and Bowie (2013) deliberated the need for cooperating teachers to communicate effectively and to be able to offer expert feedback to their student teachers. They found that cooperating teachers often noted they felt they did not communicate effectively due to the change in teacher education vocabulary over the years.

Valencia et al. (2009) were surprised to find that there was little feedback offered to student teachers and only infrequent and unstructured observations. Cooperating teachers tended to rely on direct forms of feedback around management, procedures, and pacing along with praise (Valencia et al., 2009). The studies in this area reported that cooperating teachers offered suggestions and directly told their student teachers what to do to improve their teaching, rather than promoting self-reflection (Valencia et al., 2009). This is problematic because the cooperating teacher restricted the student teacher's ability to reflect and critically think about their work as educators. Reflection time should be viewed as an important teaching moment, perhaps using open discussions instead of direct lecturing to foster critical thinking (Conway & Zerman, 2003).

Additionally, Sheridan and Young (2017) conducted a two-year study on improving the practicum experience that explored the topic of genuine conversation in the student teaching experience. Genuine conversations are defined as those where the partners are equal rather than one person leading. They found that this type of conversation was crucial in supporting student teachers' personal and professional growth. Conversations that occurred between the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and others in the school provided opportunities to talk through experiences, share expectations, and negotiate responsibilities, thus contributing to feelings of

acceptance and recognition for student teachers. Overall, conversations that involved sharing practice and beliefs were important for developing practice and confidence in the classroom (Sheridan & Young, 2017).

An understanding of how to better support the important work cooperating teachers do is necessary. Because many cooperating teachers feel they are "out of the loop," teacher education programs need to work towards establishing stronger communication and support for those who are willing to work with their teaching candidates.

Theoretical Framework

According to Merriam (1998), the epistemology that should orient a qualitative case study is constructivism as "the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). The context of this study is within a social relationship between a cooperating teacher and a student teacher. Fosnot (1989) argued for a constructivist approach for teacher education that builds on the belief that knowledge is constructed by learners through a process incorporating reflection, inquiry, and action within the context of practice.

> Rather than dispensing a list of prescribed methods of instruction to pre-service teachers for them to use, these teacher candidates themselves…need to be part of a community that actively works with them as learners and then allows the experience to be dissected, evaluated and reflected upon in order for principles of pedagogy and action to be constructed (Fosnot, 1989, p. 21).

In a social constructivism paradigm, individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. This study is framed within social constructivism under the assumption that knowledge is constructed by learners, learning takes place through social

interactions, and that learning is situated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, this case study is informed by cognitive apprenticeship.

It is argued that formal learning is often distinct from authentic activity. A proposed means of achieving authenticity is the use of the cognitive apprenticeship model (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). In a cognitive apprenticeship, learning occurs as experts and novices interact socially while focused on completing a task; the focus, as implied in the name, is on developing cognitive skills through participating in authentic learning experiences (Dennen, & Burner, 2008). It has been found that the most effective and productive relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers are guided by the theory of cognitive apprenticeship (Dennen & Burner, 2008). During the student teaching experience, cognitive apprenticeship practices have the potential to help preservice teachers understand not only the external components of teaching but also the reflective aspects of learning in and from practice as led by a cooperating teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). It must be noted that while cognitive apprenticeships have many beneficial outcomes, the learning environment plays a significant role and can differ greatly by clinical placement (Stalmeijer et al., 2010). An additional challenge of the cognitive apprenticeship model in the student teaching context includes a shift in the traditional role of a cooperating teacher from a knowledge transmitter to a coach and facilitator (Ghefaili, 2003).

Theories of learning as a social practice and cognitive apprenticeship explain how cooperating teachers perceive and enact their roles as they socialize preservice teachers into the language, culture, and identity of K–12 educators, helping them develop skills and knowledge within a specific context (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This socialization can occur on a surface level—with preservice teachers becoming capable mimics—or on a deeper level as cooperating

teachers verbalize their thinking so that student teachers can gain access to models for how to reflect on teaching decisions (Lafferty, 2018). The aim of the REG was to open space for deeper level socialization and reflection.

Methodology

Research Design

Qualitative research entails understanding how individuals make sense of their everyday lives, the researcher as the data collection instrument, understanding that social settings are unique, dynamic, and complex, and the knowledge that objectivity is impossible (Hatch, 2002). Moreover, a qualitative case study investigates the particularity and complexity of a single case and comes to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake, 1995).

Case study is a valuable method of research with distinctive characteristics that make it ideal for many types of investigations (Tellis, 1997). Although the knowledge derived from a case study may be specific to the given context, according to Hartley (1994), case studies are tailor-made for exploring new processes or behaviors or ones that are little understood.

This exploratory case study investigated the use of the Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG) with cooperating teachers at partner schools of the university where the study took place. The purpose was to explore the meaning and knowledge constructed by cooperating teachers and how they made sense of their experiences as a mentor through the use of the REG. The following research questions guided this work:

> **RQ1.** What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of the influence of a structured conferencing tool (REG) in facilitating conversations and fostering connectedness to the teacher education program?

RQ2. How does weekly use of a structured conferencing tool (REG) influence a cooperating teacher's perceptions of the relationship dynamics between themself and their student teacher?

Context

With the needs of cooperating teachers in mind, more support for cooperating teachers within the student teaching experience is proposed through a structured set of weekly discussion questions. The Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG) contains 14 weeks of questions developed to facilitate weekly discussions between the cooperating teacher and student teacher (See Appendix A).

The intent of the REG is threefold. The first is to guide intentional and meaningful weekly conferences regarding topics that do not come up organically in the week, this helps to address the need for conferencing skills. According to Sheridan & Young (2017), conversations that involve sharing practice and beliefs are important for developing practice and confidence in the classroom. A second aim of the use of REG is to help build a reciprocal relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher, addressing the need for interpersonal relationships within the student teaching experience. This guide allows for questions to be asked of both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, with the goal of learning for both parties. Finally, the REG serves to provide support to the cooperating teacher regarding ideas and terminology prevalent in teacher education, addressing the need for greater connection to the university. The REG seeks to make knowledge explicit through externalizing thought processes and promoting deep reflection on practices, which is favorable for both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

Each week the student teacher initiated a conference where 15 - 30 minutes were spent discussing a variety of topics focusing on the student teaching experience and the profession of teaching. Questions were influenced by Danielson's Framework for Teaching, the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), and the current weekly reflection questions found in the student teaching handbook. The questions were sequentially ordered so they began with relationship building types of questions and progressively developed into higher-level educational topics such as feedback and assessment.

The questions were organized using a conversational frames framework based on the work of Long et al. (2013). In their study, frames referred to the structures of expectations that allowed individuals to interpret situations, events, and people (Tannen, 1993). When speakers engage in conversation with each other, their expectations either are met or are defeated (Johnstone, 2008). Common frames, or shared expectations, ensure a smooth conversation and can allow for the successful negotiation of tensions. However, when speakers operate under different frames, conversational conflicts can result, possibly leading to a breakdown in communication (Long, et al., 2013). Through their study, the researchers identified three frame types, educative, supportive, and evaluative, through which their participants, university supervisors, and student teachers negotiated during their conversations. In the creation of the REG, these three frames were used to categorize questions each week to ensure the intent of the discussions was clear and a balance of topics was achieved.

Questions within the educative frame provide the opportunity for learning and offer a space for feedback, suggestions, and explanation of teaching topics (Long, et al., 2013). As the name suggests, these questions promote learning and help the student teacher to develop the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and dispositions to improve teaching practices. The first several weeks

rely heavily on the educative frames as the student teachers are adjusting to becoming a teacher. Next, the supportive frame focuses on emotional support while moving conversations away from critical comments (Long, et al., 2013). The student teaching experience can be stressful for student teachers; therefore, this frame provides space for working through the emotional difficulties that may arise. Finally, the evaluative frame concentrates on the ability of the student teacher to teach (Long, et al., 2013). Within this frame feedback is not given, rather the quality of the student teacher's performance is discussed. Questions in the evaluative frame begin later in the semester after the student teacher has gained experience. See Table 2 for examples of the questions organized by the conversational frames.

The use of these frames serves as a support for cooperating teachers and helps ensure teaching practices have been made explicit, as necessary in a cognitive apprenticeship. For student teachers to learn, they need more than models; the use of these weekly questions encourages higher level thinking and questioning for both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

Table 2

Examples of REG Questions within Conversational Frames

Frame type	Questions
Educative	How do you connect what you know about your students to your lesson planning? How do you organize your classroom space to support meaningful student engagement? How do you model a skill or strategy related to your learning objective(s)? How did you know whether students are ready to move to new understandings and content as a result of this lesson?
Supportive	What are you doing to take care of yourself emotionally right now? What can your CT or US do to help better support you emotionally?

Table 2, Continued

Frame type	Questions
Evaluative	How does the teacher candidate involve students in developing assessments or assessing their own work? How do they involve students in assessments? Please describe the formative and summative assessments the teacher candidate uses. How are those assessments informing their instructional choices?

The Case

Case studies are difficult to define due to the array of approaches and conflicting meanings by researchers in the field (Yazan, 2015). Yin (1994) defines case studies in terms of the research process, whereas Stake (1994, 1995) focuses more on identifying the unit of study, or case. Another perspective is that of Merriam (1988, 1998) who originally viewed a case study in terms of the end product, including description and analysis in her definition. Ten years later Merriam changed her definition to one that concentrates on the delimitation of the object of the study and aligns with Smith's (1987) notion of the case as a bounded system. The design of the case in study was orientated toward the beliefs of Merriam (1998) due to her detailed approach and minor degree of flexibility.

More specifically, an exploratory case study is appropriate when the existing knowledge base is poor, and the available literature does not provide any conceptual ideas (Yin, 2018). This type of case study is used to explore situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). This study employed an exploratory case study design due to the unknown outcomes of the REG as an influence on cooperating teachers' perceptions of their experience.

The exploratory case under study is bounded by the context of the REG. It is a single case with embedded units because the context of the REG is consistent throughout all participants, but the sub-units are unique in that they all come to the study with differing backgrounds and experiences (Baxter & Jacks, 2008). The overall study includes cooperating teachers who supported student teachers utilizing the REG for eight weeks during the Fall 2022 semester. Cooperating teachers' perspectives on structured conferencing were collected through bi-weekly questionnaires and final interviews. The goal of the case study was to explore cooperating teachers' perceptions of how the use of the REG facilitated conversations, fostered connectedness to the teacher education program, and influenced the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Participant Selection

The logic of sampling cases is fundamentally different from statistical sampling (Meyer, 2001). While quantitative sampling concerns itself with representativeness, qualitative sampling seeks information richness and selects the cases purposefully rather than randomly (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Participants were chosen based on their location and school district. Emails were sent to a school district in the midwestern United States to obtain permission to work with teachers who were serving as cooperating teachers in their schools. This district was chosen based on its proximity and close working relationship with the university. After permission was gained, cooperating teachers were contacted through email. Participants were informed that participation was optional and signed consent forms to participate. Only cooperating teachers were interviewed for this case study, as the focus was on cooperating teachers' experiences, not the student teachers.

Description of Participants

Participants included three cooperating teachers supervising Professional Development School (PDS) student teachers from a teacher education program in one of the largest elementary teacher education programs in the U.S. during the fall 2022 semester. In PDS sites teacher education is a collaborative endeavor between public schools and higher education (Bullough et al., 1997). According to the National Association for Professional Development Schools (2021):

> PDSs are grounded in key ideas such as boundary-spanning roles and structures; clinical practice; community; equity and social justice; innovative practice; inquiry; third space; professional learning for all; reciprocity; reflection; respectful relationships and collaboration; shared governance; simultaneous renewal; and traditions, celebrations, and recognitions. (p. 11)

The PDS program provides a full year of immersion in a public school setting. The experience includes 32 weeks of classroom experience. During the fall semester, student teachers are in the classroom three days a week and concurrently taking university courses. The focus is on engaging in instructional support activities, small group instruction, and getting to know the students. In the spring semester, the student teachers complete a 16-week student teaching experience wherein they slowly assume all responsibilities of the classroom teacher and work up to teaching full time.

Beth. Beth is a Kindergarten teacher with 27 years of experience. She has mentored 17 student teachers over her career. She has a master's degree in Teaching and Learning and has attended one seminar regarding the supervision of student teachers.

Carolyn. Carolyn is a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher in grades nine through 12. She has been teaching for 18 years and has mentored 7 student teachers in that time. She earned

a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and has not taken part in any additional professional development sessions for her work with student teachers.

Maria. Maria is also a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher in grades nine through 12. She has been teaching for 17 years and has mentored 10 student teachers over the years. She earned a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and has received professional development related to mentoring through attending conferences and attending PDS mentoring seminars.

Data Collection

The case study approach combines data collection methods in order to triangulate data and provide stronger corroboration of constructs and hypotheses (Meyer, 2001). In this study, data was collected through four bi-weekly questionnaires that were emailed to cooperating teachers on Fridays, interviews carried out at the end of eight weeks, and observations of two weekly discussion sessions. Additionally, demographic information was collected through an online questionnaire.

Demographic Questionnaire. Cooperating Teacher Demographics (See Appendix B) was used to provide insight and details into cooperating teachers' backgrounds. The questionnaire addressed age, level of education, degree earned, grade level, years teaching experience, number of student teachers supported, and professional development experiences.

Bi-Weekly Questionnaire. The REG Bi-weekly Questionnaire (See Appendix C) was sent out every two weeks for eight weeks. This questionnaire included Likert-type questions regarding cooperating teachers' beliefs on the usefulness of REG and what cooperating teachers found helpful in supporting their work with student teachers. Likert scales are commonly used in social sciences to measure attitudes and perceptions through survey questions in which

respondents are asked to choose an answer from (typically five or seven) ordered responses (Likert, 1923). Additionally, a short answer section at the end was used to gain examples of how the REG has been used over the two-week period. The bi-weekly questionnaire addressed both research questions with its broad approach and combination of Likert-type questions and short answer questions.

This questionnaire was piloted during the Spring 2022 semester with eight female elementary school cooperating teachers in the midwestern United States. The piloted sample was similar in grade level, demographics, and the region as the study carried out. To ensure content validity, member checks were carried out. Based on the responses from the pilot, the survey was slightly modified to ask more specific short-answer questions in order to gain greater detail in responses. An updated questionnaire was sent out to cooperating teachers every two weeks from September 2022 through November 2022.

Observations. Observations are common in qualitative research and are distinct from interviews due to the first-hand encounter of the phenomenon in the natural setting in which it occurs (Merriam & Tisdale, 2018). Observations of two weekly discussion sessions using the REG were carried out via Zoom with a focus on the relationship dynamics and conversational interactions between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The observation data informed research question two, as observation is a research tool that systematic and addresses a specific research question (Merriam & Tisdale, 2018). Field notes were taken utilizing a code sheet to record specific observed behaviors, such as who took the lead and who contributed most to the conversation, depth of reflection, contribution to conversation, and body language. A “narrow angle” lens was used to focus specifically on the interactions and items on the code sheet to ensure accurate recording of details (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Interviews. Qualitative researchers use interviews to uncover the ways participants organize their experiences and make sense of their worlds (Hatch, 2000). Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To collect data for this study, open-ended interviews were carried out, as interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information (Tellis, 1997). The interviews were semi-structured because, although there were guiding questions, there was flexibility in following the leads of the interviewees and probing into areas that arose during interview interactions (Hatch, 2002). An interview guide (See Appendix D) was utilized to ensure all questions were asked, however, the semi-structured nature allowed for the questions to be flexibly worded and allowed for follow-up questions as needed. The interview questions addressed both research questions and dove deeper into a cooperating teacher's experiences as a student teacher, connectedness to the university, relationship dynamics, reflective nature, and impact of the use of the REG on professional growth and classroom practices of the cooperating teacher. Participants were individually interviewed via Zoom after eight weeks of the use of REG. The interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience and took approximately 20 minutes.

To ensure everything said was preserved for analysis, a recording of the interview was captured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The Zoom application created an original transcript, however that transcript was thoroughly reviewed in order to ensure accuracy. The goal of the interviews was to gain more information from the participants than was gathered in the questionnaires. Additionally, to ensure internal validity, member checks were carried out. Member checking solicits feedback on preliminary findings from the participants and rules out the possibility of misinterpretation of participants answers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning, the organizing and investigating of data in ways that allows for patterns and themes to form, relationships to be discovered, explanations to be developed, critiques to be formed, and theories to be generated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data obtained from the demographic questionnaire, bi-weekly questionnaires, observations, and interviews were systematically organized and analyzed. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), qualitative data analysis involves the systematic organization of data in an effort to make meaning and understand data so that it can be presented to others. Data analysis included looking for similar themes and patterns between participants' responses in the study.

The approach to data analysis involved multiple steps. First, the demographic questionnaire was examined to determine the experience levels of the participants. Next, the bi-weekly questionnaire was investigated. The Likert-type data in this study were ordinal and therefore were limited to non-parametric analyses (Kero & Lee, 2016). The non-parametric analysis used was mode and bar charts provided for easy interpretation of data (McLeod, 2019). The non-parametric analyses contributed to the qualitative approach of the investigation because peoples' opinions and perceptions are subjective (Kane, 2019). Furthermore, non-parametric analysis ensures that future researchers do not mistakenly infer their results are replicable beyond that of their sample (Kero & Lee, 2016).

Finally, the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire and the interview data were analyzed using a series of coding types. The First Cycle Coding included Attribute Coding, Holistic Coding, and Descriptive Coding (Saldaña, 2013). The Second Cycle Coding included Theming the Data and Second Cycle Pattern Coding (Saldaña, 2013). Charmaz (2001) describes coding as the "critical link" between data collection and their explanation of meaning, making

the coding process important. According to Saldaña (2013), "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (p. 3)." There are multiple coding methods and I relied on my research questions to influence my coding decisions. My research questions are epistemological in that they address theories of knowing and understanding the phenomenon of interest (Saldaña, 2013), which led to two cycles of coding.

First Cycle Coding

To begin, Attribute Coding (Bazeley, 2003; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Gibbs, 2002; Lofland et al., 2006) was carried out. Attribute Coding is the notation of basic descriptive information such as, setting, demographics, data format, and time frame at the beginning of the data set (Saldaña, 2013). This is helpful as a way to consistently document pertinent information at the top of each transcript. Next Holistic Coding (Dey, 1993), an exploratory method, was carried out in preparation for more detailed coding (Saldaña, 2013). Holistic Coding is applicable when there is a general idea of what to investigate in the data and serves as a first step to seeing what is present in the data (Bazeley, 2007). The final step in First Cycle Coding is Descriptive Coding where a word or short phrase summarized the basic topics within the short answers and interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). Descriptive Coding lays the foundation for Second Cycle Coding and further analysis and interpretation (Wolcottt, 1994). One cycle of each strategy in the First Cycle Coding were carried out for short answer and interview data.

Second Cycle Coding

To transition from the first cycle to the second, Theming the Data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998; Butler-Kisber, 2010; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Giorgi &

Giorgi, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Smith & Osborn, 2008; van Manen, 1990) was carried out. This is a strategic approach that functions as a way to categorize a set of data into organized groups of repeating ideas (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003). Furthermore, thematic analysis allows categories to emerge from the data (Saldaña, 2013). Following the transaction, a final coding cycle was carried out. Saldaña (2013) likens Second Cycle coding to reorganizing and condensing the vast array of analytical details into a "main dish" (p.208). Second Cycle Pattern Coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was then used to identify similarly coded data, organize that data, and attribute meaning to the organization (Saldaña, 2013). The final step was to identify the two major categories constructed from data analysis of findings.

Validity and Reliability

Patton (2001) states that validity and reliability are two factors any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results, and judging the quality of the study. First, validity refers to the extent to which the findings of the research are accurate or credible (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). More specifically, internal validity refers to the extent that the researcher's findings match reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For the purpose of this study, triangulation was utilized to address internal validity through the use of multiple data collection methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Both bi-weekly questionnaires and interviews were completed for the purpose of increasing credibility and validity. Additionally, reliability or consistency refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The notion of reliability is problematic due to the human nature of participants and researchers in qualitative research studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When looking specifically at case study reliability, following a case study protocol works to document procedures and aim

to minimize errors and biases in a study (Yin, 2018). A case study protocol developed by Brereton et al. (2008) based on basic case study methodologies described by Eisenhardt (1989), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) was used as a protocol model. The protocol was followed to help ensure the reliability of this study (See Appendix E). Moreover, a pilot protocol of the interview questions and bi-weekly questionnaires were completed in the interest of strengthening their quality (Harding, 2013).

Limitations

There are a few limitations related to the data collection and analysis procedures carried out in this study. First, most data existed in the self-reported positions of the three participants. The interview data is privileged over the observational data or analysis of the bi-weekly questionnaire because it was the most detailed and revealing when considering the research questions. Observation field notes and bi-weekly questionnaires were used to corroborate the interview findings. It is possible that the findings are biased by the personal experience of the participants. Second, all three participants had similar backgrounds and previous experiences working with student teachers. While all three participants came into the study with different levels of knowledge and understanding, they all were veteran teachers who have supervised many student teachers over their careers. Additionally, the educational backgrounds of cooperating teachers influenced their work with student teachers, as all participants have earned master's degrees in Curriculum and Instruction. Finally, the researcher also had experience as a cooperating teacher and was able to engage thoroughly with the responses of each of the participants, which provided an insider's perspective on the situations and feelings described by the participants.

Findings and Assertions

Assertions were made, or general lessons were learned from studying the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and are presented as a summary of what is understood about the case (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, elaborate descriptions explain themes and illustrate the details of the case, leading to assertions (claims) regarding the benefits of using a structured conferencing guide during the student teaching experience (Stake, 1995; 2010). The interview, short answer, and observational data were analyzed utilizing three significant themes from the research questions: facilitating conversations, connectedness to the university, and relationship dynamics. The codes that emerged from these themes include focused conversations, reflection, professional growth of cooperating teacher, validation of practices, difficult conversations, professional relationships, and co-learning. Each code is described separately in the sections that follow.

Research Question 1: What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of the influence of a structured conferencing guide (REG) in facilitating conversations and fostering connectedness to the teacher education program?

The purpose of the REG is to encourage reflection and engagement between the student teacher and cooperating teacher, and it was found that it significantly influenced the work of the cooperating teachers studied and achieved its purpose. The REG supported the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship by facilitating conversations and fostering a sense of connectedness to the teacher education program.

Facilitating Conversations. As examined in the literature review, conferencing skills are imperative for promoting reflection and fostering growth for both student teachers and cooperating teachers. The most common problem during the student teaching experience results from poor communication between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher (Spencer,

2007). According to Timperly (2001), conversations are vital to developing student teachers' understanding of professional knowledge and performance. Shared interactions through conversations help to build professional confidence, provide a sense of well-being for the student teacher, and facilitate ongoing collaboration (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Furthermore, Matsko et al. (2020) found that student teachers reported feeling better prepared to teach at the end of their programs when their CTs engaged them in conversations that provided more frequent and higher quality feedback, instructional support, autonomy and encouragement, collaborative coaching, and job assistance.

Cooperating teachers must allow their student teachers to share their knowledge, solve their own problems, and reflect on their experiences so they feel a sense of agency throughout the experience. This theme had the most consistently positive reactions from the cooperating teachers, as the basis for the REG was to facilitate discussions. Focusing on specific topics and setting aside time to conference each week allowed for meaningful dialogue related to important areas in education. Codes that emerged in regard to facilitating conversations include focused discussions, reflection, difficult conversations, and cooperating teacher professional growth.

Focused discussion. Maria found the questions very beneficial because they focused on specific, important topics from the university. "We naturally do so many tasks, the attendance, the behavior management, the lesson planning, the assessment, the feedback, all of it without thinking or talking about what goes into it and why. These questions helped us focus in the chaos." Similarly, Carolyn found the questions very beneficial because they focused on specific, important topics. "It was nice to have a resource to use to focus conversations. It was helpful to pinpoint what we wanted to focus on from the week." Opportunities for conversations and guidance on teaching approaches, planning, and classroom management are imperative (Hascher

et al., 2007). The use of the REG led to focused discussions on explicit topics that were more productive and moved beyond emotional support or brief technical advice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Beth liked the questions and found they gave her and her student teacher much more concrete topics to discuss. “The questions were meaty; they led us to discuss other topics we would not have typically covered. We couldn’t get through all the questions each week because we would end up talking about 12 other things that came up from one of the questions.” She believed the questions encouraged deeper reflection for both her and her student teacher and allowed her student teacher to make real-life connections between the questions and the classroom. Beth highlighted how she and her student teacher would eat lunch with a group of teachers in the teacher’s lounge daily. This experience allowed her student teacher to see how teachers discuss and reflect informally daily. “It has been beneficial for her to see how teachers who have been teaching for a long time have similar conversations to what she and I have been having using the REG and knowing these topics do not go away. You continue to learn, reflect, and grow throughout your career.” These shared conversations are instrumental in underscoring the importance of reflecting on practices. Furthermore, these structured questions lead to conversations that enable the cooperating teacher to guide the learning and practice of the student teacher (Sheridan & Young, 2017).

Reflection. Dewey’s (1933) extensive work posits that reflection is a complex, rigorous, intellectual, and emotional process that takes time to do well. Rodgers (2002) condensed his work into four criteria that categorized his concept of reflection. These four criteria include reflection as (1) meaning making, (2) a rigorous way of thinking, (3) in interactions with others,

and (4) a set of attitudes. As one of the main aims of the REG is reflection, these criteria are significant.

Findings corroborate that the REG helped facilitate meaning-making, as theorized by Dewey (1933). Maria noted that through the discussions, she was able to help her student teacher make sense of what she observed throughout the day. “I think it (REG) was a way of making sense of what the student teacher sees us (cooperating teacher) do in an average day. It prompted questions that forced us, as the CT, to describe what we had done.” She also mentioned how the REG discussions served as a form of scaffolding by supporting the learning of her student teacher. Scaffolded learning followed by learner reflection has been suggested as a way to help learners achieve what they would not be able to do on their own and then make sense of and internalize the experience. (Dennen, 2004, p. 819). Beth pointed out that a significant benefit for her student teacher was taking the time to reflect and make real-world connections between the questions and what was happening in her classroom. The REG questions certainly assisted student teachers in making sense of what they were seeing and doing in the classroom.

Another view of reflection presupposes that the process of reflecting allows a cooperating teacher to think carefully about what is taking place and highlights the conscious choices about how to act in the classroom (Husu et al., 2008). Even when the time was limited, the questions allowed the parties to take a step back, acknowledge, and reflect on what was done. Maria pointed out how the questions forced herself and her student teacher to be more reflective. “It has helped me to slow down and think specifically about why I am doing the things I do.” She also noticed that the focused discussions and structured conferencing helped her student teacher make sense of what they have seen their teachers do throughout their prior clinical experiences.

Reflection is commonly reported as a process of self-examination and self-evaluation that teachers should engage in regularly to interpret and improve their professional practices (Husu et al., 2008). The REG encouraged rigorous and deep thinking into the how and why of teaching, aligning with Dewey's (1933) criteria that reflection is rigorous. Carolyn enjoyed the questions because she found they were important topics and ideas, but she had never thought of discussing them. "I did not think of these things; they make so much sense. Why would we not be discussing this with our student teachers?" She felt the questions did a better job of encouraging reflection on what was previously used in the program. She pointed out that the questions differed each week and progressed with the student teacher picking up responsibilities in the classroom.

Reflection was not only carried out by the student teacher, but the REG also allowed for deep reflection on the part of the cooperating teacher as well. The REG was used to facilitate two-way conversations and open communication, including reflection, aligning with Dewey's (1933) criteria that reflection needs to happen in interaction with others. Carolyn noted that the questions made her think about her expectations, what she could do to make her teaching better for her students, and the changes and growth she has had over her many years of teaching. Overall, reflective practices were found for both the cooperating teachers and student teachers.

Difficult conversations. Valencia et al. (2009) studied debriefing conferences of nine cooperating teacher-student teacher pairs and found opportunities to broaden and deepen student teachers' understanding were often lost due to a lack of discussions taking place and a lack of focus on teaching. They found that when the conversations actually took place, they focused on management issues rather than subject matter and pedagogical strategies and, moreover, focused on praise and support (Valencia et al., 2009). The use of the REG questions facilitates deeper

conversations that go beyond management and support. The questions posed provide the opportunity for educative discussions and place difficult topics out in the open to be explored.

Additionally, a content analysis of conversations between cooperating teachers and student teachers carried out by Haggarty (1995) found that both parties tended to keep conversations polite and ignore disagreements constraining open and honest dialogue. Carolyn mentioned that sometimes student teachers take feedback personally and become defensive. The REG questions helped by placing complex topics in the open and forcing discussions that could easily be ignored. She said, "While some conversations may be difficult, focusing on reflection and the bigger picture helped my student teacher think about her expectations and practices moving forward into teaching." Like Carolyn, Maria found the REG to help when challenging situations arose. She stated, "This is especially helpful when the student teacher is struggling; it provides a direct line of topics. It is not just that this information is coming from me, but this is what you should be able to do at the college level." The REG questions helped prompt questions that cooperating teachers may struggle to address independently due to the challenging content. Overall, it was found that the REG served as a buffer for difficult topics by facilitating necessary conversations.

CT Professional Growth. Research has shown that serving as a cooperating teacher positively impacts a cooperating teacher's personal and professional development (Spencer, 2007; Landt, 2002, 2004). The role of cooperating teacher offers a variety of professional benefits such as an increase in reflection skills, collaboration, learning new teaching methods, affirming their teaching skills and abilities, and a rejuvenation of teaching through the giving and receiving of ideas, information, and support (Ganser, 1996; Kosela & Ganser, 1995; Landt, 2002;

Tatel, 1994, Spencer, 2007). Data collected for this study suggests a positive impact on the cooperating teachers studied.

Beth found the questions enhanced her professional growth by reflecting on her own teaching and genuinely thinking about the "why" and relevance behind what she does in the classroom. The deeper reflection heightened her awareness of the relevance of her content and teaching strategies used. Maria also noted that while mentoring for quite a while, these questions helped her professional growth by forcing her to "think about what she is doing rather than just going through the motions day to day." She reflected on best practices and ways to improve her teaching. Spencer (2007) notes that the supervision of student teachers helps cooperating teachers learn new applications of old ideas, increase their reflective abilities, and improve classroom practices.

Additionally, Carolyn noted how the questions helped her to consider her growth as a teacher over the years. Reflection on growth enables a cooperating teacher to examine how their knowledge of teaching has been acquired and developed over the years and increases awareness of their instructional and classroom management techniques (Koerner, 1992; Koskela and Ganser, 1995, 1998; Ganser, 1996; Landt, 2002). "It (REG) really did make me reflect on where I was when I started and where I am now." The presence of a student teacher and the implementation of questions for deeper reflection led all participants to consider their practices and growth as teachers.

Connection to the University. Darling-Hammond (2009) referred to the lack of connection between campus courses and field experiences as the Achilles heel of teacher education. Moreover, research has shown that a perennial problem in traditional university teacher education programs has been the need for more connections between university-based

teacher education courses and field experiences (Zeichner, 2010). One purpose of the REG was to assist in connecting the two spaces. Overall, the participants found that the REG somewhat fostered a connection between the university and their classrooms. When explicitly asked, cooperating teachers did not find a strong connection; however, a more profound connection was found through their explanations and interview answers.

University connectedness. Most agree that satisfactory teacher preparation relies on mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and P-12 schools (Bernhardt & Koester, 2015). However, Zeichner (2010) found that student teachers often lack essential support from their cooperating teachers and describes clinical experiences as commonly being "unguided and disconnected" (p. 91). The REG sought to provide questions that encouraged the discussion of topics that would "bridge the gap" between university theory and terminology and the real-world application in the classroom.

Due to her many years of experience in the classroom, Beth acknowledged that teacher education has changed over the years since she was in college. She stated that she could learn about important topics at the university level by using the REG. Beth felt that using the REG somewhat provided a deeper connection to the university. "The REG helped me look at the broader picture, the philosophy and the pedagogy that I do not typically focus on when dealing with the day-to-day classroom tasks." Carolyn felt the REG questions slightly bridged the gap between the university and her classroom but did not help her to understand university terminology or forge a strong connection. She felt the discussions helped her understand some crucial topics at the university, but not entirely. She noted that the questions were realistic and helped her to highlight the practicality of the concepts from the university for her student teacher. Similarly, Maria believed the REG discussions provided a concrete opportunity for the student

teacher to make real-world connections between the theory learned at the university and the everyday classroom.

The two-way nature of the discussion questions in the REG was advantageous and cultivated a connection between spaces because they allowed the student teacher to share what is being taught and learned at the university. A significant positive takeaway was that having a student teacher was a great way to keep up to date on the newest and most relevant topics in teacher education. During their weekly discussions, all three cooperating teachers noted that their student teachers provided details regarding what was going on in their classes and what was expected at the university. Beth mentioned, "I appreciated her (student teacher) input because it helped me know what the priorities are for the student teachers coming out of teacher preparation programs these days and what the future looks like." While cooperating teachers may not have explicitly noticed an increase in knowledge of university terminology or concepts, they indeed were able to learn more about current themes in teacher education.

Validation. Teacher education programs rely on cooperating teachers to provide meaningful experiences for student teachers, however, cooperating teachers are typically not prepared for the multifaceted role (Lafferty, 2018; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Clarke et al., 2014). Lafferty (2018) found that even modest forms of preparation may contribute to cooperating teachers enacting their role differently (p. 88). The REG serves to direct the conversations that take place weekly between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. Maria pointed out how the questions validated the importance of the topics in teacher education, "They (the REG questions) show these topics are important to focus on overall, not just something I (as a cooperating teacher) think we should talk about. It is like a hierarchy of best practices from the university and us." Beth agreed that these discussions and questions were a way to highlight the

real-world happenings in the classroom. She discussed with her student teacher how the REG questions were things she talked about with her co-workers regularly. It was helpful for her to call attention to the fact that even veteran teachers are having these conversations and continuing to learn and grow. Overall, the REG served as an affirmation for cooperating teachers that they were on the right track. As Maria stated, "we are doing things clearly. We are meeting what colleges are implementing, so we are good."

Research Question 2: How does weekly use of a structured conferencing guide (REG) influence a cooperating teacher's perceptions of the relationship dynamics between themself and their student teacher?

Relationships are essential for developing trust and establishing confidence and effective communication within the student teaching experience (Koerner et al., 2002). Using the REG created a space for cooperating teachers and student teachers to interact socially within an authentic learning experience. The analysis of findings found that the REG successfully shaped the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher pairs. This was achieved through discussions that encouraged deeper reflection and sharing of practices. It privileged the knowledge that both the cooperating teacher and student teacher brought to the experience and provided structured opportunities for conversations. An ideal relationship within the student teaching experience includes one that is mutually beneficial and serves to convey knowledge, skills, and attitudes through demonstration, conversation, and coaching (Jones et al., 2014). Mapping findings to the theoretical framework, through the REG questions, both parties shared knowledge, leading to a mutually beneficial co-learning experience. Codes that developed include professional relationships and co-learning.

Relationship Dynamics. A positive relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher is imperative to a successful student teaching experience (Turban & Lee, 2007). The relationship quality between the cooperating teacher and student teacher may affect student teacher success, with negative relationships impeding student teachers' growth and success (Russell & Russell, 2011; Draves, 2008; Williams et al., 1998). Additionally, research has shown a need for intentionality in developing mutually beneficial personal relationships (Nesheim et al., 2014; Draves, 2013; Russell & Russell, 2011; Anderson, 2007;). One purpose of the REG was to facilitate open communication and two-way dialogue that would encourage a reciprocal relationship. In a reciprocal mentoring relationship, cooperating teachers and student teachers are involved in a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills. Both parties bring their expertise to the relationship and have their voices heard (Allen, 2007). Through interviews, it was found that due to their extensive prior experiences, all three cooperating teachers were already strong in their interpersonal relationship skills. However, the REG supported building more of a professional relationship focused on being a teacher educator rather than simply a support person. Furthermore, the REG helped to validate the work cooperating teachers are doing both as classroom teachers and mentor teachers.

Professional Relationships. Glenn (2006) found that a focus on relationships is one of the five characteristics of exemplary cooperating teachers: they should "collaborate rather than dictate, relinquish an appropriate level of control, allow for personal relationships, share constructive feedback, and accept differences" (p. 88). Due to their extensive experiences working with student teachers, all three cooperating teachers in this study were exemplary in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships. However, all found that the REG successfully promoted professional relationships with their student teachers. This professional

relationship includes the cooperating teacher taking on the role of teacher educator rather than simply a support person.

Beth found that in terms of relationships, the REG greatly aided in forming a professional relationship with her student teacher by discussing theory and educational practices. Not only was she there to offer emotional support to her student teacher in the classroom, but she realized she had knowledge and experience to share, and she had the desire to help prepare her student teacher for her future in education, not just in the student teaching classroom. Carolyn found the REG questions and discussions added a layer to building the relationship between her and her student teacher. “For me, these questions made me reflect as well. It was more of an open conversation that helped build our relationship.” Maria noted that through the structured discussions and the use of these questions, a formal process of relationship building took place. The importance of a positive working relationship during the student teaching experience cannot be understated, as it provides a foundation for learning to occur. The use of the REG proved to help establish a professional, reciprocal relationship through the weekly structured discussions. It allowed the cooperating teachers to share their knowledge in a non-threatening space, simultaneously allowing student teachers’ voices to be heard.

Co-Learning. Co-learning activities engage cooperating teachers and student teachers in authentic teaching-related activities that require both parties to draw on each other’s strengths to negotiate shared meanings together (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). Co-learning is an alternative to the traditional structures of student teaching that place the cooperating teacher in the expert role. The REG was designed to encourage co-learning by encouraging both parties to share their ideas and reflect together. These two-way conversations helped to pave the way for more reciprocal relationships to form. In reciprocal mentoring relationships, cooperating teachers and student

teachers are involved in a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills, where both parties bring their expertise to the relationship (Allen, 2007). All three cooperating teachers reported that their student teachers shared information regarding the latest happenings in teacher education. The cooperating teachers were able to move beyond the traditional expert role and were able to learn as well. Beth noted, "I appreciated how my student teacher would tell me about what they are doing in their classes and what she is working on." It was found that the REG discussions supported the cooperating teacher and student teachers in learning from and with each other. However, as seen during the observation of a discussion, the cooperating teacher was still inclined to take the lead in the conversation, revealing that a genuinely reciprocal relationship is complex due to the differences in experience levels between a cooperating teacher and a student teacher.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine if using a structured conferencing tool, the REG, would have a positive impact on several aspects of the student teaching experience, including facilitating conversations, fostering connectedness to the university, and influencing the relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers. It was found that the REG did have a positive impact on the experience and also helped meet the needs outlined in the literature review. The codes that arose from the study of using the REG include the positive impact of focused discussions, forced reflection, the opportunity for professional growth of the cooperating teacher, university connectedness, validation of cooperating teachers' practices, professional relationships, and co-learning opportunities.

The most impactful theme that arose from the research was how well the REG effectively facilitated conversations between the cooperating teachers and student teachers. All participants

found the REG questions facilitated open communication and allowed discussions that generally would not have taken place. The structured conferencing guide successfully enabled conversations and met the need for conferencing to take place while creating opportunities for open communication and reflection. Effective conferencing significantly aided in the formation of a positive working relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Second, a need found in the research on cooperating teachers was a greater connection to the university. The data revealed that the cooperating teachers could learn about topics and expectations of the university through discussing the weekly REG questions. The student teachers shared what was going on at the university level, and cooperating teachers reported that having a student teacher was a great way to stay informed on the latest teacher education trends.

Third, research showed a need for cooperating teachers to have strong interpersonal relationship skills to work with student teachers successfully. The nature of the close working relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher makes trust and open communication imperative. Results showed that the participating cooperating teachers had no trouble with their interpersonal relationship skills due to their many years of experience as both teachers and cooperating teachers. However, it was noted that using the REG helped form professional relationships that centered on the cooperating teacher as the expert with specialized knowledge to share.

Finally, this study found that using the REG created a space for cooperating teachers and student teachers to interact within a genuine learning experience. Co-learning, as an alternative structure to traditional student teaching, encourages learning on the part of both parties. It was found that co-learning took place due to two-way conversations. Cooperating teachers successfully learned from their student teachers when given the discussion prompts to facilitate

the conversations. However, the cooperating teachers consistently took the lead in the conversations, demonstrating that a genuinely reciprocal relationship is complex due to cooperating teacher's previous experiences as the leader in their classroom.

Mapping on to social constructivism, specifically a cognitive apprenticeship model, the REG, as a structured conferencing guide, promoted an intentional opportunity for the cooperating teacher to make thinking visible and clearly explain what was happening in the classroom. This allowed the student teacher to learn more than they typically would through observation. Complexity increased over the weeks, allowing for slow and consistent growth and a gradual shift in expectations as the student teacher became more experienced.

Research Implications

The results of this study have implications for teacher education programs and teacher educators. The influence of structured discussion on the relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers is notable. Including weekly two-way discussions required conversations that generally would not occur during the busy week. Successful relationships were built through the structured conferencing guide, and discussions between the cooperating teacher and student teacher were of high quality and encouraged higher-level thinking and reflection. These discussions positively impacted both the student teacher and cooperating teacher. These findings suggest that including a structured conferencing guide and two-way weekly conversations has numerous positive benefits for the student teaching experience.

Implications for Practice

It is widely known that the student teaching experience is one of the most influential aspects of teacher education. The cooperating teacher plays a significant role in how beneficial this experience is for a student teacher. This study sought to determine if a structured

conferencing guide would be helpful to the work cooperating teachers do with student teachers. The results of this study provide insight into how using a structured conferencing guide, the REG, provided many benefits to both the cooperating teacher and student teacher within the student teaching experience.

A significant observation is that using the REG shaped the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Dedicated time for conversation and reflection created space for open communication and trust building. This positively impacted the practices of both parties. Another observation is that a connection to the university was formed through the weekly discussions. While cooperating teachers did not fully recognize the connection, their interview responses proved they could learn what topics were significant at the university. Another important takeaway is how focused discussions led to more productive conversations. The use of the REG provided specific questions related to practice that encouraged growth for both parties. It is thus proposed that teacher education programs consider the implementation of the REG or similar structured conferencing guide to meet the needs of cooperating teachers and foster a positive relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Recommendations for further research include studying student teachers' perceptions of the REG. Moreover, a further look into the power structures in place that constrict communication between a cooperating teacher and student teacher would be beneficial for teacher education professionals. Additionally, a focus on how cooperating teachers are prepared for their mentoring role is worth exploring as it varies from state to state or institution to institution.

Conclusion

This study has shown how using a structured conferencing guide and dedicated time for conferencing positively impacts a cooperating teacher within the student teaching context. Cooperating teachers play a significant role in the student teaching experience. Research shows they should ideally provide expertise and guidance to help a novice teacher grow, but that is only sometimes the case. This research aimed to determine if a structured conferencing guide influenced cooperating teacher's work with a student teacher. This focused on the researched needs of a cooperating teacher and the relationship built with the student teacher. It was found that the structured conferencing guide, the REG, positively impacted the practices of the cooperating teachers studied. Overall, the importance of the cooperating teacher cannot be understated. The role they place in teacher education is invaluable. Teacher education programs should continue to find ways to support the work of cooperating teachers, and the REG is one way they could do so.

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CHAPTER IV: CREATION OF A REFLECTION AND ENGAGEMENT GUIDE TO SUPPORT COOPERATING TEACHERS

Introduction

The student teaching experience provides the opportunity for student teachers to gain knowledge through observing and learning from a mentor, relating theoretical knowledge learned at the university to real-world experiences in the classroom, gaining new skills related to teaching, and reflecting on teaching skills and experiences (Flores, 2015, Korthagen, 2010, Schon, 1983). This critical experience has a major impact on the teaching practices and future of the student teacher, and it can be argued that the cooperating teacher has the greatest impact on the quality of the experience (Weiss & Weiss, 2001; Henry & Weber, 2010). Furthermore, research suggests that while teaching student teachers to reflect and providing feedback is important, an interactive component is most important, and cooperating teachers are best suited to provide that interaction (Trites, 2020).

My previous experiences as both a cooperating teacher and university supervisor and prior research on cooperating teachers have shown that there is a need for cooperating teachers and student teachers to have open communication and discuss topics that offer the opportunity to bridge the gap between the university and the school setting. At our university, one component of the student teaching experience is a weekly conference between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. This conference is conducted by utilizing a set of questions to facilitate a 15 to 30-minute discussion at the end of each week. Through interviews with cooperating teachers and university supervisors, it was found that the questions being used needed to be updated to make them more relevant. Through a purposeful and intentional approach, the Reflection and

Engagement Guide (REG) was created to meet this need and encourage meaningful conferences each week. The prior set of questions served as a starting point, but various research theories and frameworks supplemented our work. This paper describes the multiple influences on the creation of the REG and how the guided is used during the student teaching experience.

Reflection and Engagement Guide

The Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG) comprises 14 sets of questions developed to facilitate weekly discussions between the cooperating teacher and student teacher and a set of supportive guidelines for the cooperating teacher to reference weekly throughout the student teaching experience (See Appendix A). One intent of the questions prompted in the REG is to guide intentional and meaningful weekly conferences concerning topics that do not typically come up during the week. This is imperative because conversations that involve sharing practice and beliefs are important for developing practice and confidence in the classroom (Sheridan & Young, 2017). These weekly conferences are used to facilitate reflection and learning from experiences in the classroom.

Additionally, the REG aims to build a reciprocal relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. This involves a two-way interchange of knowledge and skills, where both parties share their expertise within the relationship (Allen, 2007). This is achieved through questions that both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher ask and answer, allowing for an open exchange of knowledge and growth throughout the student teaching experience (Ambrosettti & Dekkers, 2010).

Finally, the questions and guidelines support the cooperating teacher regarding concepts and terminology prevalent in teacher education. These topics are based on research and theory, helping to bridge the gap between the university and the school. Overall, the use of the REG

provides the opportunity for structured conferencing and reflection, along with supportive mentoring suggestions for cooperating teachers. The questions' development was influenced by various sources, including cognitive apprenticeship theory, conversational frames by Long et al. (2013), Danielson's Framework for Teaching, and the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). Specific components are discussed below.

Relevant Concepts and Literature

Cognitive Apprenticeship

The creation of the REG was grounded in social constructivism and, more specifically, situated within a cognitive apprenticeship. Social constructivism posits that knowledge and learning are constructed through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). A cognitive apprenticeship prioritizes the use of authentic tasks and situations and the role of interactions between more and less-skilled individuals (Garner, 2012). Cognitive apprenticeship methods assimilate students into authentic practices through activity and social interaction (Brown et al., 1989). A key goal of cognitive apprenticeships is to make otherwise unspoken cognitive and metacognitive processes explicitly known during the performance of complex tasks (Garner, 2012). This is accomplished via the cooperating teacher serving as a mentor who models and verbalizes their thought processes.

Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1991) indicate that the novice's practice in a real-life setting is necessary for helping them to develop relevant, transferable knowledge. Dennen and Burner (2008) postulate that the most effective and productive relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers is guided by the theory of cognitive apprenticeship. This theory was evident in the creation of the REG as we purposefully created questions that engaged both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

Conversational Frames

The framework of the REG is based on conversational frames created by Long, van Es, and Black (2013). In their study, Long et al. (2013) examined the discourse of student teacher supervision, focusing on how the conversational frames of supervisors and student teachers influenced how student teacher practice was discussed. Analysis of four transcripts of post-observation meetings revealed three conversational frame types that influenced the effectiveness of the interactions: educative, supportive, and evaluative.

These three frame types refer to the types of expectations that allow people to interpret interactions, conversations, and people (Tannen, 1993). Common frames are necessary to ensure smooth conversations and to successfully negotiate tensions (Long, et al., 2013). On the other hand, when individuals operate under different frames, conversational conflicts can occur, conceivably leading to a halt in communication (Long, et al., 2013).

In creating the REG, these three frames were used to categorize questions and ensure a balance between the three kinds of conversations that could arise during weekly conferencing. By using conversational frames, the conversations between a student teacher and cooperating teacher are guided and achieve a balance between being evaluative and educative; furthermore, it adds a supportive component that is necessary when working with preservice teachers.

First, the questions within the educative frame aim to help the student teacher develop the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and dispositions to improve teaching practices (Long, et al., 2013). These types of questions encourage learning and offer a space for feedback, suggestions, and explanations of teaching (Long, et al., 2013). Cooperating teachers should utilize these types of questions to provide specific feedback on practice and make suggestions for improvement, while student teachers can use these questions to explain their decision-making and analyze their

classroom practices. Ideally, using the educative frame opens space for productive conversations where student teacher learning is supported through conversational interaction (Long et al., 2013, p. 184).

Next, the supportive frame focuses on emotional support and creating a comfortable and nonthreatening space while moving conversations away from critical explanations and remarks (Long, et al., 2013). This frame provides space for working through the emotional difficulties that may arise during the demanding student teaching experience. These supportive questions balance the more pressing questions in the educative and evaluative frames. They also allow for building a stronger relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher.

Finally, the evaluative frame concentrates on the capability of the student teacher to teach effectively rather than on feedback, the quality of the student teacher's performance is discussed (Long, et al., 2013). Questions in the evaluative frame are used sparingly and begin later in the semester after the student teacher has gained experience. Questions in this frame were created with teacher evaluation in mind.

The use of these frames serves as a support for cooperating teachers and helps ensure teaching practices have been made explicit, as necessary in a cognitive apprenticeship. For student teachers to learn, they need their cooperating teachers to serve as more than just more than models; they need feedback, explanations, suggestions for improvement, and support. Tannen (1993) posited that using a protocol to make explicit the expectations for the conversation between a student teacher and cooperating teacher ensures that both parties seek to achieve the same goal in the conversation. Using these three frames encourages a productive conversation between parties.

Danielson's Framework for Teaching

A well-known framework that measures teacher performance and determines what a teacher should be able to do is The Framework for Teaching (FFT). The FFT is grounded in a research-based set of components of instruction and the Interstate Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011). It comprises 76 elements of effective practice, organized into 22 components within four domains. The domains include Planning and Preparing for Student Learning (Domain 1), Creating an Environment for Student Learning (Domain 2), Teaching for Student Learning (Domain 3), and Professional Responsibilities (Domain 4) (Danielson Group, 2014a). The FFT honors the complexity of teaching by deconstructing effective strategies in a way that supports professional practice through the rich description of performance attributes (Evans et al., 2015, p. 22).

The FFT is one of the most widely used observational systems for evaluating teacher effectiveness (Danielson, 2015) and is also used within our university to evaluate student teachers. The FFT is a foundational document to structure conversations using a common language for practitioners (Danielson, 2015). We strongly believe in utilizing this framework due to its foundation in research and detailed performance characteristics that students will encounter in their evaluation during student teaching and in their future job. Each week of the REG includes references to the components found in the FFT to help support conversations. Additionally, most cooperating teachers have extensive experience using this framework and are familiar with these elements of effective practice.

EdTPA

An additional consideration was a link to a performance-based assessment, which in Illinois is The Educative Teacher Performance Assessment or edTPA. The edTPA is a performance-based assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. It was partially developed in response to the subjectivity of teacher preparation as it creates a measure of performance for individual teachers and for teaching as a collective enterprise (Sato, 2014). The edTPA aims to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from day one in the classroom ("About edTPA," n.d.). Moreover, the edTPA provides a standard set of expectations for licensure and nationally available performance standards that can be used across programs and states to support licensing new teachers ("About edTPA," n.d.). According to AACTE.org, the edTPA goes beyond coursework to ask teacher candidates to demonstrate what they can and will do on the job, translating into practice what research shows improves learning. It is a multipart assessment that guides candidates through the creation of an online portfolio that consists of three interrelated areas: Planning for Instruction and Assessment, Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning, and Assessing Student Learning, often referred to as Tasks 1, 2, and 3 (edTPA.com, n.d.).

According to Darling-Hammond (2011), using the edTPA can potentially improve teacher effectiveness by providing an educative performance assessment that aims to improve the quality of teacher education. The edTPA ties into the educative frame, focusing on student teacher learning and evaluation. While the edTPA may have its downfalls and is not viewed favorably by all, the questions posed encourage deep thinking and justification of practices.

Putting it All Together

Framed by cognitive apprenticeship and conversational frames and influenced by Danielson's FFT and the edTPA, the REG was created to engage both cooperating teachers and student teachers in meaningful dialogue and reflection and provide information to cooperating teachers regarding ways to support their student teachers. Each week includes a different important topic regarding teaching practices. The top of each week's page begins with a title and an essential question. The weekly questions are categorized into three conversational frames, educative, supportive, or evaluative (Long et al., 2013). Additionally, the supportive section has a short list of guidelines for cooperating teachers to easily understand the focus for the week and how they can best support their student teacher. At the bottom of each week's page is a reference to the section of Danielson that relates to the week's topic.

The weekly questions begin being more educative and supportive, and as the semester progresses, evaluative questions are added. The questions are ordered in a way that builds on complexity, beginning with relationship-building, classroom community types of questions and progressively developing into higher-level educational topics such as feedback, assessment, and inquiry as the semester progresses. This guide is located in the student teaching handbook and syllabus and also emailed to cooperating teachers at the beginning of the experience.

Using the REG

The REG is used weekly throughout 14 weeks of the student teaching experience. It is recommended that the questions are reviewed at the beginning of the week so that the focus for the week is known. At the end of each week, the student teacher must initiate a conference with the cooperating teacher to discuss the questions. A 15 to 30-minute discussion is suggested. Ideally, the discussion includes at least three of the several questions posed. A unique feature of

the REG is that the questions are written in a way that they can be asked and answered by either the cooperating teacher or the student teacher. Both parties are encouraged to reflect and share their opinions. This is not simply a time to get the cooperating teacher's expert point of view, student teachers must answer questions on their teaching practices and share their knowledge as well.

At the time of creation, no specific assessment has been tied to using the REG. The outcome is simply a weekly discussion to encourage deeper reflection and engagement and also support the cooperating teacher in their work as a mentor. In the future, the possibility exists of creating a semester-long portfolio assessment that ties into these questions and requires the student teacher to provide evidence of learning throughout the entire student teaching experience.

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CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This three-article dissertation explores how to better support cooperating teachers in their significant work with student teachers through the use of a Reflection and Engagement Guide (REG). Often, little value is placed on the role of the cooperating teacher, yet these individuals significantly impact the preservice teachers they mentor (Clarke et al., 2014; Zeichner, 2011). Through these three chapters, I examined cooperating teachers' role as an expert versus co-learner, and perceptions of using the REG with a focus on facilitating conversations and fostering a connection to the university teacher education program, Furthermore, relationship dynamics between cooperating teachers and student teachers were explored.

Levin (2002) points out that while clinical experiences are essential to effective teacher preparation, they are perhaps the least intentional component of the process. The creation of the REG was intentional and purposeful. It was designed to facilitate intentional and meaningful conversations and create space for these conversations to happen weekly. The REG encouraged both the student teacher and cooperating teacher to share their thoughts and reflect. Research shows that being a cooperating teacher encourages a teacher to reflect on themself as a practitioner and on the teaching profession (Koerner, 1992). Therefore, the REG was an addition and support piece to the reflection portion of being a cooperating teacher. Not only did the REG support cooperating teacher reflection, but it also encouraged open dialogue between the student teacher and cooperating teacher with the intent of enhancing the reflection of the student teacher and promoting a relationship between the parties.

Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2009) mentioned that the lack of connection between university coursework and field experiences could be seen as the Achilles' heel of teacher education. The REG sought to help "bridge the gap" by providing theory-related questions each

week and tips for cooperating teachers to assist in their understanding of university-related terms and theories to focus on each week. While participants did not note a strong, explicit connection, it was found that the student teachers openly shared what they have learned at the university, helping to "bridge the gap."

Overall, this study provided evidence that the role of a cooperating teacher can be supported through the use of a structured mentoring guide called the REG. The role of a cooperating teacher is indeed an important one. They play a significant role in the education of pre-service teachers. By gaining a greater understanding of the role and mentoring styles of cooperating teachers and how to better support them through the use of the REG, a step has been taken to advance the work of cooperating teachers.

Future Research

Supported by the findings of this study, my future research will continue in three related directions. These include considering a credentialing program for cooperating teachers, understanding the perspectives of university supervisors, and extending the use of the REG by gaining the viewpoints of student teachers.

First, through the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Inquiry Initiative research team I am a part of, I am currently completing research regarding mentor teachers or cooperating teacher requirements in all 50 states. Our future work consists of an analysis of the requirements so that we can develop a baseline of national expectations for cooperating teachers. We will use this information to inform a study regarding credentialing mentor teachers to ensure they are prepared for the complex role they fulfill. This builds upon the idea of supporting cooperating teachers in their role as mentors and furthers it by focusing on a concrete method of training cooperating teachers. Our end goal is a national credentialing program.

A second avenue to explore is an understanding of the distinct perspectives of university supervisors and their roles. University supervisors are uniquely positioned to "bridge the gap" between the university and clinical placement classrooms. It would be interesting to explore their training and preparation to fulfill this unique role. I would like to look deeper into how their teaching experiences, educational value systems, and formal education influence their work with student teachers. This could inform the future work of university supervisors to ensure they are properly prepared for their important work.

Finally, a deeper look into student teachers' perception of the REG would be worthwhile. While this study and my research body thus far have focused on cooperating teachers, the perspective of the student teacher would also be beneficial to gain. The overall student teaching experience aims to produce a competent future teacher, so their perspectives are imperative as well.

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APPENDIX A: REFLECTION AND ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

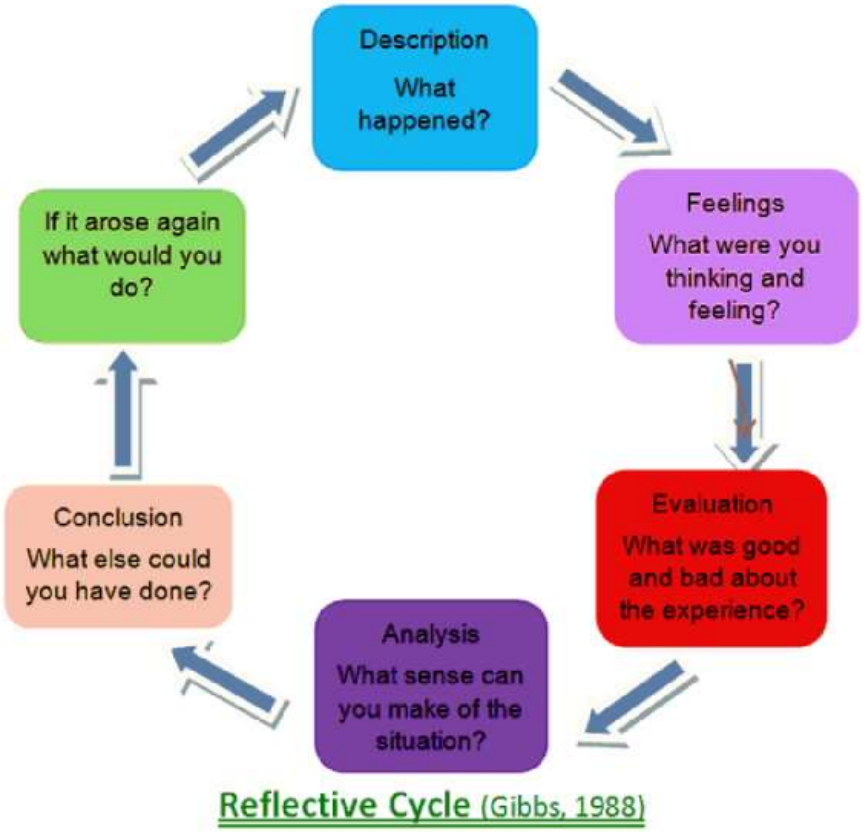
Week 1 – Reflection and expectations

Essential question: How do teachers use reflection to improve their practices?
Educative - none

Supportive –

1. What expectations does your cooperating teacher have for your experience?
2. What expectations do you have for your experience?
3. How does your cooperating teacher reflect on his/her experiences in the classroom?
4. What concerns do you have regarding your student teaching experience?
5. What concerns does your cooperating teacher have regarding hosting a student teacher?

Evaluative – none
Gibbs Reflection – you may find this model helpful when talking about the importance of reflection in teaching. Feel free to utilize this cycle when discussing events in the classroom.



Week 2 – Knowledge of students and learning environment

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Please reference Danielson Domain 1 and discuss the following questions:

Essential Question: How do teachers and their students construct classroom communities that support meaningful student engagement?

Educative –

1. How do you get to know your students, families, and communities?
2. How do you connect what you know about your students to your lesson planning?
3. Discuss how you effectively use content standards to design lessons.
4. What questions do you plan to ask your students in order to determine their knowledge of the content before you begin teaching? When do you plan to ask these questions?
5. How do you organize your classroom space to support meaningful student engagement?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting your candidate in:

- Learning more about your students and their families.
- Effectively using standards to design lessons.
- The importance of classroom organization.

Evaluative -

See Danielson: 1b, 1c, 2a

Week 3 – Knowledge of students and planning

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

At this point, you should have carried out a lesson, please answer the following questions regarding that lesson.

Essential Question: How does the teacher's knowledge of students contribute to planning and learning?

Educative –

1. Discuss how you effectively implemented content standards and connected them to objectives in your lesson this week.
2. How did knowledge of your students inform your instructional choices?
3. Assessing prior knowledge: What questions did you ask your students so that you would know what they understood about the content before you began teaching? How did their answers inform your instructional choices? Did you make any changes to what you were planning to teach based on their feedback to you? Did you ask these questions a day or two in advance? Or right before the lesson?
4. What supports do your students need to be successful in your classroom? How do you support students with IEPs/504s? How do you support English Language Learners?
5. How do you extend students' learning when they already know the content?
6. Describe the plans for differentiation that are established for specific students or groups of students in your classroom.
7. How do you structure a lesson around mentally challenging content for your students?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting your candidates in:

- Using what they know of students to make instructional choices.
- Effectively linking content standards and objectives.

Evaluative –

See Danielson: 1b, 3c, 3d

Week 4 – Engagement

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Please reference Danielson Domain 2 & 3 and discuss the following questions:

Essential Question: How does the teacher effectively engage students in learning? Why is engagement important?

Educative –

1. How did what you know about your students inform your planning process this past week? Did you think through any "worst-case scenarios" and create plans to prevent issues?
2. What elements of your lesson were mentally challenging for your students? Did you notice any differences in classroom behaviors when your students were cognitively engaged with the content you were teaching?
3. How does maintaining physical proximity to students affect student engagement?
4. How do you establish consequences that are reasonable and consistent? Were these consequences established in collaboration with the children? Were issues in equity and diversity considered in the establishment of these consequences?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Consistently applying equitable and reasonable consequences
- Intentionally planning for student engagement and implementing engaging strategies

Evaluative –

Danielson: **1c,** 2**c**, **d,** 3**c**

Week 5 – Feedback and engagement

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How do teachers promote student learning through deep engagement and participation during instruction?

Spend some time discussing and thinking about meaningful conversations you've had with your students this week and the conversations your cooperating teacher has had with the students this week.

Educative –

1. How do you model a skill or strategy related to your learning objective(s)? How do students practice the skill or strategy? How do students practice the skill or strategy independently?

2. What opportunities do students have to engage in conversations related to the learning objective(s) during the lesson?

3. How do you provide feedback to students during the lesson related to the learning objective(s)?

4. Have you noticed any particular questions that seem to elicit deep responses from the students?

5. How would you describe the link between deep thinking and student engagement? How does this affect the classroom learning environment?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Deepening the students' knowledge of content
- Framing effective questions for soliciting student feedback and for deepening student understanding

Evaluative –

Danielson Domain 3a, c

Week 6 – Assessment

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How can teachers assess student learning? How were you assessed when you were in school? How has assessment changed since you were in school?

Educative –

1. Were you able to effectively assess your objectives? How did you know you effectively assessed your objectives? Was your objective measurable and/or demonstrable?

2. What do you consider when deciding the type of assessment to use? How do you use the knowledge of your students in that decision?

3. How do you reframe an assessment to elicit deeper responses from students?

4. How are you showing that you're using the results of assessment when planning future lessons?

Supportive –
CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Developing assessments based on knowledge of students
- Deepening student responses

Evaluative -

Danielson Domain 3d

Week 7 – Students and assessment

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How can the teacher include students in the assessment process?

Educative -

1. What role does the student play in the assessment process?

2. How will you know what the students are thinking about the content?

3. How did you know whether students are ready to move to new understandings and content as a result of this lesson?

4. What opportunities did students have to develop the measurement of their own and their peers understanding of the content? Were the students given opportunities to determine how they will be assessed?

5. How does what I assess reflect what is valued in my classroom?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Self-assessment, peer assessment, metacognition
- Designing assessment

Evaluative -

Danielson 1d, e, f, 3d, e, f

Week 8 – Feedback

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How does feedback improve student learning?

Educative –

1. What questions did you ask to determine your students' understanding of the content? How did your questions relate to the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy?

2. Is your formative feedback developmentally appropriate? Before you move on in your lesson, are you checking for understanding?

3. How did you differentiate your instructional choices based on your students' feedback (formative assessment)?

4. How do students use the results of your formative and/or summative assessments? How are students engaged in that feedback process? How will they use that feedback?

Supportive -
CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Using effective questioning to deepen student learning
- Differentiating instructional choice based on student feedback
- Assisting students in using feedback to deepen their own understanding

Evaluative -

1. What evidence of effective instructional methods does your cooperating teacher notice in your teaching? Discuss specific examples.

2. What evidence of effective classroom management/engagement strategies does your cooperating teacher notice in your teaching? Discuss specific examples.

3. Discuss areas of growth related to your instructional methods and/or management/engagement strategies?

4. What opportunities do your students have to use the content in new ways?

Danielson 1e, f, 3b, d

Week 9 – SEL

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: What are your experiences managing the social/emotional part of student teaching?

Educative –

Supportive -

1. What do you find to be emotionally supportive?

2. When you need your bucket filled, what/who do you turn to?
   Music/art/books/exercise/poetry/friends/family/sports/movies

3. What are you doing to take care of yourself emotionally right now?

4. What can your CT or US do to help better support you emotionally?

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Being aware of the candidate's stress level/well-being
- Supporting self-care
- Share a story of when you found a time to nurture your well-being, what you did
- Share a time when you said “no” as a way to nurture your own well-being

Evaluative -

Week 10 - Jobs

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How do I best prepare for the job-seeking process?

Educative -

Supportive -

1. Who am I as a teacher (professional identity)?

2. How do I code-switch to conventional/professional/academic English to be successful in a job interview?

3. What am I looking for in a professional community?

4. What questions might I be asked?

5. What questions do I ask the district?

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- The job search process
- Learning more about the profession
- Thinking about interview questions

Evaluative -

Week 11 - Reflecting on growth

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential question: How have I grown as a professional over the past 10 weeks?

Educative -

1. What evidence of effective instructional methods does your cooperating teacher notice in your teaching? Discuss specific examples.

2. What evidence of effective classroom management/engagement strategies does your cooperating teacher notice in your teaching? Discuss specific examples.

3. Discuss areas of growth related to your instructional methods and/or management/engagement strategies?

4. What opportunities do your students have to use the content in new ways?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Self-reflection
- Classroom management/engagement strategies
- Effective instructional methods

Evaluative –

Danielson 1 d, e, 2d, 4e

Week 12 – Feedback

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: Why is feedback essential to the learning process?

Educative -

1. How do you and your students collaboratively set learning goals?

2. How did you differentiate your feedback to students? Was your feedback based on your students' varying levels of understanding of the content? How did you know whether or not the students understood the content to a point that they could use it in new ways?

3. How did your feedback evidence respect for and caring for your students? (This gets at meaningful comments being used—not just "good job"—the respect is an outgrowth of high expectations)

Supportive -

CT: Supports Candidate in:

- Designing strategies for feedback
- Aligning effective feedback with what they know about their students
- Creating respectful and caring conversations with children

Evaluative -

Danielson 1b, 3d, e

Week 13 – Assessment design

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How do you design assessments based on what you know about your learners?

Educative -

1. What should the teacher candidate consider when determining the next steps for supporting students at all levels of understanding (relative to the content being taught)?

Supportive –

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Linking feedback to assessment
- Considering multiple ways to assess based on what they know about their learners

Evaluative –

1. How does the teacher candidate involve students in developing assessments or assessing their own work? How do they involve students in assessments?

2. Please describe the formative and summative assessments the teacher candidate uses. How are those assessments informing their instructional choices?

Danielson 1f, 3d

Week 14 - Inquiry

This should be a two-way conversation. At times the cooperating teacher should ask questions to the student teacher, and at times the student teacher should ask questions to the cooperating teacher. Please use your best judgment to encourage a meaningful conversation.

Essential Question: How might teaching be a process of inquiry? What does it mean to teach from a perspective of inquiry?

Educative -

1. How do you develop critical understandings and perspectives about teaching and learning?

Supportive -

1. How do I continue as a learner while teaching?

2. How does what you learn about your students push your own professional growth?

3. What are my own curiosities and passions? How do they inform my practice? How can they inform my continued learning?

4. How might inquiry happen in my classroom on a daily basis?

CT: Supporting the candidate in:

- Being a life-long learner
- How what they are learning informs practice
- Considering a perspective of social justice

Evaluative -

Danielson 4a, e

APPENDIX B: COOPERATING TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name _____

2. What is your age?
   - 24-34
   - 35-44
   - 45-54
   - 65-older

3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
   - Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
   - Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
   - Doctorate or professional degree (PhD, EdD)

4. What type of graduate degree did you earn? (Leadership/Administration, Reading Specialist, Teaching and Learning, etc.) _____

5. What grade level and/or content area do you teach? _____

6. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
   - 0-2
   - 3-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 16-20
   - 21-25
   - 26-more

7. How many student teachers have you supported throughout your career?
   - This is my first
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4-5
   - 6-7
   - 8 or more

8. Have you ever taken part in professional development activities regarding supervision of clinical students or student teachers? _____

9. What specific types of professional development have you received (conference, seminar, graduate course, etc.)? _____

APPENDIX C: BI-WEEKLY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name

2. Over the past two weeks, did you discuss the REG questions with your student teacher?
   - Yes
   - No

3. **How much do you feel you have grown in your ability to**

	A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	None at all
build a positive relationship between you and your student teacher	○	○	○	○	○
foster lines of open communication between you and your student teacher	○	○	○	○	○
promote reciprocal relationships between you and your student teacher (including your openness to learning from your student teacher)	○	○	○	○	○
understand the mission of ISU's teacher education program	○	○	○	○	○

4. **How helpful were the conferencing questions in helping**

	Extremely useful	Very useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful
support you in stepping into the role of a teacher educator	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
support your understanding of university terminology and important topics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
facilitate discussions regarding topics that would not normally come up in the daily routine of student teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
help you to feel connected to the ISU teacher education program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. **How helpful were your prior experiences (grad classes, PD, etc.) in helping**

	Extremely useful	Very useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful
support you in stepping into the role of a teacher educator	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
support your understanding of university terminology and important topics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
facilitate discussions regarding topics that would not normally come up in the daily routine of student teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
help you to feel connected to the ISU teacher education program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6.

How helpful was advice from your colleagues in helping

	Extremely useful	Very useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful
support you in stepping into the role of a teacher educator	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
support your understanding of university terminology and important topics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
facilitate discussions regarding topics that would not normally come up in the daily routine of student teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
help you to feel connected to the ISU teacher education program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Please share an example of a meaningful conversation you had with your student teacher based on your REG conversations over the past two weeks.

8. Please include any additional thoughts you have regarding the conferencing document's ability to assist you in your role as a CT. Provide specific examples.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Script prior to the interview:

Welcome, and thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. Our interview today will last approximately 20 during which I will be asking you about your experiences as a cooperating teacher using the REG.
If it is okay with you, I will be recording our conversation. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain your comments without any reference to your name or identifying personal information. Please let me know if, at any point, you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.
Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? [Discuss questions] If any questions arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions. Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

1. Tell me about your student teaching experience, what was it like? (Strengths, weakness) How did that experience influence you in your role as a cooperating teacher?
2. How do you feel the set of conferencing questions facilitated your conversations? In what ways? Can you give me an example?
3. Were you able to openly discuss the questions? Was there anything that held you back?
4. Did the structured nature of the REG help you to build a relationship with your student teacher?
5. How much time did you spend conferencing weekly?
6. How did you decide what questions to discuss each week?
7. How well do you feel the questions supported your K-12 work by bridging the gap between university and your school?
8. How do you feel these questions align with your personal teaching beliefs?
9. Do you feel this enhanced your professional growth? In what ways?
10. How did these discussions affect the work in your classroom? Did you find you changed any of your practices based on what you discussed? Please give an example.
11. Do you feel your ST learned more about teaching through these discussion questions?
12. In what ways did your student teacher reflect differently than you, as an experienced teacher?
13. Are there any other topics or questions you feel should be included in these discussions? Did we miss any important topics?