`FROM SHELTERED PRACTICE TO ACTUAL TEACHING: THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE NEW-TO-PROFESSION TEACHERS

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my boys, John Russell and Landry Matthew.

You are the reason I finished.

"*There is an enduring tenderness in the love of a mother to a son that transcends all other affections of the heart*."

Washington Irving

For Sean, my metronome.

Ruth 1:16-17

And, for Mama and Daddy--who taught me the love of reading and the value of an education.

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This body of work was influenced by friends and teachers around me.

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Lastly, to my friends around me-Jenn, Cynthia, Jamie, and Nicole. Your messages, hugs, and talks of encouragement kept me focused and reminded me of the end goal.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Travis walked into his classroom thirty minutes before the first day of school began with an air of confidence. Long hours at the university, student teaching, preparing for his certification exams, job fairs, and new teacher training were culminating in this final moment: teaching his own students. Excited, with just a trace of nervousness, he instinctively stacked papers for one last time, waiting for the young voices and faces to arrive.

The first week of school was exhausting, but Travis had expected as much. Despite the overwhelming abundance of back-to-school paperwork and red tape that all teachers face, he looked forward to real teaching.

However, about three weeks into the school year, Travis noticed that he started falling further behind in his lesson planning and the activities for his classes were not as successful as he had anticipated. He had trouble following the lesson plans he had made and did not know how to adjust midway through lessons to make them more meaningful. The students were starting to talk a lot, were talking out of turn, and were not engaging in the lessons. Travis began relying on his commanding voice to maintain control but felt frustrated. He had never faced these challenges during student teaching.

For twelve weeks, Travis had seamlessly taken over his supervising teacher's room. He had been successful in teaching American History by utilizing her lesson plans and homework assignments, and he never had a problem with classroom behavior. However, his first teaching job was altogether different. His warm-ups seemed to take up a third of the class period. He was behind on entering grades into the online grade-book program and returning emails from parents.

Looking back, he wondered *why* student teaching was easy compared to having his own class and students. What had his supervising teacher done to get her students to listen, work, be respectful, and want to be in class? Granted, having assistance while writing lesson plans and activities was extremely beneficial compared to having to write his own plans and lessons, but something else was missing.

As Travis tried to acclimate to middle school rigor, he found himself continuing to stumble. The paperwork and documentation were overwhelming, calling parents was time-consuming, and preparing lesson plans was all encompassing. Travis felt exasperated: his dreams of being a teacher were falling flat as he struggled to do his job.

At the end of the semester, he knew he had found himself in a dire situation; he had given his students the semester exam prepared for him by the district curriculum writers but had failed to enter the results into the grade-book program correctly. His academic classes had to have their semester averages reconfigured and grade changes done individually by the counselors. This misstep earned him a visit with the principal about his struggles.

As he reflected on the challenges he had encountered, he wondered, "How did teaching become so difficult?" His own teachers had made it look easy, even flawless. His students were disrespectful, apathetic, and unruly. He tried to assess his classroom management and curriculum lessons and connect them to his student teaching experience. What was missing and how could he salvage his first year of teaching? How could he make changes that would positively impact his teaching, so he could commit to and fulfill his dream? He was encountering situations he had never expected: student homelessness, poverty, students with learning differences, and an enormous amount of paperwork. Travis was not naïve enough to think these problems did not

exist; he just did not know what to do about them. What he learned in the textbooks was not helping; the daily rigor of running his own class was simply overwhelming. Travis knew that his own class would be difficult because of the demanding students, but becoming a teacher is what he had studied, trained, and prepared to do.

Statement of the Problem

As thousands of new teachers venture into their first teaching assignment every school year, many face the difficulties Travis encountered. What makes some teachers successful as they transition from university student to classroom teacher? What skills and necessary training ensure success as a teacher ventures out on his own?

Colleges of education across the United States are continually updating their preparation programs in order to better prepare students for their work as teachers. Teacher training programs have received attention as researchers and practitioners investigate how to equip teachers better and reduce turnover rates (Ludwig, Kirshstein, & Sidana, 2010).

Some student teaching programs are even focusing their efforts on better preparing their students to work in "urban settings with high diversity and large percentages of economically disadvantaged students through a service-learning field experience" (Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2012, p. 70). Researchers He and Schwille (as cited in Russell & Russell, 2011) argued that sheltered practice is a collaborative effort among university supervisors, teacher educators, school administrators, and the pre-service teachers to help new teachers better prepare for the growing challenges in a classroom environment. According to He (2010), the pre-service teacher needs both pedagogical and content knowledge support throughout the sheltered practice. A strong, qualified teacher has a powerful impact on students in the classroom, and

student learning gains directly relate to a quality teacher preparation program (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Although teachers are finding their way to the classroom, many do not remain; as members of a profession, teachers have a higher turnover rate than those in other professional fields (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) estimated the cost of teacher turnover in public schools at more than $7 billion annually.

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2010) notes that having strong school-based clinical teachers is crucial for the student teaching experience. Schools should choose these supporting teachers based on their expertise and experiences; and moreover, they and the student teacher need to be compatible. Support for pre-service teachers is paramount for success in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated and documented the early teaching experiences of recent college of education graduates. The study provided a path to reflect upon and link their beginning experiences in the classroom to the student teaching component of the participants' university preparation program. While many programs have certain criteria for classes, exams, and sheltered practice, those new to the teaching profession still struggle with the rigor of their own classroom. Beginning teachers face numerous challenges including: student motivation, planning and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and a desire to assess students' learning, as they begin teaching their own class. These factors can create a high level of stress on the new teacher (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, & Pressley, 2007). It is the responsibility of colleges of education and their faculties to instill in teachers the attitudes, values, skills, and personalities

needed for effective performance in the teaching profession (Ezedue, Chiaha, & Eze, 2013). Having a strong school-based clinical experience is imperative for the future success of new-to-profession teachers; the selection of the cooperating teacher is crucial as school administrators should select these teachers "for their deep expertise, extensive experience, and planned match with candidates from the similar subject area and grade level" (Hobson, et al., 2012, p. 70).

Background of this study

In the spring of 1993, I began my 12-week student teaching experience. I felt excited and nervous as I knew my curriculum classes had armed me with the knowledge to teach history and English. The professors in my theoretical classes in education had tried to prepare me for the practical side of a classroom. However, per my request for wanting a student teaching experience in the secondary field, the program placed me at a high school, teaching American History (1877 to present) and English alongside two teacher-coaches who were in the midst of baseball season. To my surprise, on the first day of student teaching, they handed me roll books and teachers' editions and told me to do whatever I wanted. While the freedom was enticing, this student teaching experience was not the hands-on, integrated, guided learning practice I had anticipated.

Fortunately, I navigated the student teaching despite missing critical front-line lessons on classroom management, lesson planning, and standardized testing. Researchers often consider the sheltered practice a "hit or miss experience" due to the lack of guidance and parameters established for the mentoring teacher. Teacher-education programs must "rely on the schools or districts to provide the professional development to prepare teachers to be effective mentors" (Russell & Russell, 2011, p. 2).

Being hired within two months of completing the sheltered practice, I found the first year of teaching was a challenge. But why? Was it because the initial year in a job is always the most demanding? Was it due to multiple course preparations and 150 students? Or, was it because I missed fundamental skills and lessons from my student teaching experience? Hence, my interest in this particular subject and study.

Education is a complex profession. Without adequate preparation, however, numerous pre-service teachers do not feel prepared for the challenging first years of teaching. Foundational best practices in a classroom includes active learning, various teaching strategies, continuously adapting to students' needs, effective scaffolding, clear standards, constant feedback and an effectively managed class (Darling-Hammond, 2011; Marzano & Pickering, 2011; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2012).

Darling-Hammond (2011) has been a vocal proponent of having strong teacher qualifications to better serve students. These qualifications include a strong academic background, quality preparation prior to entry, certification in the field taught, experience (> 3 years) and National Board Certification (2011). The lack of a strong teacher in a classroom can be devastating for students as a teaching gap creates an achievement gap for students (Darling-Hammond, 2011). The effect is cyclical; the teaching gap often means that the least experienced and prepared teachers teach the least advantaged students. As high attrition rates create a revolving door in the classroom, this also creates a domino effect as schools and states replace and retrain teachers at an estimated cost of $15,000-20,000 per teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

This constant *greening* effect translates into 33% of teachers leaving the profession within the first three years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2012). Greening is defined as new teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of entry into teaching. It takes approximately three years for a teacher to become proficient or establish his "sea-legs" (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). In essence, many teachers leave the field altogether before ever becoming proficient and comfortable in the classroom. Teacher attrition is a problem that affects our nation, state, and districts, but most importantly, it affects our students. How many teachers have left the field of teaching because their colleges and preparation programs did not adequately prepare them for the challenges a new-to-profession teacher encounters?

Research Question

This study targeted the following research question: **How do new-to-profession teachers relate the elements of their student teaching experiences to their initial teaching practices and behaviors?**

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the following issues related to the student teaching experience: (1) what concepts were learned and well-utilized, (2) what concepts were learned, but never utilized, and (3) what concepts were never learned, but needed in the initial years of teaching?

Significance of the Study

The potential significance of this study was to benefit university training programs and help impact the selection process as colleges pair student teachers with supervising teachers. If teachers are better prepared for their initial teaching experience through a substantive sheltered practice, an in-depth case study analysis informed and shed light on the most effective

components of student teaching. As Knobloch (2006) states, "Student teaching is important for pre-service teachers' development" (p. 36) and is a significant aspect of a teacher's development and education (Sadler, 2006). This study encourages further research regarding the impact of the student teaching component of teacher preparation.

Theoretical Framework

Merriam (2009) describes a theoretical framework as the "underlying structure or frame of your study" and the body of literature or disciplinary orientation drawn upon for a study (p. 66). This section provides an overview of the study's conceptual framework and components. The concepts and theories discussed in this section includes constructivist theory, experiential theory, and situational theory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model

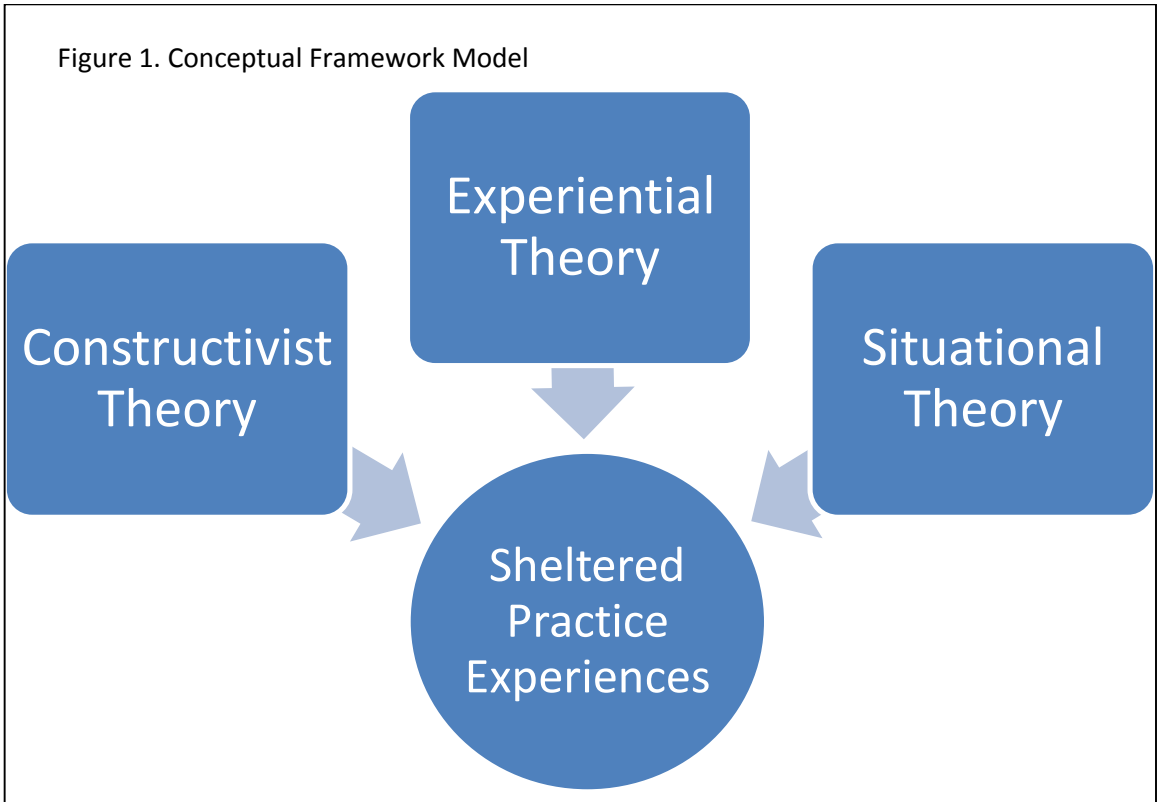

Figure 1. The different theories that influenced this research

Merriam (2009) succinctly states that the overall purpose of qualitative research is to understand how people make sense of a particular process, and such research encompasses a variety of philosophical approaches.

The purpose of the constructivist perspective is to "describe, understand, and interpret" (Merriam, 2009, p. 11). Researchers describe constructivist theory as a way in which learners "actively construct knowledge and make meaning, based on their experiences individually or socially" (Narayan, Rodriguez, Araujo, Shaqlaih, & Moss, 2013, p. 169). Constructivist theory relates to the student teaching experience and how new-to-profession teachers draw from this experience to create and build an understanding of the expectations for their first years teaching. Zijdemans-Boudreau, Moss, and Lee (2013) state, "Learning is a process involving constant adaption to, and engagement with one's environment. Individuals create knowledge from experience rather than just from received instruction. Conflicts, disagreements, and differences are inevitable in the learning process" (p. 115). The constructivist theory is applicable to the sheltered practice because student teachers are constantly creating and forming their own knowledge based on the experiences during this specific time. The sheltered practice is a time for student teachers to apply what they have learned throughout their foundation and theoretical classes and apply it to real teaching experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) describe the criteria of constructivist theory as having "trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability" (p. 28). Lastly, "constructivist theory focuses on the idea that students gain understanding and value through their relationships, interactions, and encounters with others" (Fredrickson, et al., 2013, p. 199). This particular theory demonstrates how the interactions and dynamics of the student teaching process create this learning opportunity for the student teacher.

Experiential learning also played a role in building the theoretical framework of this study as it is a crucial link to demonstrate how new-to-profession teachers reflect upon their experiences in the classroom. Experiential learning is an established approach to adult education theory (Miettienen, 2010). Kolb's research on learning theory influences this study as he believes that the concrete experiences provide the information that serves as a basis for reflection (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's theory takes a holistic approach and emphasizes how experiences and emotions affect and influence the learning process (Kolb, 1984). The crux of experiential learning is an individual's ability and capacity to grow and learn (Miettienen, 2010). Lastly, Miettienen states, "Learning is a process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (2010, p. 62). Zidemans-Boudreau et al (2013) add that experiential theory "create[s] learning activities that provide students with concrete experiences, giving them a basis for deeper reflection and construction of knowledge" (p. 117).

Lastly, situational theory provides unique aspects and elements that formulate the experience. This model immerses the students in the actual setting where they can practice and later apply the concepts they learned and used in the curriculum (Meyers & Lester, 2013). A situational theory model accounts for the participants of the case studies to experience, build, and connect their learning to a real-life situation — their own classrooms. "Many teacher educators seem to forget that educational knowledge cannot be simply 'transmitted' to teachers—and thus improve their actions" (Korthagen, 2008, p. 99). Korthagen argues that all knowledge is grounded in personal encounters in concrete situations. This theory describes "Learning, then from [the] perspective, [as] a process of 'enculturation' wherein the opportunity to observe and to practice *in situ* allows the development of contextualized competencies…" (Jenlink, 2013, p. 185). Situated learning occurs in a specific time and place and, in relation to this study, this

theory helps to examine the learning that occurred during the sheltered practice of the case studies.

The context of the sheltered-practice of the case studies is important to understand as it provided the learning foundation that I utilized to connect to the experiences in these individuals' early careers in teaching.

Overview of Methodology

This study proposed to take an in-depth look at three recent college graduates who were in their first or second year of teaching. Using a qualitative approach and data collection methods, such as observations, interviews, and primary documents, I constructed stories of these individuals' student teaching experiences and early teaching practices.

This study closely examined the skills the individuals learned, identified the skills that were absent, and recognized what skills they learned and honed during their student teaching experience. According to Ezeudu, et al. (2013), faculties at colleges of education need to prepare future teachers with proper attitudes, values, skills, and personalities needed for effective performance in the classroom. Researchers agree that the sheltered practice or student teaching in a future teacher's education is imperative as a critical component of the preparation program (Ezeudu, et al., 2013; Whitacre, Diaz, and Esquierdo, 2013).

Using the theoretical framework and analyses of case studies, I uncovered a better understanding of the student teaching experience, the lessons, and the skills taught and utilized during the sheltered practice. The student teaching experience is a crucial piece of the whole education of a teacher. As Darling-Hammond (2012) argues, "We need to arm teachers with the knowledge and skills they need so they can teach students in the way they deserve" (p. 13) as

"every child's educational birthright [includes] a caring, competent teaching in every classroom" (2000, p. 163).

This study utilized the basic framework as described by Merriam (2009) to address the research questions through asking: (1) How do people interpret their experiences? (2) How do people construct their worlds? (3) What meaning do they contribute to their experiences? This study addressed these questions by observing three college of education graduates who are in their first or second year of teaching.

This particular study has an intrinsic value for the researcher; I am particularly interested in examining the student teaching program of the university to draw insight from the case studies. Case studies, as explained by Merriam (2009), offer a "means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (p. 50) and are an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40).

Figure 2 demonstrates two aspects of sheltered practice and new-to-profession teachers in their first and second years of teaching. Various components from both experiences will overlap and align, to varying degrees, among case studies.

Figure 2. Venn diagram of Classroom Experiences

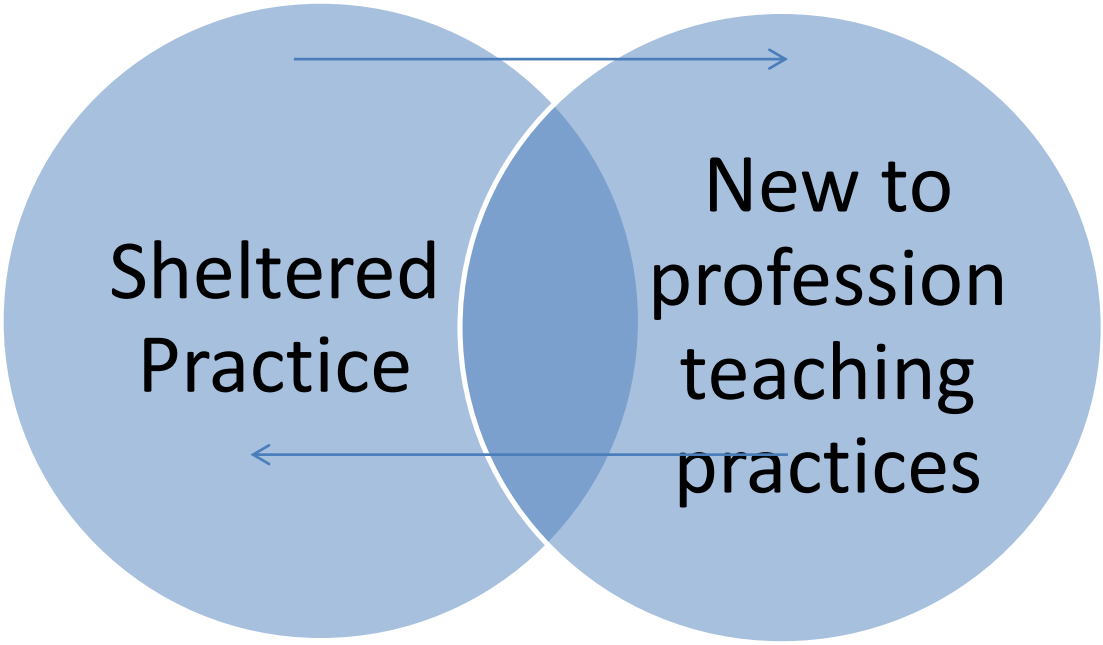

Figure 2: Dark shaded area represents the intersection or degree of alignment

Merriam's work established the framework for this study with three unknown ideas: (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences (2009). I discovered through in-depth analyses of these selected teachers how they learned from their sheltered practice and what practices they honed during this time of learning. These stories provided a vehicle to understand the sheltered practice, and through narrative analysis, I used the stories that these teachers describe in-depth to me as a way to understand the opportunities they experienced, per Merriam's definition.

Merriam (2009) succinctly states, "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, [and] how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 13). A qualitative study utilizing case studies helped me understand and "delineate the process" (p. 14) and is "a type of research that encompasses a

number of philosophical orientations as approaches" (p.19). I analyzed and understand what specific facets of sheltered practice assisted the new-to-profession teachers (case studies) in their first and second years of teaching, per Merriam's definition.

In order to examine and analyze the case studies, I used various methods to gain insights. The narrative analysis method involved examining the stories that these teachers told to enhance and discover meaning. Later, it was applied to the point the research question established. I followed a semi-structured interview format that allowed the participants to explore the conversation with ease.

Assumptions

Assumptions made for purpose of this study included the following:

1. Participants were willing to co-construct their student teaching stories with me.
2. Participants were willing to be interviewed and observed.
3. Participants were willing to craft their story and answered questions about their student teaching and early teaching experiences and practices.
4. Participants were willing to attend private meetings with me and allowed me to interview them.
5. Participants were honest and reflected upon their student teaching experience and early teaching practices.

Limitations

This study was limited by any unintended biases that I may have had about student teaching and teaching. I was limited by geography and a small sample size of teachers that may not allow other universities to draw conclusions from this study in the future.

Definition of Terms

*Greening: "*Teacher attrition is especially high in the first years on the job. New teachers leave within the first five years of entry into teaching….So, not only are there far more beginners in the teaching force, but these beginners are less likely to stay in teaching. In short, both the number and instability of beginning teachers have been increasing in recent years" Ingersoll, 2012, p. 49)

Revolving Door: "Large numbers of qualified teachers depart from their jobs for reasons other than retirement" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 499).

Student Teaching: the time of sheltered practice, typically a 12-week program intended for those at the end of their coursework to put into practice theory and knowledge. It is usually the last step before becoming a certified teacher.

Chapter Summary

This study explored the practices of teachers in their initial years of teaching. Drawing on their experiences from the student teaching practicum, the data collected highlighted pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and classroom management skills. Student teaching is the apprenticeship of teachers; as the American classroom continues to change, it is crucial that teachers are equipped to not only teach, but challenge students to become productive citizens.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The student teaching literature tends to fall into two critical themes or categories: 1) attrition and challenges that teachers encounter; and 2) preparation of teachers, including education programs and the supervising teacher. The professional sources reiterate the idea that student teaching remains an imperative part of the development and growth of a teacher. Student teaching is a valuable step in the teaching preparation experience (Killian, Dye, & Wayman, 2013). The driving question is how can universities best prepare teachers for today's changing classrooms? Fallin and Royse (2000) recapitulate the importance of the student teaching experience, saying that placement is the most critical step to ensure a high quality student teaching experience. The American Council of Education (as cited in Knobloch & Whittington, 2002) reiterates the notion that teacher education programs have a significant role in developing teachers. While educators clearly agree upon the importance of student teaching, teacher-education programs lack a cohesive protocol among universities as to how they should implement and execute such training. Student teaching is a crucial component in the development of a teacher.

This literature review was informative and helped to illustrate critical issues related to teacher preparation, especially the essential nature of a successful student teaching experience. An effective student teaching experience should be the springboard for a successful career and not a time for self-doubt. The student teaching or sheltered practice is a critical component of the teacher preparation and development program (Whitacre et al., 2013).

Student Teaching as a Foundation for Teachers

As one team of researchers noted, "Student teaching is a cornerstone of teacher preparation, yet it remains one of the most difficult experiences to understand" (Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009, p. 304) because many student teaching situations and experiences are diverse (Tigchelaar, 2004). The student teaching experience is typically the capstone or final course in undergraduate preparation before entering the profession of being a teacher as it bridges the academic coursework and the realities of classroom teaching (Ediger, 2007; Sadler, 2006). Yet, no one formula guarantees success in the classroom accompanied by a lengthy career.

Theory versus Hands-on Practice

The complexity of teaching practice has been both the "target and the source of two major streams of educational inquiry—the theory driven and the practice driven" (Wang, Spalding, Odell, Klecka, & Lin, 2010, p. 3). One of the issues within teacher development is the juxtaposition of theory with hands-on experiences. Zeichner (2010) says university courses are disconnected from field practices for student teachers. Many times, preparation classes do not match the skills and strategies needed for running a successful classroom or provide effective teaching strategies. One of the issues that university programs encounter is the lack of connection between campus-based classes and the field experiences. Lampert (2010) argues, "Problems with learning the work of teaching are often stated in terms of the connection—or disconnection—between teacher education and some conception of practice" (p. 22).

According to Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012), pre-service programs prepare teachers for the real world of teaching. The authors add that the "vast majority of teachers strive to teach effectively in order to enhance student learning outcomes and they draw upon the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their pre-service teacher degree" (p. 68).

Attrition, Issues, and Challenges

Teacher attrition is a problem that all states and districts encounter. Darling-Hammond (2012) asserts this as a national concern. This problem has come to the forefront of educators' interests as it is receiving more and more attention nationwide.

According to Ingersoll (2001), "The failure to ensure that elementary and secondary classrooms are all staffed with qualified teachers" is a national problem (p. 500) as the public schools in the United States are facing an unprecedented shortage of qualified teachers (Connelly & Graham, 2009). The idea that unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are in front of the classroom teaching the rudiments of education to students whose success in their school career may depend on the ability of their teacher is an alarming proposition. Students, schools, parents, and all other stakeholders deserve and demand better.

In 2007, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (as cited in Jamil, et al., 2012) estimated that the U.S. spends $7 billion annually on replacing teachers in the classroom. The Alliance for Excellent Education estimated the cost of replacing teachers at $2.2 billion in 2005. At this high cost, schools must increase the retention rates among their faculties (Jamil, et al., 2012), as teacher attrition rates are high (almost 30%) especially for those in their first few years in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Fry, 2010; Ingersoll, 2012; Ravitch, 2010). When teachers leave the classroom, the vacancies affect all those involved: states, districts, schools, and students.

Essentially, there is an insufficient supply of qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2002). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) state the teaching profession has higher turnover rates than other professions such as architects, engineers, lawyers, and other professionals.

Nationally, the United States Department of Education notes that 17% of new public school teachers leave within the first three years on the job (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). Why are teachers leaving at these rates? Are teacher education programs not developing high-quality teachers and ensuring they are prepared for the classroom? States and districts spend thousands of dollars each year on the recruitment, hiring, and training of new faculty members, yet if a teacher has a short teaching career for whatever reason, the lack of continuity takes its toll on all stakeholders.

Feiman-Nemser (2012) states, "The paradigm assumes that once new teachers learn the ropes and gain some confidence, they can function on their own" (p. 12). Unfortunately, new teachers are more likely than veteran teachers to receive larger classes, more students with special needs or behavioral problems, extracurricular duties, and classrooms with fewer textbooks and equipment; all of which may aggravate the problem, particularly if teachers are not prepared for these specific challenges. She adds, "The process of hazing new teachers…[such as] ignoring their status as beginners helps to explain why so many leave teaching" (p. 15). Up to one-third of new teachers leave the profession within the first few years, with the heaviest burden falling on urban schools (Feiman-Nemser et al., Darling-Hammond, 2010; & Ingersoll, 2001). This high rate of attrition contributes to the shortages of high-quality teachers (Fry, Harrell, Leavell, Van Tassell, & McKee, 2004).

Teachers leaving the classroom create a vicious cycle as these vacancies also increase the likelihood that students will have a succession of inexperienced teachers. Darling-Hammond (2010) notes that there are 100,000 new teachers entering classrooms each fall. Ingersoll (2012) states that teachers tend to leave the field most often during the first years on the job. Ingersoll (2001) earlier stated that this high rate of teacher turnover may also indicate underlying problems

in the functionality of a school, the quality of the school community, and the performance of the school.

These high rates of attrition solidify the importance of teacher preparation. Teacher preparation matters in two ways, according to Darling-Hammond (2010): It can "enhance the initial effectiveness and increase the likelihood of staying on the job long enough to become more experienced and effective, as teachers' effectiveness improves significantly after the third year of experience" (pp. 37-38). Teachers are leaving the field altogether after their first year due to the initial demands of the job. If teachers leave the classroom before it becomes easier, then classrooms have an exodus of teachers who may have had successful careers.

This perpetual "greening effect" results in an estimated 40-50% of new teachers leaving within the first five years of their entry into teaching (Ingersoll, 2012). The school staffing issues are a definite result of the revolving door issue; not only are teachers leaving early in their career, but they are also exiting the classrooms before reaching retirement (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll 2012). Glickman and Bey's (1990) work revealed that teacher retention is directly affected by the supervising teacher's influence. Latham (1998) believes that job satisfaction can not only help retain teachers, but also improve their instruction.

Working Conditions

Studies conducted throughout the previous years determine why teachers are leaving the profession. A plethora of problems and new challenges present in classrooms today were non-existent ten or twenty years ago. Sim (2011) adds that in the classroom, management is one of the areas most needed to run an effective classroom. The lack of classroom management could add stress to a new teacher. Darling-Hammond (2012) states that higher attrition rates in high

poverty schools link dissatisfaction with teaching as the reason for the exodus from the classroom.

> Working conditions--including professional teaching conditions, such as the availability of instructional materials, class sizes, the attractiveness and safety of facilities, high-quality leadership and professional learning, opportunities also play a role in teachers' decisions to leave teaching in a particular school or sometimes to leave the field altogether. (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 9)

Teacher education programs have struggled with the challenge of preparing and retaining a sufficient number of high-quality teachers who are able to work effectively with students from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, particularly those in urban schools (Wang, Spalding, Odell, et al., 2010). According to researchers Connelly and Graham (2009), a solid foundation of student teaching is essential for the "retention of special educators" (p. 257).

Ingersoll (2001) also claims that high-poverty schools have a higher turnover rate than do more affluent schools. While the problem of chronic shortages of fully certified beginning teachers is an issue for many states and districts, there remains the fact that special educators, along with mathematics and science teachers, have the highest attrition rates (Connelly & Graham, 2009). Low-salary districts with higher needs often hire teachers with significantly lower qualifications, who then, in turn, have higher turnover rates (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Another issue of retention and attrition comes to light through school finance reform cases as the differentiated school district funding which leads to unequal salaries and working conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Filling Positions

In spite of all the efforts being made to recruit, hire, and retain qualified teachers, many districts must still hire uncertified teachers to ensure that every classroom has a teacher present

on the first day of school (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005). While many special education positions do get filled by the first day of school, many of them are filled by personnel who are not fully certified in Special Education (Connelly & Graham, 2009). As teacher demand has increased and funding inequities "have grown over the past 15 years, many urban and poor rural districts have hired a growing number of individuals on emergency permits or waivers who lack formal preparation for teaching" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 2). Students of color, low income learners, and those considered low-performing particularly in urban and poor rural areas typically are taught by less qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Thousands of new teachers enter the classroom each year in these urban and poor rural areas with little or no exposure to basic information about children, curriculum, or schools. Talbert-Johnson (2006) said, "considering the persistent staffing needs in large urban schools, colleges of education must prepare prospective teachers with the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective in urban classrooms" (p. 155). Student achievement is hurt most by having an inexperienced teacher on a temporary license (Darling-Hammond, 2011). Many of these teachers have gone through educational programs, but have not received the rigorous education and essential knowledge and clinical training for success in the classroom (2007).

Work-Related Stress

Feiman-Nemser (2012) succinctly describes the early years of a teacher's career as a "time of intense learning" and "intense loneliness" (p. 10). As Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) note, "The early years of teaching are considered an intense and formative stage in teaching and learning to teach" (p. 5).

A variety of stressors cause teachers apprehension and unease. One of the areas that influence teachers' leaving the field is the amount of stress occurring on the job. Stress can have detrimental effects on the teachers themselves, their students, and the learning environment. Teachers feel stress from the expectations of their actual work experiences (Kerlin, 2002). Teachers may internalize stress and anxiety and feel that it is a reflection of their performance (Jamil, et al., 2012). Teachers feel overwhelmed and unsupported in their early years on the job (Feiman-Nemser, 1999). One reason for stress early-on in a teacher's career may be due to the feeling of lack of support. "All types of support were needed during the first month of school…[particularly] instructional, emotional and resource support remained constant" (p. 8).

Feiman-Nemser adds that beginning teachers have "limited experience and practical knowledge to draw on increases their sense of frustration and inadequacy" (p. 6). Increased negativity can ultimately result in teachers feeling as though they have made a poor career professional choice and decide to seek employment outside of education (Kerlin, 2002). Kerlin adds that teachers feel plagued by demands placed on them, such as "instructional planning, managing student behavior, interacting with other teachers and administration professionally, insuring programs produce students who can pass state-required proficiency exams, meeting with parents, writing new curriculum, grading and evaluating students, and administrative paper work" (p. 309). Work-related stress can also reduce a teacher's commitment and effectiveness (Latham, 1998). Lastly, as these negative stressors continue to arise, teachers may be unaware of effective strategies to reduce "stress-related problems" (Kerlin, 2002, p. 309). Kerlin adds that the fewer number of years a teacher has been teaching, the lower his ability to successfully handle negative stress (2002).

Another challenge is that "pre-service teachers struggled with differentiating their instruction for diverse students" (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012, p.68). They maintain that as teachers reflect upon their own teaching, they need to devote time to thinking about the knowledge and skills that a diverse population of students have and need. These teachers must also establish a classroom atmosphere and various teaching techniques that are "likely to enhance individual student engagement and learning, rather than focusing on designated curriculum and assessment" (p. 77).

Feiman-Nemser (1999) adds that new teachers are expected to perform the same duties as experienced teachers perform. Freiberg (2002) states that many teachers feel overwhelmed as they begin their careers and these struggles make some teachers feel that the complications and demands of teaching are insurmountable.

Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowdon (2007) reiterate this idea more succinctly, noting that, "Teachers must be able to *do* a wide variety of things, many of them simultaneously" (p. 117). They continue with the idea that teachers have multiple goals and students have many diverse needs; therefore, teaching requires the integration of a variety of knowledge and skills in order to analyze what is going on in the classroom and to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and classroom management in light of the particular students who they teach. (2007). Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012) add that teachers should recognize and adapt to different learning styles and abilities and determine why a child is not engaged or learning. Differentiating instruction for diverse students is a skill that pre-service teachers struggled with in their classes.

Challenges Facing Teachers Today

As teachers enter the classroom for the first or twentieth year, they face a broad range of challenges with various settings (Busby, Ingram, Bowmon, Oliver, & Lyons, 2012). Today's teachers encounter a wide array of social problems, including poverty, tumultuous home lives, undernourishment among their students (Fehr & Agnello, 2012), and other social issues that were less problematic years ago. Morton (2007) cites the Department of Health Human Services which states that in 2001 one-sixth of American children live in poverty. Another issue of retention and attrition comes to light through school finance reform cases as the differentiated school district funding which leads to unequal salaries and working conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

It is crucial that pre-service teachers not only take into account the content of what they are teaching, but whom they are teaching. They must be able to recognize and respond appropriately to student diversity, including race and sexual orientations of students (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). Throughout a teacher's career, most teachers experience a "cacophony of standards and directives both in terms of what they're expected to teach and *how* they're expected to do so" (Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 10).

One area that has helped teacher attrition is the development of high-quality models that offer strong preparation and close supervision, coupled with other reforms to improve recruitment, according to Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003). All teachers need solid foundations as they begin their career in order to better serve the students they teach.

Preparation of Teachers

The importance of the development of a teacher should not be treated lightly by colleges of education and teacher certification programs as the teaching profession demands competent

teachers in every classroom. Teachers are the single most important in-school variable related to student achievement, which reinforces the notion that well-trained and effective teachers are a necessity in every classroom in America (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ravitch, 2010).

Role Development and the Student-Teaching Experience

Ezeudu, et al. (2013) state, "Quality teachers should be prepared for this crucial role of human capital development" (p. 83) as they begin their teaching career. The teaching practice is an activity that prepares quality teachers (Ezeudu, et al., 2013) as pre-service teacher education is a link to producing teachers of high caliber (Levine, 2006). Talbert-Johnson (2006) said, "[Teaching] is more than pedagogical knowledge but also the essential dispositions to affirm and embrace all students" (p. 147).

Darling-Hammond (2012) has emphasized this point for years—every aspect of school reform and student success rests on the skills of the highly qualified teacher. Kerlin (2002) adds, "Teaching has many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for people entering the pedagogical arena" (p. 309) and all programs need to ensure that candidates understand the basics of learning, development, curriculum, and teaching before asked to practice independently (Darling-Hammond, 2006; 2007).

Teaching is "complex work [and rarely is] pre-employment teacher preparation sufficient to provide all the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching" (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 47). Ingersoll (2012) adds that most often a significant portion of this knowledge is acquired on the job. Additionally, linking the theory to real practice remains a crucial piece of training. Tigchelaar (2004) states, "Teacher educators are very creative in developing teaching strategies, educational procedures, exercise, and tasks in which they try and help their students in applying

the theory to their teaching practices" (p. 665). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) argue that teacher education programs need to find methods in order for teachers to learn about "practice in practice so that concrete applications can be made and problems of practice can be raised, analyzed, and addressed…[teachers must] acquire a set of skills and efficient routines and to seek out and apply new strategies in situations where routines are not enough" (p. 115). Essentially, teaching is learned by doing (Feiman-Nemser, 1998).

What Good Teachers Do

Effective teachers do a variety of things seemingly all at the same time to make the lesson more meaningful for their students. "Classroom teachers need to act deliberately to maintain productive relationships with particular individual students in ways that result in those students learning" (Lampert, 2010, p. 22). Researchers say that effective teachers engage students in active learning through debating, discussing, researching, writing, evaluating, and experimenting with concepts and ideas (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Zemelman et al., 2012). These teachers also create models, papers, and products as well as listen, read and practice new skills. In an earlier publication, Darling-Hammond (2000) asserts that teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach these subjects to their students by making their knowledge accessible to their students. Effective teachers have an assortment of strategies in their teaching toolbox and on a moment's notice can differentiate the learning for their students. For example, Whitacre et al. (2013) list the following best practices: 1. Using repetition; 2. Providing different examples; 3. Making relations of concept to real-life activities; 4. Giving verbal examples of the concept explained; 5. Modeling the activity; and 6. Using visuals.

A crucial skill for effective teaching lies in the ability to quickly reflect and adapt a lesson for engagement. Darling-Hammond (2000) adds that teachers must be knowledgeable about subject matter and how to teach it to students, and understand how to foster learning and development, and how to address special learning needs. Teachers must also have the ability to assess students, plan curriculum, and use a range of teaching strategies that develop high ends of student performance, and, lastly, teachers must have an ability to create a positive and purposeful learning environment.

For teachers to develop and make meaningful experiences powerful, they need the following characteristics: 1. Experiences and skills in the classroom; 2. Knowledge of content and pedagogy; and 3. Personal dispositions that are right for the classroom. These skills are not optional; they are a necessity as "today's classroom calls for teachers who are well-prepared to instruct diverse students" (Fehr & Agnello, 2012, p. 34). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) state that many teachers have the book knowledge that is relevant to teaching and learning but lack the skills and experiences necessary to transform the knowledge into effective practice. Teaching is more than content or pedagogical knowledge; it is the ability to make lessons meaningful for students who have a variety of learning styles. Teachers need to develop and hone these skills as many situations demand immediate responses and prompt decisions, with time to reflect after making the decision (Tigchelaar, 2004).

Darling-Hammond (2011) asserts that effective teachers engage students in active learning, create ambitious tasks, assess student learning continuously, adapt teaching to student needs, create effective scaffolds, and define clear standards for assessment. In an earlier study, Darling-Hammond (2000) says that high quality teachers are committed to students and their

learning. Good teachers also understand how students develop and learn, and adjust their teaching based on students' needs.

Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning and for utilizing a range of instructional techniques when each is appropriate. They also know how to motivate and engage students, assess their learning, and explain student performance to parents. Bakar, Mohammed, and Zakaria (2012) reaffirm the previous notion that teacher quality is the most important factor in predicting student outcomes and in addition to acquiring content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, teachers must have certification, strong knowledge of content, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching experience. Connelly and Graham (2009) reiterate the notion that highly qualified teachers make a difference in student achievement. Research has linked all these factors to high student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Tigchelaar (2004) states, "The teacher educator also has to stimulate the students to integrate their new knowledge with their school lessons" (p. 666). Ravitch said that the key factor in students' success is the teacher and their training (2010).

One of the skills of an effective teacher includes connecting the new lesson to prior knowledge and linking it to student's world; this makes a lesson more meaningful and engages the student. Feiman-Nemser (1999) points out that not all teachers develop the kind of teaching that fosters "deep and complex learning on the part of the student" (p. 2). Talbert-Johnson (2006) states that teachers, by modeling caring behavior to students, can facilitate the development of a caring community within the learning environment. When children feel affirmed and safe in their environment, they are more likely to perform well (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

College of Education Programs

As teachers prepare for a career of teaching, they must prepare for the demands of the classroom. Classrooms continue to change and become more diverse each year. Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012) add, "The role of the teacher in the classroom has been found to be the single most important factor in student learning" (p. 68). Colleges of education and school districts are striving to meet the needs of communities and students they serve by examining and reinventing opportunities that support new teachers' preparation for the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2006). University programs understand the importance of this ever-changing profession and the need to change their approaches in order to better prepare teachers for the classroom.

Preparation and Expectations

Teaching is more than content knowledge. Quality teachers:

> should be prepared for this crucial role of human capital development.…Classroom teaching is not the only job of a teacher and so student teachers should be trained by other teachers in the field in other activities which will prepare them for the future job ahead (Ezedue, et al., 2013, pp. 83-85).

Student teaching offers an opportunity for future teachers to learn in context and apply their pedagogical skills to real world experiences (Merrill, 2002); and student teachers can benefit from the lessons and experiences learned in the student teaching experience as related to classroom instruction (Whitacre, et al., 2013). This experience should launch a teacher's career.

New-to-profession teachers need specific training and guidance as they enter the classroom. This ensures the quality of teachers as they begin their teaching career. Teachers work largely in isolation from colleagues, and therefore it is difficult at times to receive feedback when necessary (Ingersoll, 2012). Talbert-Johnson (2006) argues that teacher programs need to emphasize the importance of providing clinical experiences early and throughout the program to

ensure that candidates develop an image of what teaching involves and requires. Texas requires teachers to pass tests of core academic skills and tests of pedagogical knowledge matter and to complete an approved teacher education program that includes specified courses in teaching and learning, instructional methods and strategies, classroom management, curriculum, measurement and evaluation of student learning, human growth and development, and multi-cultural education (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

The first year can be challenging for new-to-profession teachers (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). First year teachers have the "the same responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues; beginning teachers are expected to perform and be effective" (Feiman-Nemser, Schwilledewa, Carver, & Yusko, 1999, p.6). Researchers agree on the importance of the student teaching experience; it is not only necessary to partake in this sheltered practice, but must be a powerful learning experience as well. Darling-Hammond (2010) states, "The bottom line is that we need highly effective, adequately resourced models of preparation for all teachers without exception" (2010, p. 39). Preparation programs are at a critical juncture as they prepare teachers for the classroom. Programs must instill not only knowledge, but create a disposition that allows teachers to effectively intervene with all students (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Darling-Hammond (2006) states that the most powerful teacher programs encourage student teachers to spend extensive amounts of time in the field as they examine and apply concepts and strategies learned in coursework.

Teacher preparation is at a crossroads; significant improvements have been made by college preparation and teacher certification programs through transformations of the schools and creating stronger clinical practice, strengthening coursework around critical areas like student learning and development, assessment, subject matter, pedagogy, and teaching of

English-language learners, and special educational students. However, there is still much ground to cover (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Although most of the university teacher preparation programs now include multiple experiences in the field, previously, there has been a gap or disconnect between what lessons are taught in the preparation classes and the opportunities to enact these actual experiences and practices (Zeichner, 2010). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) say, "They make their expectations for high quality-work very clear and they provide models of student work that meets those standards" (p. 112). Darling-Hammond adds that the best programs are those with a clinical as well as a strong curriculum foundation that allows their student teacher candidates the ability to apply what they have learned.

Talbert-Johnson (2006) reminds educators that with the passage of No Child Left Behind, districts, schools, and classrooms are under the microscopic lens of scrutiny to ensure that poor, diverse, low-achieving students are receiving a "rich curriculum delivered by highly qualified teachers" (p. 158).

Darling-Hammond (2007) asks rhetorically, "How can we create programs and learning environments that ensure this diverse teacher-candidate pool will develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that allow success in the classroom with all the children they serve?" (p. 114). Future success in the classroom depends currently on the student teaching programs of today.

Traditional programs of teacher education have often required students to take batches of front-loaded coursework in isolation, later adding student teaching at the end of the program, often in classrooms that do not model the one in isolation (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, strong programs, according to Darling-Hammond (2007), have extended periods of clinical time

(a minimum of 30 weeks), coursework closely woven into clinical experiences, and a strong partnership with the participating schools and school districts. Lastly, they have clarity of goals, model good practices, frequent opportunities for practice, and graduate responsibility onto student as they go through the clinical experiences. The best models give candidates an opportunity to work alongside teachers who can demonstrate how to teach in ways that are responsive to learners while interwoven into the coursework. These programs specifically require a minimum of a full year of student teaching under the direct supervision of one or more teachers who model expert practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006; 2010).

Student teaching experiences "have assisted the prospective student teacher to gain knowledge, skill, understandings pertaining to teacher learning situations" (Ediger, 2007, p. 251). These time-honored programs are the "most significant methods for developing positive attitudes toward teaching and the teaching profession, the assessment of attitudes of student teachers over time helps to evaluate the effectiveness of experiences provided, changes in training, and procedures…" (Ediger, 2007, p. 253). This time of learning is not to be taken lightly or haphazardly. As Sim (2011) asserts, "Positive professional experience in initial teacher education programs is critical to the development of future teachers' knowledge and skills" (p. 139). The quest for teacher education programs is to discern how to create effective programs that enable teachers to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will allow them to provide quality instruction and equitable practices in diverse settings (Talbert-Johnson, 2006).

Supervising or Cooperating Teachers

The role of the supervising teacher is a critical piece of the tutelage of a new teacher as it is his job to tap into the learning of the student teacher (Beddoe, Ackroyd, Chinnery, &

Appleton, 2011). This role of supervising teacher is an important role because he can directly influence the future of teachers and the profession in a meaningful way. Researchers Cavanaugh and Prescott (2011) say that working with student teachers is a way to directly influence and shape the next generation of teachers as the practicum provides supervisors a unique opportunity to influence the future of the teaching profession in a practical way. It also enables the supervising teacher an opportunity to improve one's own skill through observing, listening, and problem solving (Glickman and Bey, 1990).

Understanding the Role

Experienced teachers are in a perfect position to mentor, tutor, and help develop strong, future teachers (Mergler & Spooner Lane, 2012). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) add that student teachers should be supervised by expert veteran teachers who are able to model, coach, assist with curriculum, and assist with the diverse needs of students.

A positive relationship among the student teacher, the supervising teacher, and the college professor is crucial for the student teacher. Valencia, et al. (2009) state, "At a time when student teaching continues to be a mainstay of teacher education programs, we need to better understand the complex interactions of the key triad members (student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor)" (p. 304). The challenge for the triad is to create an environment where information is shared, a strong leadership is developed, and a career is launched (Fallin & Royse, 2000). A student teacher should not only learn pedagogical and classroom management skills from the supervising teacher, but organizational tips, activities and assignment ideas, as well as classroom set-up and management are crucial components as well.

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education said in 2010 that having a strong student-teaching program is crucial for the success of the student teacher. The association adds that the supervising teacher should be chosen because of his deep expertise and extensive experiences. It is important that the supervising teacher and student teacher are well-matched with candidates from similar subject areas and grade levels (Hobson, et al., 2012). Sadler (2006) argues that student teachers can "best be served where there are extended interactions and collaborations with the student teachers, university educators, and cooperating teachers" (p. 217).

This experience is extremely important because teachers often rely on these practitioners and particular field contexts to develop their style and approach to the classroom (Wang, et al., 2011). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowdon (2007) maintain that expert veterans should supervise candidates because they are available daily to coach, model, and oversee decisions in curriculum development, instruction, and the needs of individual students. A well-supervised practicum or student teaching experience allows students to connect better theoretical learning to practice new ideas and methods and they are more confident in learning to teach and are able to enact what they are learning in ways that are effective for students. These skills can include assessments, extended activities, integrated lessons, utilization of various sources, as well as the personal and professional development of the teacher.

Successful Supervision

Glickman and Bey (1990) state that successful supervision includes tasks that create instructional dialogue, time for reflection and higher order thinking, group develop activities. Ezeudu, et al., (2013) state, "Classroom teaching is not the only job of a teacher and so student teachers should be trained by other teachers in the field in other activities which will prepare

them for the future job ahead" (p. 85). Russell and Russell (2011) reiterate the importance of the internship providing an opportunity for interns (novice teachers) to collaborate and be:

> actively monitored by cooperating teachers (veteran teachers). Typically, university teacher education program select veteran or more experienced teachers to serve as cooperative teachers and mentors based on factors that may include prior collaboration, credentials, and teacher availability or willingness to work with an intern. (p. 2)

Fallin and Royse (2000) argue that when student teachers are paired with supervising teachers, it is important to give careful thought to the college student's personality, readiness level, and teaching style.

> Student performance on experiences from the undergraduate curriculum, such as teaching activity in methods classes, written philosophies of teaching, journals from observations, and interaction with university professors can all provide helpful insights into pairing a student teacher's needs with the strengths of the cooperating teacher (p. 19).

Russell and Russell (2011) add that because the beginning teacher is impressionable and the internship experience is pivotal to his development, he or she needs to "investigate methods or strategies that better prepare for [the] cooperating teacher to be an effective mentor" (p. 2). Therefore, a poorly chosen placement, regardless of who makes it can have negative consequences for the student teacher and the students. The results can also include feelings of inadequacy, low self-confidence, and a negative attitude toward teaching young people (Fallin & Royse, 2000).

Another crucial job is the role of the university supervisor and cooperating teacher as they have the job to help "students grow, develop, and achieve during the student teaching experience" (Ediger, 2007, p. 254). The role of the university supervisor has been characterized as overlapping the role of the cooperating teacher (Glickman, 1990). While this job is critical, no one can define the role of the supervising teacher in simple terms. However, the supervisor has a

"greater understanding of what teachers need to do to be more effective and can help teachers understand and use this essential information" (Glickman and Bey, 1990, p. 550).

Additionally, research has shown a need to provide supervision training to both university supervisors and cooperating teachers. The process of pairing a student teacher with a supervising teacher should be carefully considered by the teacher preparation program or college faculty member. Glickman and Bey (1990) believe that supervising teachers should be selected for their supervisory experience and style and should be able to exhibit "responsibilities and expectations among university supervisors and student teachers" (p. 561). Russell and Russell (2011) state that most cooperating teachers do not receive comprehensive training or preparation for their role as an effective mentor. Generally, the more remote, smaller, and poorer in resources a school district is, the less supervision is available to the teachers (Glickman, 1990).

Conclusion

Darling-Hammond (2012) says, "We won't really improve the quality of the profession unless we also bring in an excellent supply of good teachers who are well-prepared and committed to ongoing learning" (p. 9). Learning how to teach is not only learning about the practices of a classroom and pedagogical skills, it is learning how to call oneself a teacher and believe in what teachers do on a daily basis (Lampert, 2010). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowdon (2007) state that teachers who learn to teach without guidance often learn merely to cope rather than to promote learning for their students. However, student teachers who hone their skills when they are learning to teach "undergo a process of learning, experimenting, and reflecting on their practice" (p. 118). Latham (1998) reminds educators that the intrinsic value of teaching makes an effective teacher and can have greater importance than extrinsic rewards for

teachers. In essence, teaching puts into work a wide range of abilities and characteristics of a teacher. Student teaching is a time-honored preparatory step that teachers experience as they move from pre-service status to full-time teacher.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter on research design and methods established a framework for the study. Central to this work is the matter of how new-to-profession teachers relate the elements of their student teaching experience to their initial teaching practices. The study's design encompassed qualitative inquiry through case study research and analysis. Moreover, this chapter describes the criteria for selection of participants and procedures utilized throughout the project. It also includes the ethical considerations for the participants.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was an ideal methodology to investigate the experiences of pre-service teachers. Qualitative research is defined as a type of research that "encompasses a number of philosophical orientations and approaches" (Merriam, 2009, p. 19) as "researchers are interested in *understanding the meaning people have constructed*…how people make sense of their world and [their] experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). When describing qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (2013) state that there is an "emphasis …on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (or measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (p. 17).

Hancock and Algozzine (2011) explain that qualitative researchers illustrate experiences through language by describing actions and identifying patterns. Qualitative research is built utilizing observations, developing understandings from field experiences, and gathering pieces of information. Data collection can include interviews with individuals, observations, review of existing documents, or a combination. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) describe qualitative research as a variety of things "going on at the same time: different voices, different perspectives, points

of views, angles of vision" (p. 9), as the word qualitative implies an emphasis on traits or conditions that cannot necessarily be measured through other forms of inquiry.

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative inquiry focuses on meaning within a certain context and requires data collection tools that are sensitive to "underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data" (p. 2). Qualitative research has four main characteristics: (1) the focus on a process, understanding, and meaning; (2) the researcher as the primary instrument of data collections and analysis; (3) an inductive process; and (4) a richly descriptive product. The overall purpose of qualitative research is to understand how people make meaning of actual experiences in their lives. The researcher must spend time in the specific field of study in order to understand these specific experiences, in particular for this study, the student teaching-to-teaching practice (Merriam, 2009).

A qualitative study is a "richly descriptive" product utilizing the words, stories, and data collection that the researcher gathers. Merriam (2009) says, "The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis, the process is inductive, and rich description characterizes the end product" (p. 19). Case studies and narrative analyses tell the story behind this richly descriptive dissertation. Merriam says this approach "uses stories people tell, analyzing them in various ways, to understand the meaning of the experiences as revealed in the story" (p. 23). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) describe qualitative research as a montage or "quilt" that is collected by placing slices of reality together (p. 9). They argue that qualitative researchers "stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 17). The research design of this study addressed the following questions per Denzin and Lincoln research design framework, including, but not limited to, who or what will be studied? What strategies of

inquiry will be used? What methods of research tools for collecting and analyzing empirical materials will be utilized?

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Context is critical to understanding how participants and learners construct meaning from the experiences, because it creates and informs their perspective and the way they interpret their world (Alfred, Cherrstrom, Robinson, & Friday, 2013). Succinctly, it is the way the researcher views the research.

In this study's context, case study analysis served as a means of comparing and evaluating the experiences of the participants' student teaching-to-teaching experience. Case

studies allow the investigator to explore a bounded system (through one or more cases) over a period of time utilizing multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007). The way the learner makes sense of the student teaching experience is often achieved through synthesizing the depth of knowledge gained from his or her encounters during this period of sheltered practice. Qualitative research attempts to explore factors that influence situations. This type of study aligned perfectly with this particular research as there are multiple facets occurring at once inside a classroom. Experiences during sheltered practices can enhance a new teacher's ability to address these complexities as they arise.

Framework Revisited

This section provides an explanation of the theoretical framework, perspective, and methodology that built a foundation for this work. A theoretical framework underlies the beliefs that influence qualitative research and its interpretation. The framework builds the body of literature of the "disciplinary orientation that you draw upon to situate your survey" (Merriam, 2009, p. 67). The framework is present in qualitative studies because one must have a question that is being asked. Merriam (2009) says it must have three aspects, including the manner in which participants interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and the meaning they derive from those experiences. Essentially, the framework is the blueprint for research (Yin, 2014).

An anchor theory for this qualitative study is *experiential learning*, an approach allowing students to become engaged in building meaning through hands-on experiences. Based on Deweyan thought that learning is active, student-centered, and involves shared inquiry, experiential programs create opportunities for faculty and students to interact with one another in

authentic ways. One of the strengths of experiential learning is the idea that an apprentice can grow and develop through the application of research to practice (Hickcox, 2002). Kolb (1999) theorized that this holistic model of the learning process and a "multi-linear model of adult development…are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop" (p. 2). In simpler terms, experiential learning theory defines learning as the process whereby "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1999, p. 2). In this study, the experience of writing curriculum, creating lesson plans, managing a class, working with students, and developing other teacher-related skills are centerpieces of student teaching. The student teaching practice allows future teachers an opportunity to prepare under the guidance and supervision of an experienced teacher before having to perform these functions alone. This theory provides an opportunity to create activities and reflect upon them for a deeper understanding of what has been learned (Zidemans-Boudreau, Moss, & Lee, 2013).

Constructivist theory also played a part in the study's framework. New-to-profession teachers connected these sheltered practice experiences and applied it to real teaching opportunities. This theory allows the learner to "describe, understand, and interpret" the information that will in turn construct the narratives of this study (Merriam, 2009).

Situational theory allows for the case study participants to experience, build, and connect their learning from the student teaching experience to their initial years of teaching. This particular model allows the participants to apply the concepts of curriculum and specific instances and contextualize it into real situations. Essentially, knowledge is grounded in personal encounters in concrete situations (Korthagen, 2008).

Method

To understand and construct the bridge between the cases describing student teaching-to-teaching experiences and the practices of first-year or second-year teachers, the author served as researcher, observer, and analyzer of data. Qualitative researchers create a theory by connecting understandings from the field, including observations, interviews, and/or documents. Then, they are combined and ordered into thematic categories which then build the narratives from the data (Merriam, 2009).

The researcher established two major criteria for the subjects of this study: (1) each subject will be a graduate of the university, and (2) each subject will be in his first or second year of teaching.

The idea that teachers learn these invaluable competencies during student teaching established the framework for the case analyses. The stories of these teachers provided the pathway for the researcher to categorize the experiences of sheltered practice. Merriam (2009) defines the bounded system as a "case…program, a group…an instance of some process, issue, or concern" (pp. 40-41). Through the bounded system of sheltered practices, I explored, investigated, and document detailed, in-depth analyses of the experiences, including but not limited to interviews, discussions, observations, and primary sources (p. 43). I included sources of information from observations and detailed interviews as I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. As Merriam states, "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data" (p. 175). My data analyses addressed the research questions and, through the stories of the participants, I crafted their stories and utilized them to bridge the gap between sheltered practice and actual teaching. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue that case studies "often contain a substantial element of narrative" (p. 190).

As noted above, this study utilized case studies while providing an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. The case study provided a method for investigating multiple or different variables within a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) state, "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 17).

Why Case Studies

As Hancock and Algozzine (2011) state, case studies represent a different kind of qualitative inquiry from other types of research. Using case studies involves intensive analysis of a single unit or system bounded by "space of time" (p. 10). Case studies can include individuals, events, or groups and through case studies, researchers hope to uncover an in-depth "understanding of situations and meaning for those involved" (p. 10) in circumstances, organizations or programs. Case study research means determining what researchers already know about a particular question or inquiry. In order to "identify strengths and weaknesses of previous research" (p. 31), it is imperative to make sense of the information from various sources. It is the process by which the researcher continuously interacts with the data and draws tentative conclusions about the questions being asked (Merriam, 2009). The case studies were utilized to help identify what strengths and weaknesses exist within a sheltered practice experience. Constructing cases allowed the researcher to understand specific instances and skills that were honed or omitted during this time.

Case study research means conducting an empirical investigation with multiple sources of evidence as a researcher trying to understand a "real-world case" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Sources

include individuals, organizations, processes, and programs for case study analyses (Yin, 2014). Cases were bound to assist in determining the scope of the data collection, and it aided in determining which persons were included. These persons were differentiated from those who are outside of it (the context of the case study). The components of research included: the case study's questions, its propositions, its units of analyses, the logic linking the data to the propositions', and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Yin (2014) explained that a common misunderstanding of qualitative research is that the information cannot be generalized, and therefore, cannot contribute to scientific development.

Participants and Criterion

The participants for this study were three new-to-profession teachers who were currently in their initial (first or second) years of teaching at the secondary level at an accredited school in north central Texas. These teachers were selected using convenience sampling, an approach common when time constraints, financial limitations, location and availability of sites, or availability of respondents are factors (Merriam, 2009). However, it was also important to identify participants who had the best information to address the research question (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

Data Collection

The process of data collection was divided among three stages: entry, data collection, and exit (Merriam, 2009). Researchers suggest that "case study researchers adhere to several guidelines as they simultaneously summarize and interpret information gathered when doing case study research" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 62). The intent of the case study was to discover the participant's view and testimony through the data collection process. This

experience or phenomenon being studied emerged from the data as the participants described the particular aspects and details of the student teaching practice. Each participant's training was distinctive; therefore, each interview and narrative was distinctive as well. The researcher kept the data collection focused on the descriptors of the experiences and discover through this process the interpretations of the "rich, textual data provided by the participants [as they] describe their experiences" (de Marrais, 2004, p. 57). In data collection, the researcher becomes the learner while the participant is the expert throughout the data collection process. Both the researcher and participant are engaged and working toward shared meanings (de Marrais, 2004).

Study frameworks should include a well-designed method for labeling, storing, and accessing information acquired during the research effort. A well-devised and planned method for data collection is an integral part of the inquiry process. The absence thereof can jeopardize the researcher's ability to interpret the vast amount of information gathered. Therefore, each data element was labeled with the date, location, persons involved, and circumstances surrounding the collection of that piece of information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The researcher followed this protocol when gathering data from the interviews, observations, and personal documents in order to accurately construct the narratives. In this study, the use of documents is to "corroborate and augment" evidence from other sources as these documents can provide additional information, support, and details (Yin, 2014, p. 107).

Interviews

The first step of data collection included an initial structured questionnaire form from each participant which assisted the researcher in gaining background information (see Appendix D). The second step of data collection entailed face-to-face interviews with each participant and

oral administration of another set of semi-structured questions. This was scheduled at a time and location convenient for each participant and lasted for approximately one hour. Researcher de Marrais (2004) defines semi-structured interviews as a method in which the researcher and participant engage "in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 55). The interviews served as the main process in the data collection to obtain honest, unique, and specific information. Interviews are the most appropriate form of data collection for this specific information. A semi-structured approach allows the researcher to ask predetermined questions, yet offers flexibility to engage in the discussion of related topics (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). In addition to utilizing pre-determined questions, interviews allow follow-up queries designed to probe more deeply into issues of interest to the researcher and interviewees. An effective researcher is able to "ask good questions, be a good listener, stay adaptive, have a firm grasp of the issues being studied, and …avoid biases" (Yin, 2014, p. 73). Moreover, a good researcher constantly strives for the highest standards throughout the process. This included a responsibility to scholarship, honesty, the avoidance of deception and accepting one's own work while maintaining a strong, professional competence and ensured the accuracy and the integrity of the work (Yin, 2014).

Interviews were audio-recorded in order to preserve the conversations and create accurate verbatim transcriptions of the interactions. The interviews served as a primary data source to answer the study's questions and to construct the case narratives.

Co-Creating Narratives

The heart of this study featured the stories that the new-to-profession teachers shared with the researcher in order to describe their student teaching-to-teaching experiences. The case

study provided a mechanism for the participant to share the deep, richer meanings of events (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It was during this process that the narratives were returned to the participants to allow for member checking and verification. The participants were allowed the opportunity to add, delete, or correct the content as appropriate.

Classroom Observations

A second critical form of data in building the cases of the new-to-profession teachers came from in-class observations. Observational data is a "first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p. 117) and is a systematic research tool that addresses a specific research question. Through observational data, a check and balance was established and produced accurate and trustworthy results. Observations are often used in the process of case study research to add another layer of detail while providing answers to questions being investigated (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The researcher either develops an observation guide or uses an established tool, then conducts the observation. The setting maximizes the usefulness of data that are being gathered in a realistic context. Notes taken during the observation must be specific and follow a predetermined protocol. Afterwards, responses are recorded for later review and analysis.

Four one-hour classroom observations occurred for each participant utilizing the *Indicators of Best Practices Checklist* (see Appendix G). Adapted from Zemelman, et al. (2012), the checklist served as a guideline for classroom procedures in order to view each classroom using a similar lens. Observations included notes focusing on classroom strategies, management, teacher attitude, student work and assessment, activities and assignments, classroom climate, language, and communication. Additionally, any related materials or lesson plans were reviewed

and noted. These observations were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the participants. With permission of the building principal, notification was sent to parents explaining the researcher's presence in the classroom (see Appendix J). No audio or video recordings were made when students were present. The researcher recorded the data gathered following each class visit to ensure accuracy and appropriateness, including date, time, subject, and grade taught during each classroom observation.

Personal Documents

During this time, the researcher requested permission to view personal documents from each participant. These documents included a range of materials related to the student teaching experiences, such as lesson plans, field supervisor or cooperating teacher feedback, etc. The records included current professional materials relating to walk-through visits or classroom observations. Personal documents are a reliable source, per Merriam (2009) as it is data that demonstrates someone's view; however, the material can be considered highly subjective as the writer was the only source of information. Such file data would allow the researcher to gain another perspective of the participant through the lens of their supervisors. Reviewing these documents allowed the researcher to gather further information about the student teaching and the experiences in the initial years in the classroom. Good researchers gather information from as many relevant documents as possible (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011).

Data Analysis

By triangulating connections among the interviews, observations, and personal documents, the data are strengthened. The use of multiple methods serves as an "attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

Observational data can be utilized to triangulate and substantiate data when used in conjunction with other documentation, such as interviews, and document analysis. Managing data and finding themes is crucial as it allowed the researcher a method to easily identify specific pieces of information (Merriam, 2009). These findings were in the form of descriptive accounts, categories, or theories that help explain the data that was collected. More importantly, this analysis should motivate the researcher to think beyond the obvious and particular pieces of information; it revealed information on an abstract level. The researcher coded themes and made sense of all the information while trying to understand the phenomenon of the sheltered practice, as well as the initial teaching experiences.

Novice researchers may encounter difficulty in interpreting data they have collected. However, through rigorous contemplation and careful consideration for the data, even novices can produce the needed analytic result. To be successful in analyzing data, the researcher followed a step-by-step process. Step one: The researcher studied the outputs to determine whether any meaningful patterns emerged in the data as well as searched for patterns, insights, or concepts that seem promising through "playing" or "manipulating" the data (Yin, 2014, p. 135). This included placing information into different arrays, creating flowcharts and other graphics, tabulating the frequency of different events, or placing information in a chronological order. Step two: The researcher relied on the theoretical background that helped shape the study and find the answers in the data collection that address the study's question. Step three: The researcher identified a useful concept that lead into further data analysis in order to produce connections within the data itself. This process was repetitive and ongoing as the researcher was immersed in data in order to identify recurring patterns and themes.

The researcher utilized intra-case comparison to juxtapose each participant's student teaching story with their early teaching practices narrative. Subsequently, cross-case analysis aided in comparing each participant's individual cases. Looking at the aggregate, "profiling" each case allowed the researcher to find the replications or contradictions (Yin, 2014).

Figure 3: Data Analysis Flowchart

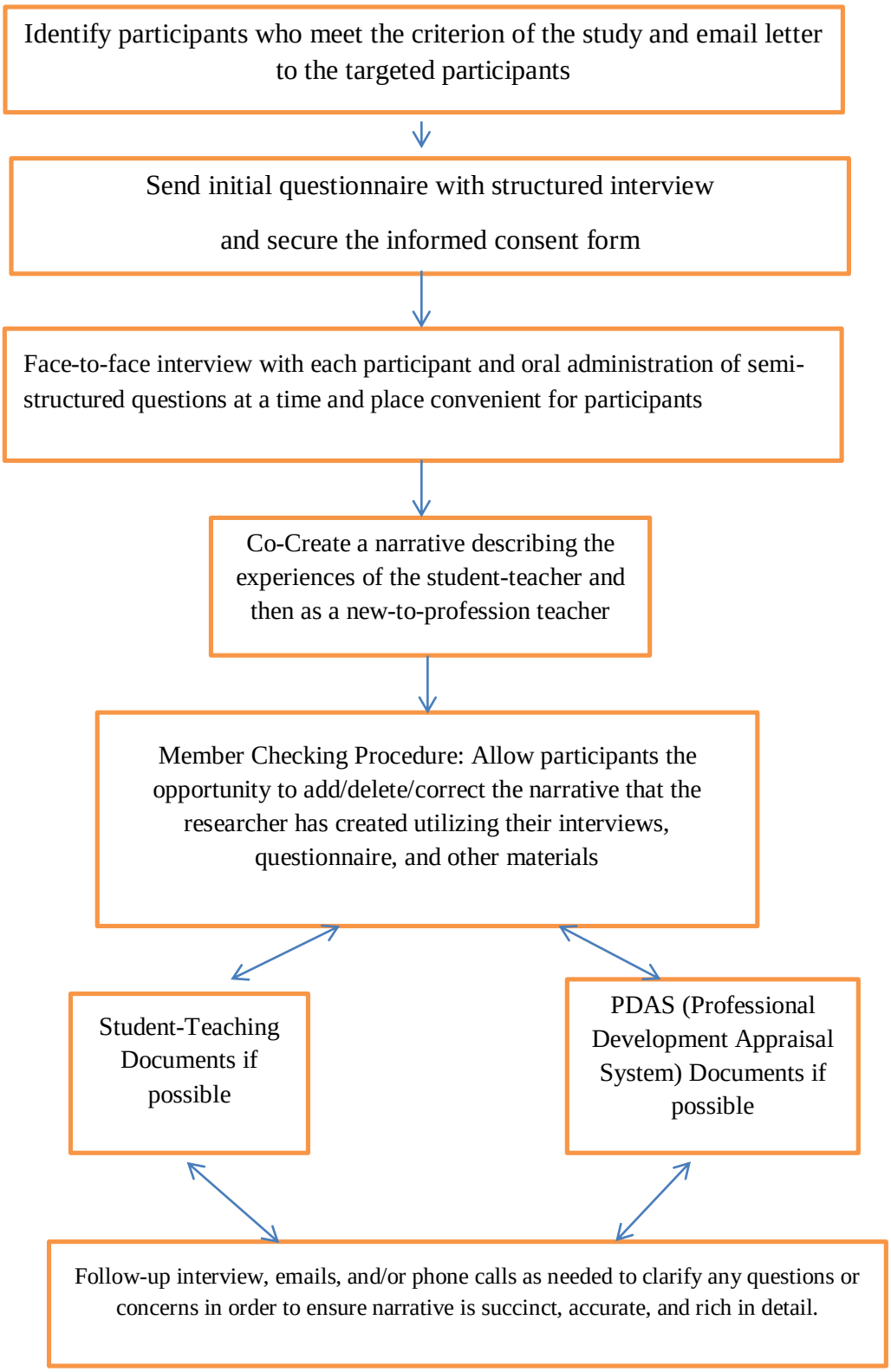


Figure 3: Participant flow chart demonstrating the data collection and analysis procedure.

The researcher synthesized the many "piles of information" acquired during the data collection process in order to identify and report meaningful findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 67). Pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case syntheses are methods that assisted the researcher disaggregate the data in order to produce a report that is richly descriptive and clearly elucidated the findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The Data Analysis Flowchart (see Figure 3) thoroughly demonstrates the chronological process of collecting data and analyzing data.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted ethically and followed the steps outlined in the Institutional Review Board Protocol (see Appendix K). It followed all guidelines necessary to protect participants. No deception was used and the privacy and confidentiality of the teachers, supervising teachers, college professors, and schools was strictly protected (Yin, 2014).

While potential risks to subjects were considered minimal in this study, other potential stressors may have been present including the amount of time required to participate in the questionnaire and interviews. Additionally, concerns may have been associated with participants feeling as though their performance was being evaluated. Participation did not impact their employment or evaluation and was held in the strictest confidence. The participants were also assured that participation was not required by their supervisor, principal, or other district employee and they knew they could have withdrawn from the study at any time by simply informing the researcher. As there were no issues or concerns during the study, observations were conducted and data was collected successfully.

Only the investigator had access to the data as it was being collected and analyzed. Pseudonyms were used throughout the study, and any identifying information was removed to protect confidentiality. Data collected for this study (interview notes, field notes, anecdotal notes, and preliminary analyses) was stored in password protected computer files that only the investigator could open and access. These procedures ensured anonymity and confidentiality and followed legal and ethical practices (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011).

Other precautions included minimizing the possibility of undue influence or coercion including an explanation about voluntary consent and withdrawal procedures. The following statement was published on all written electronic correspondence:

> *Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The choice to participate is at your sole discretion and not required by your principal or school district. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time by informing the researcher. No incentive or compensation is being offered for your involvement. Your responses will be completely confidential and neither your name nor the name of your school will be disclosed by the researcher*.

All study participants were adults. The researcher discussed the consent document and the study procedures with participants prior to obtaining written consent.

Chapter Summary

This chapter established the lens for which the researcher used to gather and analyze data. Through case stories, the researcher created rich narratives as connections were linked between the student teaching practice and initial years of teaching.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: PARTICIPANT STORIES

An overarching research question guided this work: **How do new-to-profession teachers relate the elements of their student teaching experiences to their initial teaching practices and behaviors?**

The goal of this study was to provide an in-depth analysis of the following issues related to the student teaching experience (1) what concepts were learned and well-utilized, (2) what concepts were learned but seldom utilized, and (3) what concepts were not learned, but needed in their initial years of teaching? This study followed a case study approach, as defined by Yin (2014), as it "investigate[d] a case in-depth and within its real-world context" (p. 16). Yin (2014) elaborates that collecting case study evidence involves using the documents to "corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 107). The personal, semi-structured interviews allowed the conversation to ebb and flow and the researcher to further inquire about details mentioned in order for the participants to respond in greater detail.

The case studies' participants were three new-to-profession teachers, all in their second year of teaching. The names of the teachers, supervising professor, supervising teachers, and the high school have been changed in order to mask participants' identities. The teachers are: Holly, a mathematics teacher, Cindy, a social studies teacher, and Steven, an English teacher. Lastly, Crockett High School (CHS) is the pseudonym for the study site.

Data consisted of questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, personal documents from the participants' student teaching lesson plans, observations from the supervising professor, lesson plans, reflective journals, emails from participants, and annual appraisal documents.

This chapter explains and presents the findings by first introducing the participants along with important observations from their initial interviews and questionnaires (see Appendix D and F). Secondly, I crafted their stories about their student teaching experience and their stories about their first years of actual classroom teaching.

While all three participants are teaching at the same school in a large, urban area, their experiences and pathways to the classrooms differed.

Holly, Mathematics Teacher

Holly had an "interesting" student teaching experience. She taught in two different schools—CHS and at an international school in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her desire to study abroad and see the world allowed her a trip overseas to complete her internship.

Holly was in her second year of teaching and spent the spring of 2011 at two different schools (CHS and the International School in Sweden) with three different teachers for her student teaching experience. She said that she had an incredible experience and realized she learned valuable, yet different lessons from each teacher. She wanted to travel abroad and this was her opportunity to learn about how Swedish educators design curriculum, manage their classrooms, and structure their schools. She spent three weeks at this school. All of the students spoke English and many were on the track for college. Holly enjoyed her student teaching experience in Sweden because she had students on high levels and low levels of math. She was able to allow them to push through and "foster that resilience and how to encourage it, and how to deal with students [who] aren't resilient anymore." Mr. Andersson, her Swedish supervising teacher, said she had a strong ability to connect to the students and teach them on their level.

Holly observed Mr. Andersson and began teaching on the third day of her experience. She was simply placed with him and he was under the impression that she was there to take over his classroom. He told her where they were in the curriculum, where they needed to go, and the password for the computer and website. The students were primarily Swedish, with a few German students, and children from other countries. Mr. Andersson noted in his weekly evaluation that she proved herself to be quite capable of teaching students despite their array of academic levels.

Holly reported that her second student teaching experience supplied her with the necessary skills for successfully teaching and running a classroom. At CHS, Holly worked with two teachers. She said having two supervising teachers worked to her benefit as both teachers had different strengths and she learned from both of them in various ways. She spent her mornings with Ms. Laney in AP Calculus classes and her afternoons with Ms. Lancaster in Math Models classes. These teachers had worked with the university in prior years and were typically the "go to" teachers used for secondary math student teachers.

Holly credits her two supervising teachers with showing her the ins-and-outs of running a classroom on her own. Because she was working in AP Calculus and Math Models, she could see both ends of the academic spectrum. Holly described Ms. Laney as creative and great at brainstorming ideas. Ms. Lancaster was nurturing and helped lead Holly to discover logistical functions of the classroom. Holly described Ms. Lancaster as an excellent organizer and great at putting ideas into action. Her way of nurturing Holly helped show her when lessons had been unsuccessful and discover new methods of teaching the material. Holly described her experiences with both of these teachers as "the best she could possibly have had."

Lessons Learned

Holly said one of the most practical lessons she learned during her student teaching was that when students were distracted and not listening, a teacher needs to stop, wait for them, and then get everyone back on the same page; otherwise, learning is not going to occur. According to her weekly evaluations, Holly noted the biggest struggle occurred in the Math Models classes. These students struggled with proper classroom behavior and "learned helplessness." Another important lesson was that classroom behavior was not just about the classroom. Holly said, "There is so much that goes on outside the classroom" that affects the inside of the classroom behavior. She understood a child can be two different students depending on the day so teachers must take that into account and be willing to communicate with students through tough times. She added, "Being open to listening to them makes an entirely different atmosphere in your classroom."

Holly said that student teaching was the most beneficial part of her degree in education. "I really did not learn anything about teaching in my education classes. That sounds really depressing. The theoretical stuff from a book didn't [help me] learn anything." Holly added that she learns best by doing. Her supervising teacher, Mrs. Laney even noted in her weekly evaluation, "Great job jumping right in and working with kids."

Holly learned about balancing time, how to answer questions without giving away the answer, and how to lead students to their own discovery of the answer. She learned how to assess grades and how to write questions. She added, "In student teaching, I learned so much on how to teach" During her first few weeks of student teaching, Holly participated in real activities. She graded Honors Pre-Cal tests and was surprised by how difficult and time consuming it was by

creating the grading rubric and implementing it. During the second week of student teaching, she created her first seating chart and noted that it was harder than it looked due to student personalities. She personally realized when she was tired she could not deliver her best to her students and thought she was "an awful teacher." She added,

> It is the reality and if you can get the basic building blocks then you can apply this to later situations. The first time—which is something I hate about the education major and this is probably a terrible thing to say—but, my senior year is the first time I really got to work with actual kids!

Holly said her first three years of education classes only included observations. "Looking at kids is not the same as working with kids." She described that watching teachers in the classroom is different because you do not learn what really makes them a good teacher or a bad teacher. Holly shared that the observations left her with more questions than answers about what it takes to make a classroom run successfully.

> During observations, if you had asked me if someone was a good or a bad teacher, I would have been able to answer yes or no by the end of the observation. However, observing them didn't teach me how and in what ways they were good or bad. Teaching is a practice, so if you don't understand the practices of a good teacher, and don't get to practice them yourself, how can you ever be good at it on purpose?

Holly described the student teaching experience as the first time she learned about building the relationships, establishing rapport and respect. Ms. Laney observed Holly at a CHS boys' soccer match, which was one way she built rapport with her students.

Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster helped build Holly's confidence and gave her the independence she needed to teach her own class. Holly said, "I was in charge of planning lessons, grading homework, grading quizzes, and everything a teacher does except for making copies and contacting parents." She said she was tentative when she began in the classroom, but she gained independence throughout her twelve weeks. Her teachers did not hover or

micromanage her, and though she occasionally asked for help, they let her teach and "fly." Ms. Lancaster commented that Holly was extremely comfortable with students and she knew the material well as she displayed creative ways in helping students understand. By the second week, she implemented a lesson that she had created and she noted in her reflective journal that it was more difficult than she anticipated because she "had to design questions that would set the students up to understand general formulae." Ms. Laney noted that Holly tried to make Calculus lessons as interactive as possible and found new, interesting ways to present product and quotient rules for finding derivatives. For Math Models, she designed a slope jeopardy review for her students and while they performed well on it, Holly knew this moment was fleeting because her students could find slope, but they did not understand the way the mandated state test makers formatted questions. "The frustration was the kids could do the math, they just couldn't do the test, because they didn't understand the questions and how to decode them."

Her college supervisor, Mr. Allison, did not influence or help her prepare for the classroom in his four visits for observations; however, he did note on his observations that she was a capable teacher. Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster gave her in-depth feedback daily that, according to her, helped her become the teacher she is today.

Classroom Management

During Holly's student teaching experience, she shared that classroom management and discipline were never a problem. She did learn about pacing and directing a classroom:

> When students are distracted, you need to stop and wait for them. Like if they aren't listening to you, stop and wait because if you try to keep going, keep talking, no one is listening and no one is getting anywhere.

Ms. Lancaster recorded in her weekly observations that Holly needed to "slow down with struggling students and if they are talking, demand their attention." Later, she needed to keep students focused on lessons and not allow them to get off task by visiting. Ms. Lancaster also noted that Holly was cognizant of students' understanding before moving forward. Early on, Holly witnessed students struggling with Unit Circle problems as they were beginning to talk out of turn and keep quiet. Holly wrote in her reflective journal that at one point her Math Models class was becoming more and more frustrating, but she wanted to push on and "teach them as much as possible." Ms. Laney commented on her last weekly evaluation that Holly had a sense of humor, patience, and strong organizational skills as her areas of strength in the classroom.

When Mr. Allison observed her, he did note that she "had excellent rapport with students" as she gave positive and constructive feedback and managed her class time well. He noted she handled the student sleeping in class correctly.

Learning from Stressful Situations

Holly described one particular situation that caused her stress during her student teaching. Holly created an outdoor lab activity for her Math Models students to see geometry in real life. The activity consisted of measuring shadows on the ground in order to figure out the height of an object that one cannot measure, but can find by using similar triangles. Due to the dynamics of the class, Math Models students tended to be students who had struggled with behavior and been in and out of alternative schooling. She said she was nervous about taking them outside and leaving campus while responsible for them:

> I was a young twenty-something taking all these high school kids outside and around campus. I could just imagine them all running in a thousand directions as soon as we stepped outside and there would be nothing I could do about it.

Holly said she was stressed because she wanted the activity to be successful. She had designed it herself, but was plagued with the question: what if the students ran away? Holly explained:

> Trusting the students was the biggest stressor for me. But, since we had this relationship already, that kind of eased the anxiety. Once we got outside, they were like, 'Ok, miss. You want us to do this and we will give it a shot.'

Holly credits this relationship as the reason why her kids were successful outside with the geometry lab. They were willing to work with her because she had built trust and respect with them. Ms. Laney commented that Holly learned the students' names in a week and this was "great for establishing camaraderie" with the students. Holly noted in her reflective journal that through her before and after school tutorial sessions, she could "see the benefit of relationship building." Ms. Laney added that Holly was always willing to help. This willingness to assist students before and after school was beneficial as students began to drop Calculus at the beginning of the semester because of the level of difficulty. Holly tutored the students and she noted in her journal, "I'm glad they are starting to trust me and ask for help." This was a turning point in her student teaching experience. For the first two weeks, the students did not ask Holly any math questions. "As I became a bigger presence in tutorials, word spread that I could really help the students and they came to me first instead of Ms. Laney." Ms. Lancaster noted that Holly was patient and made students feel comfortable as she taught. Ms. Laney observed Holly as she worked with students and encouraged them to pass their derivation quizzes as she often worked through lunch to tutor students.

Another stressor for Holly during her student teaching was the realization that she was responsible for building the base knowledge for Calculus II students. Ms. Laney assisted her during this "nerve-racking" time and reminded her that related rates (a rate at which a quantity changes) are a difficult topic to teach, but because Holly knew her content well, she was able to

"answer difficult and challenging questions" for the students. Holly also learned first-hand the importance of working problems prior to class. Holly documented that she had not been prepared for class and had to defer to Ms. Laney for help; however, she learned from this lesson how important it is to plan a lesson and work the problems prior to class because she would not always have another teacher to defer to in the midst of a lesson.

Bridging Student Teaching to the Real World

Holly indicated that her theoretical classes were "pointless." She said the classes were structured primarily for elementary students and she had to plan imaginary units for imaginary students that she was never going to teach. "The professors told us to do something that you could really use. You are never going to teach it, so I can't tell you whether or not it was going to work or not!" She adds that these exercises in lesson planning were "completely pointless" but the lesson planning in student teaching was:

> somewhat helpful…We didn't go into the actual structure of a lesson, but I [learned] to tie into what we have been doing. You start class connecting to the previous day by talking about it or going over homework and then it leads into the actual lesson.

Holly said she tried to always introduce a lesson by connecting it in a way to grab the students' attention in order to demonstrate the content. Holly said the next step usually included practice problems. "OK, I have been talking, I have been doing, now *we* are going to do, and then I want *you* to do." Holly would then give students problems and walk around and see how the students were handling the work. Holly would carefully and actively monitor her students and then determine whether or not she would need to reteach or move further into the lesson. Mr. Allison noted in his last visit that Holly displayed a higher degree of questioning, critical thinking, and problem solving with her students. Even after her first attempt at teaching a calculus lesson, she

was unsure of her own effectiveness and realized she would have to adjust and tweak her instruction for greater student achievement and understanding.

Holly reflected upon some of her experiences and realized the importance of planning a successful lesson and related this idea. “It takes so much time to plan a solid lesson and once you begin teaching it, it can change directions and go in a different direction than what you expected.” She also learned that on her first attempt at a derivative quiz, she had made the material too difficult and no one passed. She then spent the next two days “bonding” with her Calculus students assisting them as they tried to re-take the exam and pass. Another lesson learned includes the importance of pacing in a lesson and allowing time for the students to discover the solutions by talking less during instruction. Through their class participation, she found that through slowing down the lesson and prompting them with questions, she was able to help them discover the answer. This worked particularly well with the students who had been struggling and helped them grasp the material. Mr. Allison also observed Holly differentiating the lessons with her students. He noted that in the middle of one lesson, she suggested to her students that she “show the problem in a different way.” Mr. Allison noted that Holly had great use of the Promethean Board during his observation as she integrated laptops for her Math Models class.

Holly credits her supervising teachers for her learning about lesson structure and pacing. However, she mentioned that she did not know how to construct a lesson to hand off to another teacher to teach.

She said her experience at CHS working with Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster, and teaching at remedial and AP levels gave her a firm foundation for teaching secondary math. “Teaching at

the two different levels—the highest highs and lowest lows" gave her the confidence to teach anything and everything in-between. As Holly demonstrated her ability, Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster gave her more responsibilities in the classes, lesson planning, and teaching. She added, "I felt I could teach anything and making those relationships with my students. I can't stress relationships enough." Mr. Allison called her a "student-centered teacher" and that her own professional development will "enhance student learning." He added, "…she will be a valuable asset to her school and district."

Holly as a Teacher

Holly's student teaching experience pushed her to acquire the independence as a prospective teacher, which she says she truly needed. Holly described her first job after student teaching as *difficult*. "I was in a school that didn't have strong teachers. It wasn't a good school and it did not have good administrators. It was the complete antithesis of my student teaching experience." The students were essentially the same at CHS and her new school as they typically had the same background and the same demographics. "Kids are kids and they react the same way and generally have the same needs." She revealed the school had a poor reputation, and had administrators "who did not support the teachers and the good teachers leave the bad schools!" She was unprepared for the negativity from her new colleagues:

> I went in and I was very passionate but I was in a school with a bunch of people that were burnt out and they were angry at the kids or administrators. It was a higher paying district and they were in it for the wrong reasons. I was totally unprepared on how to deal with that situation.

She said she had had a wonderful student teaching experience and thoroughly enjoyed building the relationships with colleagues who communicated well and valued professional relationships. Holly said, "Then I went into a situation where people would gossip about one another or try to

get one another in trouble. We even had a sexual harassment case and that is just something you are totally unprepared for."

Holly said that a lot of first year teachers end up in schools that are less than great because good teachers do not like to leave the good schools and good leaders. Therefore, the turnover and vacancies are in the less desirable schools:

> It is hard as a first year teacher, to get into a really good place, but that is where we have our student teaching experiences. Because as a college, you don't want to send your student teachers into awful schools because then they won't want to be a teacher. They are gonna say this sucks and I don't want to do this. And they are going to leave the profession when they are really, really good teachers. So, I think if we could somehow expose student teachers to that without disheartening them and I don't know if that is possible, because that was really disheartening, but it made me stronger.

Holly's first experience teaching made her more determined and solidified her passion for what she does in a classroom and not to "let that one experience ruin this for me."

At the end of her first year in the neighboring district, Holly knew she had to make some changes. She applied in the district which is home to CHS and fortunately, there was a math teaching position open. She never interviewed for her job at CHS. Ms. Laney told the principal that she wanted Holly and the principal agreed. She was offered the job teaching Math Models and Pre-AP Calculus. This school year, Holly wrote the entire curriculum for her Math Models class due to the way the class was established (students/objectives). This class was designed for students who had trouble passing the state exam or need extra support for their traditional math class.

Holly elaborated in her interview about learning behavior from her Math Models class and is able to succinctly define the relationship between student teaching and success later in the classroom. Holly believes it was the hands-on application of the experiences that cannot be

explained in a college classroom or textbook. “Some book is not going to help you figure out how to manage thirty kids. A book cannot tell you how to get thirty kids to sit down and be quiet.” Simply, Holly believes the student teaching experience teaches all the hands-on strategies teachers need. “Behavior is not just about the classroom.” Holly described the varying behavior of a student because of their personal life: “Really taking that [a student’s personal life] into account and being open to listening to them makes an entirely different atmosphere in your classroom.” Holly understands that her students come from all walks of life and while she does not allow that to be an excuse for not doing homework, she understands that the students have basic needs, and these “feed into classroom management of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and we can only achieve the higher levels once we satisfy the basic needs.”

Holly said this behavior was modeled for her during her student teaching and she learned early on to listen to her students.

> A lot of times, I think the students feel like teachers don’t listen or just don’t care, but when you listen to them, you can really discover students’ fears. Once they know you care, they are very honest with you.

Holly related that when she got to know her students, they were able to open up to her and tell her their struggles. For example, Holly told an anecdote about one of her students who was continuously falling asleep in class. Holly discovered he was working a full-time job at night to help his parents support him and his six siblings.

> No wonder he didn’t get his homework done and fell asleep in class. I can’t tell him not to do homework or that homework is more important than his job which helps pay the bills. But I was willing to work with that and not sacrifice the education.

Holly provided a path for him to be successful as she allowed him extra time on the assignment as well as taking a quick nap in class. Holly believes once he saw the compassion from her it

made him better behaved in the class. “They see your flexibility you have with them and it makes them want to have flexibility with you.”

Holly was able to integrate technology utilizing the TI nSpire (Texas Instruments Calculator) and software in her class during student teaching. Ms. Laney commented, “Holly has been great in helping to use technology in developing lessons and presentations.” This was one area that Holly has not been able to bridge to her classroom today due to the lack of the technology set-up in her classroom. In student teaching, she accessed this technology to have instantaneous results for student feedback during lessons and quizzes.

Stress in the Classroom

Holly said her stress level has risen since getting a job because she is doing more and does not have the safety net of her cooperating teachers. Holly occasionally relied on Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster to grade a stack of quizzes, if necessary. However, her stress level from her first to second year has decreased tremendously as the first year was the hardest and she was not in a great situation. She said, “In your first year, you make a jillion mistakes and you learn. Your second year, you only make half a jillion. But for me, my stress level has dropped.” While her stress level was decreasing, her confidence level was increasing. Her first two years in the classroom have prepared her for a variety of situations and given her a strong knowledge base.

Success for the Classroom

Holly says the number one skill needed for success as a beginning teacher is organization. She said it is necessary to know where students should turn in work, file absentee work, organization for setting up a classroom, who to go to for help like when your computer is

on the fritz, how to communicate to students, and how to create a system that is best for you. She added, "It is all organization that you have to do six things at once and six different ways."

While Holly had a positive experience, she was honest in her assessment that student teaching could not fully prepare her for teaching.

> I don't think it is any fault of my cooperating teachers or any fault of mine. I think it prepared me 90% and that 10% you can't learn from a book or student teaching--because the 10% is truly when you are completely and fully on your own.

She believes her experience prepared her the best it could; however, it is impossible to cover everything in 12 weeks that a teacher will need. Holly credits her cooperating teachers for her success. Holly's job satisfaction was high during her student teaching and it dropped her first year and has steadily increased her second year. "I was lucky enough to be able to come back to CHS and my satisfaction has gone up a thousand times."

Holly has rekindled her professional camaraderie with her supervising teachers, Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster. She reached out to them for professional support as they have been able to communicate and relate to her as a colleague. She says her family and friends have been supportive, but because they are not teachers, they do not understand her struggles firsthand.

Moving Forward

Holly says she has learned a lot but still has much to learn. "I want to know how I can take my experiences and how I can help myself, but how can I help my students and help other teachers. After having such a terrible first year of teaching, I want to prepare others for that."

Holly's message would be for new teachers not to lose heart because it does get better and is worth the end goal of having your own classroom. "I want to continue to move forward and push myself to new levels." She believes that student teaching is the best thing that colleges

can do to prepare teachers and firmly believes the textbooks in education do not make a difference. Her suggestion to improve the experience would be to extend the experience. She wished the student teaching experience began earlier or lasted longer. She understands it is difficult to get a teacher in a classroom for an entire year, but she learned most from the hands-on applications. Holly says real teaching cannot be explained or learned in a textbook: "Student teaching is the foundation of teaching."

In closing, Holly's message was simple: "It is all about the relationship you have with your kids because if you do not have relationships with your students, you cannot teach them. I truly believe that to my core." Holly says she has had students tell her the only reason they come to school is because they like her or like her class. That makes her feel like she has achieved a major victory with them. She believes new and veteran teachers need to understand the crucial impact relationships play in building success. "If you don't care, get out, because we don't need that and neither do the kids."

Cindy, Social Studies Teacher

Cindy is a second year social studies teacher. She performed her student teaching at the same school, CHS where she is now employed.

Cindy and Mr. Jones

For Cindy's student teaching experience, she was able to select her supervising teacher, Mr. Jones. She met him during her earlier classroom observations and thought that he would be a good fit for her student teaching experience. Cindy liked Mr. Jones's enthusiasm for the subject and animation in class. "He had great control of his class and it seemed like he was someone I could learn a lot from about teaching history." During the first week of her 12-week experience,

she observed him for all six of his classes (five Pre AP World Geography and one grade level World Geography). She observed him as he taught, learned the classroom procedures, and learned the names of the students. On the second week of student teaching, he turned his classes over to her. She said that he would occasionally pop in and watch her teach, but he spent most of his time in the library. She did not know it at the time, but he was preparing for an exit from the classroom as he was working towards a principal certification. She said they would meet at the beginning of the week to plan the lesson and to address any concerns she had. Cindy reported that during her student teaching she could rely on his lessons, PowerPoint presentations, and materials that he received from another teacher, Mrs. McCormick. These were not Mr. Jones's creations, but that of another teacher. Mr. Jones noted in one of his weekly observational reports that Cindy needed to become more "fluid with lectures and use the ancillary material more." When I asked Cindy about the lesson planning, she said that Mr. Jones did not require her to turn them in, but her supervising professor at the university did. She met with Mr. Jones every week to go over the "game plan" but he did not instruct her on how to construct a well-developed lesson plan or unit. He noted she needed to take the initiative to plan out lessons and to "use the internet and websites to gather current event issues that can be used in the classroom." Other comments included that she was good with discipline and rapport with the students as she could easily connect with the students. He also thanked her on the weekly evaluation for finalizing grades for the report card.

The supervising professor, Mr. Allison, from the university gave her feedback during his four visits to CHS.

> When he came to observe my class, he would have a lot of positive feedback for me. He would make suggestions like making sure the objective was on the board, placing desks in ways conducive for cooperative learning, and things that he

> thought would make the class run smoother. This feedback was nice because my cooperating teacher [Mr. Jones] wasn't giving me the constructive feedback I needed in order to improve. He just told me I was doing great every week, even though he didn't watch me.

Mr. Jones's observations included positive remarks on connecting with students, monitoring students during note taking, students' engagement, excellent lesson plans, and she was able to connect the learning to the previous day's lesson. He also praised her for getting the reluctant students to answer and share questions during a discussion through "appropriate questioning and inquiry." Mr. Jones noted during one observation that her lesson was very student-centered and he praised her for being able to link the geography lesson to modern day current events. His coaching points for Cindy mentioned teaching bell-to-bell, not allowing students to talk during school announcements, and her pacing of the Power-Point presentation.

Learning from tough situations

Sometimes, a negative situation produces a positive result, as was the case with Cindy. She described this experience as a horrible event, but it truly has stayed with her as she has been in the classroom. One morning, Cindy went to Mr. Jones and told him she was not ready for the lesson on the physical geography of Africa. She described her predicament: "I knew the information but didn't have a PowerPoint to go along with it; I could stand and talk about the information and use a map, but I didn't have a visual for the students." She had perused the material he had given her, yet she did not find anything suitable to aid in the lesson. When she approached him, he condescendingly lectured her on the importance of being prepared. Cindy described:

> This was horrible — I felt so bad because he was right but I just didn't see anything he had given me and I didn't know what to do. And he yelled at me! Therefore, this made me prepare every day.

Cindy hated the feeling that she had disappointed Mr. Jones as well as herself. She said it was not like her to just simply not prepare for something. She simply did not know what to do because this presentation was missing from his materials and she was unsure on how she was to proceed.

Another lesson Cindy learned involved discipline and classroom management. Cindy said that as she observed Mr. Jones's discipline, she honestly did not like his style. She said that he was a "yeller" and had "beaten the kids into submission." By the time she arrived to do her student teaching, she did not have any issues or discipline problems. Because he had left her on her own after about a week, she just "winged it." She observed him for a week; she watched how he ran the class and got an idea of what she would be teaching. After a week, the classes became hers. However, Mr. Jones did not involve himself with her actual teaching. She said that his students liked having Cindy at the helm. As she says, "They probably liked the fact I didn't yell at them."

Cindy and her first job

Due to the large increase of student enrollment, Cindy was hired at CHS in October 2012. She began her first year of teaching during the beginning of the second six weeks of the school year. She was assigned to teach AP U.S. History, Pre AP World Geography, and English I Honors. For her second year, her class preparation changed and she was strictly teaching social studies subjects: AP U.S. History, AP World Geography, and grade level World Geography.

When asked about her success as a new teacher, Cindy related that she has had strong support from her department head and department in general. She said the school has talented teachers and they were willing to help along the way in a variety of manners.

Content Knowledge

One of the areas Cindy has struggled with as a new teacher was subject content. Due to the wide array of Social Studies curriculum, Cindy was teaching World Geography and American History. She added that while she was a history major, she never had any geography classes per se. Therefore, she spent much of her time now preparing lessons as she honed her own skills and knowledge in order to better serve and teach her students. "In college, I learned about geography, but nowhere did I study the terrain of Africa and its major crops." Her Social Studies Composite Certification allowed her to teach a variety of subjects including United States History, World History, and Geography.

AP Rigor

Teaching AP classes was something new for Cindy as well. In her student teaching, only one class was on grade-level and all other classes were advanced placement (AP). She said she had not been familiar with the demands and rigor of an AP class. Cindy explained, "I really didn't understand what it meant to be preparing these kids for AP classes and exams, as well as grasping all the content that I was supposed to know."

One of the continual stressors that Cindy reflected upon is how much the students were learning in preparation for their AP exams. She mentioned that she anticipated having high scores (AP scores of 3s, 4s, and 5s), but she is not sure if her scores will be high because of the group of students she has or if it is because of her teaching. She says that she reflected upon her own teaching and wondered if the kids were learning what they needed in order to succeed on these exams.

Job satisfaction

Cindy said that her job satisfaction has changed since her student teaching. She felt more comfortable and was building stronger relationships with her students and colleagues. She was happy at her school today and realized that her student teaching experience may not have been the bright shining moment in her career but was glad things occurred like they did to get her to the place she is now. She has learned to rely on friends and colleagues for support and her department lead to help mentor her through aspects of curriculum and classroom management. "The social studies lead teacher has taken me under her wing and has great confidence in my abilities and it is great to have someone who thinks that highly of me!"

Most needed skills

Cindy stated that strong communication skills are one of the essentials needed by a successful teacher. "Knowing how to communicate adequately with the students, parents, and faculty is something every teacher needs. Teachers also need to know how to ask for help when they need it." Cindy elaborated that at times she felt bad asking fellow teachers for help because they had their own classrooms and students, but during her second year, she had gone to colleagues to talk her through situations and ask for feedback. "I was scared of getting in trouble last year. I found a support system and utilize it is important and I have used it this year." Cindy understood that certain aspects of her job will continue to become easier as she teaches. "I've heard that the third year is the golden year."

Bridging Student Teaching to Initial Years of Teaching

"My cooperating teacher was—the best way I can put it—harsh, but he supported me. His personality was harsh and then he cut me off and let me go." Cindy said that this style worked better for her than having someone hover over her and micromanage her every move. "I have

heard that some teachers didn't want to give up the reins and they had a tougher time transitioning to their own class. He threw me in the water and hoped I would swim."

When asked what would have made the student teaching experience more effective, Cindy said it would be beneficial to give student teachers more responsibilities. She said she would have welcomed the challenges. When asked about nuances of the real job compared to her student teaching experience, Cindy did not realize how crucial time management would be:

> It was strongly suggested that I become a coach and it has been a tremendous amount of more responsibility on top of the classes I was doing. I didn't know it would be pushed as much as it is here [at CHS].

Another aspect of the job to which Cindy has had to adjust is the relationship part of being a young teacher working with high school students:

> It was a learning curve to be a young girl in a classroom taking over for a 40-year-old man. And trying to figure out how to approach relationships while letting them know I am not their friend, but their teacher and superior. I am here to teach them. That was a learning curve.

I asked Cindy if working with this particular teacher benefited her, she replied, "Well, he got me a job." Cindy believed his style of management worked best for her because of her own drive. Cindy added that his approach of letting her do her own thing really helped her determine how to become a good teacher.

Cindy said she always prepares each afternoon for the lesson the next day. Her instance of Mr. Jones yelling at her made a lasting impression. While this lesson was not academic, curriculum based, or rooted in classroom management, the transfer of this incident is long lasting. Cindy does not want to feel this unprepared ever again. She said:

> I don't want to portray him in a negative light at all. It wasn't a total negative experience—there were things I wish were a little different. Like if he had

> checked in more often. I don't think he gave me full honest evaluations because he didn't want to take the time—looking back, he portrayed me as an excellent teacher. I feel I was good, but not excellent.

I asked Cindy about learning classroom management from Mr. Jones and she said that she learned she did not want to be constantly yelling at the students. Mr. Jones used yelling to settle the students and did not employ other discipline tactics to quiet the students. Cindy said she does not like to yell, so she has used other methods to settle students.

Cindy has been able to utilize curriculum lessons that she received during her student teaching for her classes now. The lessons that she received from the other teacher have helped her in her current teaching situation. While Mr. Jones did assist Cindy in helping her learn her content, she did not really learn anything about writing lesson plans or planning a unit. She said that Mr. Jones used a lot of worksheets for his students and, according to Cindy, "Freshmen don't like worksheets."

Lastly, when asked if student teaching prepared her for running her own classroom, Cindy said she did not know. She added:

> I think that is like asking, did your education classes prepare you to be a teacher? I really don't know what a solution would be.…A true issue with education is everything is all theoretical until you are thrown into then it is like, oh, I have the responsibility of 100-150 students and I have to make sure they learn from A to Z and that they are prepared for life. I don't think that is anything you can grasp from student teaching and that is truly how much responsibility you really have until it is your own classroom. However, once it is your own classroom, you start to get a feel for it.

I asked Cindy if there was anything she still wanted to learn and she said she would like to have a stronger grasp of her content and time management in her grading of AP essays. At the end of the interview, Cindy added that she was not sure if student teaching could ever adequately prepare someone to be on his own in the classroom, but she hoped that other future teachers have

experiences like hers because she got lucky with the end result. As she said, "I think if you are really supposed to be in this profession, you will get the hang of it. It might take a couple of years, but I feel better every semester."

Steven, English Teacher

Like Holly and Cindy, Steven, fulfilled his 12-week student teaching experience at CHS. His first job after graduation was in a neighboring school district teaching 8th grade English. For his second year as a teacher, he had the opportunity to return to the high school level and teach English II and AP English IV.

Steven and Dr. Bonilla

Steven's supervising teacher at CHS was Dr. Bonilla, a former college English professor turned high school English teacher. Steven selected CHS as his student teaching locale due to the location as it was close to campus and his residence. He originally had been assigned to a different teacher, Ms. Gonzalez, the head of the English department, but Dr. Bonilla was interested in working with a young teacher and the assignment was switched. Steven said he saw a little how the process worked this school year as the English department lead teachers were placing student teachers and they eliminated teachers by current stressors and coaching responsibilities. He said the process was informal.

Learning from Tough Situations

Steven's teaching assignments consisted of AP English III and AP English V classes. Due to the student enrollment, classroom management was not something he had to learn during

his student teaching. His students were focused and driven about their academic performance. He did find himself in situations when he did not know what to do.

The first experience that Steven described to me that left a lasting impression about classroom management was a situation that occurred with an advanced Senior AP English V (AP Literature and Composition) class. He said they had successfully annotated a poem on blackberry picking. However, during his seventh period, he had allowed them too much time and when he asked for the meaning of the poem, a boy responded with "The poem is about sex!" He then continued to back his claim with text evidence from the poem. Steven said he was unprepared for the quick turn in the conversation and how, after that moment, he could not reel the conversation back to any other literary analysis. He said when he looked at his supervising teacher, she had her head in her hands and her neck was red. I asked if he had known the poem had sexual references and he said no. Steven said he tried to push on to another part of the poem, but the students were acting too silly to move on. This was a lesson learned in the pacing of the class.

The second situation involved cheating by advanced placement students. He discovered the first instance when he was grading quizzes that two students had the same wrong answers on the same question. Steven broached the subject with Dr. Bonilla and asked her how to proceed and she immediately handled the situation. She pulled the students out into the hallway and told them what she discovered and how it looked to her. The kids, of course, swore that they had not cheated but had studied together the night before which is why their answers aligned with one another. In the second case, Steven and Dr. Bonilla discovered that a student had accessed her phone during a timed writing and copied verbatim an essay from the internet. This situation quickly involved the office and her parents. The student failed the essay and in future writings,

had to turn her phone into Steven and Dr. Bonilla for the duration of class to ensure integrity of her writing.

One of the stressors for Steven came during the same seventh period class (mentioned earlier). He described the class as a bunch of "goofy, yet brilliant kids who knew they could be a handful." He found the content in the AP class to be challenging, yet he enjoyed the rigor. The students disagreed with one of the answers on a multiple choice assignment. The students debated the difference between synecdoche and autonomy. Steven said he did not agree with the answer in the book either, and it actually turned into a positive lesson:

> It was a hard place to get to and I was unfamiliar with the difference between the two and getting caught in the middle of the discussion—I had to explain it to them and understand it myself before I could really explain it to them. It was stressful. By the end, we got there and I think it really—maybe—the part I had going for me that helped us get there was I was young and friendly…they were willing to work it out with me and not just expecting the answers.

Learning to write well-developed lesson plans was not something Steven learned from his supervising teacher. Steven said he kept lesson plans to turn in because CHS made it mandatory that all teachers turn in plans to the office for filing purposes. Ironically, demonstrating the formality of writing lesson plans was something that Steven was able to teach Dr. Bonilla about because she had been a college English professor and did not write formal plans for college classes. Steven said he would meet with her daily, but plan for the lessons once a week. They tried to stay a week ahead of the students. According to his student teaching documents, his lesson plans included detailed weekly and daily objectives, anticipatory set, small group activities, and whole class activities, as well as detailing questions for checking for understanding and a closing activity for each week. His Power-Point presentation on "Perrine's

Poetry" demonstrated a complex lesson and simplified the material for his students, utilizing their vernacular.

Steven described the format he and Dr. Bonilla followed as they made out their lesson plans:

> We used a calendar and would [determine] we need to cover this poem on these two days and this short story and this day is blank and we could do whatever. We just sort of blocked it out. We said these are the mandatory things we need to cover [then] I filled in little pieces and wrote up lesson plans based on what we were covering.

Content Knowledge

Steven said that working with Dr. Bonilla benefitted him and he learned from her. He described her as "pedagogically sound. She was very helpful as he created lesson and allowed him to try new things. But she knew tricks because she "could quickly think on her feet and could fix a problem." He said a few times during lessons he did have to return to some of his college notes. He was able to utilize poems and stories he was familiar with and bring those into the classroom during the open days on the lesson calendar.

AP Rigor

I asked Steven if he learned higher questioning strategies from Dr. Bonilla to help with the AP classes. He said that after teaching a lesson, if he was unsure about how things had progressed, he would ask her and she would give him feedback before the next class period and as to how he could make it more meaningful for the students. One of the small morning classes was struggling with meaningful dialogue. She suggested they might talk in partners and then share with the class:

> It is the THINK-PAIR-SHARE which I had done before at [the university] with professors, but I had forgotten about it. I had never put it into place and never thought it would happen in an AP class and that they would need that support...

Steven was unsure if the early morning, his lack of experience leading classroom discussions, or just the dynamics of the students made class discussions difficult and slow-moving. But this simple strategy resulted in good dialogue among the students:

> There were times where I was speaking too much in AP Lit and she had a better way of phrasing the questions to try and get them where I wanted to go. I could correct my line of questioning and get them where I needed them to go.

According to Steven, Dr. Bonilla had great methods for phrasing the questions and to trying to get the students to arrive at the answers she wanted them to discover through her line of inquiry. Steven utilized the university guidelines per their instructions as he transitioned into and out of teaching. He began teaching one class and gradually added more as the weeks progressed and finally, for two weeks, he taught all six sections (classes). He then began handing the classes back off to her.

Dr. Bonilla also gave Steven ideas for activities for lessons, such as the THINK-PAIR-SHARE model. He said he also learned from Dr. Bonilla the technique of letting students share authentic and personal writing as he has looked for opportunities in both years of teaching to incorporate this into his lessons.

Steven and Initial Job

Stress level, questioning the profession, and later success

Steven shared that his student teaching experiences went fairly well. It was not until his first year of teaching that he questioned his choice of profession as he was working his first job in a neighboring district, teaching middle school English. His new school had a different

population than what he had student taught. CHS is predominately Hispanic but has a large population of AP learners as it is a School of Choice. He said that at his first job, the school served mostly African American students and he said he encountered much drama probably because he was a "straight, white, Christian male" and he did not enjoy the drama and antics of middle school students. "They seem to make fun of each other a lot and I didn't like that, so I tried to nip it in the bud a lot, but it became a constant battle all year and that is not the age group for me." Steven said that teaching now at the high school level is a much better fit for him.

In another instance, he said two male students about to engage in a fight and he stepped in-between the two students. They had the attention of the entire class and neither boy wanted to throw the first punch. However, they were yelling and mouthing at each other and Steven was finally able to coerce one into leaving the class for a sip of water. He then sent the second student to the office. When the first student returned, he was sent to the office as well. "It was that kind of pure testosterone and hormonal silliness of fighting that made me realize I didn't want to be a part of it any longer."

His success as a second year teacher is partially due to his failure as a first year teacher when he was teaching eighth grade English. He shared he had a lot of lessons that he thought would work, however they were "way over the students' heads." Even this year, Steven attempted to read *The Flea* by John Donne, but the antiquated language was too much for the students and they struggled with it and they never connected with it at all. "Some failures are good to learn from."

I asked Steven what has made him successful and he was not quite sure, but then he referenced his ability to move away from what other teachers are doing and how they teach. He

said he does not try to emulate other teacher's lessons or activities. He said, "What has made me successful is going to what I know and what I can explain and being able to go to my lead content teachers when I don't fully understand something."

Steven honed his skills on teaching the content essentials. His knowledge of poems and literature content has improved, but he has struggled with teaching persuasive writing. The second time teaching this unit, he relied on help from a colleague to gain new insight into teaching strategies. He has had to learn about the AP exam in order to help his students understand rhetorical devices and essay writing.

Building the bridge from student teaching to initial years of experience

When questioned about what particular skills he honed during the student teaching experience, he said he learned about time management and balance. Balancing university classes, working a job as an intramural referee, making time for friends, making time for a girlfriend, grading papers, and planning lessons took a toll on his free time. Steven had to learn to divide time among friends and work.

Steven said a crucial link between the student teaching experience and his initial years of teaching were the ideas that sometimes his explanations may vary from student to student:

> I think finding different ways to explain [topics] because some things make sense to me and I can understand it from a textbook; I can understand it from talking to a professor or a teacher can explain it well. But every explanation I understand—this may not work for every person in the room.

As a teacher, Steven understood that different students need different explanations. He said that became evident this skill was essential early on in his teaching career.

Steven watched her interactions and learned from Dr. Bonilla. “Watching her explain things and be firm. And, hearing her understanding [of topics] was really great to learn from.” Classroom pacing was a skill Steven was able to model after Dr. Bonilla’s style. He explained, “Her class was very structured and I am ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and part of my coping mechanism are nice routines. It was nice to have a two-week schedule.” While Steven learned this, he said he has trouble re-creating it in his own classroom. “That was nice to see we could something like our schedule on paper. We planned like every other week and still get have flexibility. So, I liked it, but I haven’t been able to re-create it yet.”

One skill Steven can directly relate to his student teaching experience is his skill in interpreting and teaching poems. He cited the poem on blackberry picking and the student’s interpretation of sexual innuendo as an important learning moment:

> Now, when students bring up sex in a poem or book, we don’t shy away from it. Just like in *Brave New World* by George Orwell, which is all about sex and relationships—so being able to talk about it comfortably without allowing students an opportunity to be crude or disrespectful is important. I was caught off guard in student teaching and now I know how to help the students keep the conversation appropriate. It was a good, possible interpretation, but I was not ready for it at the time.

Steven relied upon his student teaching experience to help make the decision to change schools and grade levels after his first year in the neighboring district. He was extremely unhappy and struggled to connect with his students. He remembered how good things had been at CHS teaching AP high school students. He remembered his successes and knew he had to pick up the pieces and make lessons work. “I do have a good experience to fall back on with Dr. Bonilla. If I had not had that, things could have easily gone awry.”

Steven said student teaching helps give future teachers a “little taste of different things.” He wishes he had been able to do some work in on-level or remedial classes as to see how the

dynamics of those classes function. In his opinion, teachers need to be comfortable talking to parents and defending their positions as sometimes teachers need to explain situations to parents or the Principal. He said parents claim they are inquisitive, but they can put a teacher on the spot and "you are all alone and need to defend yourself."

He said his stress level has changed dramatically since student teaching. His stress level hit an all-time high when he was in the neighboring district but enjoys his position now back at CHS. He said he tries to use his spare time after school to decompress and reflect upon things and improve. When asked if his confidence level has changed, he said, "Yes, because experience is a great thing. I may have failed a few times with lessons, but have been able to change those times, but no one has fired me yet!"

When asked what would make the student teaching experience more beneficial for future teachers, Steven suggested that a wider array of classes might be helpful. He was only in AP classes and in his current job, he teaches both on-level and AP. Steven said the classes have had different issues and concerns. Steven said that in his grade-level classes, when he called parents, he does so because their child hasn't been to class or has a "13 average because only one assignment has been turned in or their kid cussed someone out in class." However, in AP classes parents want reasoning and justification for grades.

Steven said that student teaching did not fully prepare him for the rigors of the job. He said he missed out on some of the other tasks teachers typically perform in the course of the day. But, he knows there is no way in student teaching "you are going to see everything." He honestly said he missed the discipline aspect because he was in all AP classes and having some training in this area would have benefitted him during his first job.

Lastly, having a supportive administrative team has been beneficial. Relying on teachers who teach the same content and “having them available” to help think ideas and lessons through has been a big help. He liked having a team he can “run ideas” by when necessary.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: ACTUAL TEACHING, OBSERVATIONS, AND ANALYSES

This research project included three one-hour observations in the participants' classrooms, watching them teach while utilizing the adapted checklist from Zemelman et al (2012). The second step was to create the participants' student teaching stories and their new-to-profession stories while supplementing them with observational data from their university professor and supervising teachers. Throughout the process, themes were revealed. I linked and conducted cross-case analyses among the teachers and their data. Triangulating data from multiple sources reinforced the evidence and findings. Included in this chapter are data from classroom observations and the participants' annual appraisal documents. While chapter IV primarily used their interviews to construct their stories, some of the conversation is relevant to this chapter. These pieces of information pertain to their current teaching. Essentially, who are they as teachers today? Their skills and attitudes in the class were influenced by their student teaching experiences and their first year in the classroom.

Chapter IV revealed the student teaching stories of the study participants as well as the struggles and successes of the first and second years of actual teaching. Observations occurred at the end of their second year of full time teaching. Through cross analyses of information, the data revealed all three teachers are more comfortable and confident at the end of their second year of teaching than they were during their student teaching. The findings among the three teachers revealed overlapping themes, yet the three have had unique experiences. More importantly, different aspects of each student teaching experience influenced their teaching practices and attitudes today.

To understand what the teachers were communicating via their stories, I created individual graphic organizers that began from the same starting point: student teaching. From there, similarities and variances among their stories were mapped. These were particularly helpful as I linked and coded their findings from the multiple sources, including the initial questionnaire, interview, follow-up questions, member checks, observational data, appraisal instruments, and various student teaching documents, including observations from college supervisors and supervising classroom teachers.

Holly

Observations of Holly's teaching included spending time in both Math Models and Pre-Calculus classes. Student desks were arranged in clusters with the Promethean Board at the front of the classroom. Her room was decorated with college and CHS posters, pictures, and as well as whimsical items. On the final classroom visit (which marked the last six weeks of the school year), Holly had changed one of her bulletin boards to photocopied pages of Dr. Seuss's *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* as a tribute to the graduating seniors in her classes. No student work was posted outside her class as she was in a portable building and it was physically impossible to do so. Grades were posted using the students' school ID numbers. Her class rules and procedures were prominent, located by the door for students and visitors to see upon entering the classroom. The posting read*: 1. Be ready; 2. Be Respectful; 3. Be Responsible; and 4. Follow All CHS Rules.* One of the criteria on the classroom checklist (see Appendix G) involved the classroom atmosphere. This was the case with Holly's classroom as it was warm and inviting and her demeanor was positive, fair, caring, and respectful according to the adapted checklist from Zemelman et al (2012).

At the beginning of each class period, the bell-ringer or warm-up activity was on the Promethean Board and calculators were on the desks for students. The students knew the protocol as they walked into the class. Students knew where to grab the day's assignment and began to work when the bell rang. Holly held the door open and greeted students at the door. As they walked in, she directed them to get their "packet" out from the day before. The first few minutes of class included greeting students, taking role, students turning in homework from the day before, and going over the plan for the week. Some students quietly asked neighbors for help and Holly walked around the room monitoring their progress. Even when a student was tardy to class, she greeted them personally with a smile and a warm hello.

Lesson Planning and Actual Teaching

Holly used a six weeks calendar to map and plan the lessons she needed to cover for Math Models. She said there was not a scripted curriculum, district curriculum, or Scope and Sequence to use for creating lessons. As mentioned in Chapter IV, she wrote her own lessons for this class. The Math Models class is comprised of students who failed the TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the previous mandated state exam) and STAAR Algebra I EOC (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End of Course exam, the current state mandated exam) on earlier test administrations. Therefore, she was constantly changing the material and concepts needed based on student performance. Because the Math Models class did not have access to a class set of textbooks, everything the students received for notes and daily work was crafted by the teacher.

Almost four hours was spent in Holly's Math Models and Pre-Calculus classes watching her teach, interact, and work with students. During the lesson on the Promethean Board, students

listened and some jotted notes. When she asked one student to answer a question, she prompted on how to solve for X. He was able to solve the equation as he described the process of moving X's to one side. While not giving him the answer, she asked him questions that directed him towards the answer.

Holly tied the current lesson to the previous day's lesson, stressing the importance of analyzing their data from benchmark exams. Holly reminded the students that "data is a way of organizing information in order to make decisions." She was trying to show the students how to determine what topics and concepts they needed to cover in Math Models.

During a different lesson in Math Models on right triangles, Holly linked what they had studied and worked on the previous day as they discussed Pythagorean Theorem, sine, cosine, and tangent. She told the students it could be tough and intimidating, but they would solve the problems together. When one student was puzzled, she worked the problem and re-explained and asked him, "Now, do you know how to solve for X?" The student said, "Yeah, I can do that." She went to his desk and she showed him discreetly where he had missed a step (forgetting the importance of parenthesis while solving for X).

During another observation, she prompted the students to initiate a class discussion on congruent angles. One student responded, "It has something to do with relationships." She answered, "Yes, they have to add up to 180˚. Now, can we prove this?" Students began working and raising hands with answers as she walked around observing their work. She asked for a few "lucky ducks" to collect homework and turn it in to the basket.

Holly instructed students how to determine the lengths of sides on geometric shapes. It was during this conversational exchange that a student did not know how to label his figure.

Holly instructed him to "label what you know first" and then took him step-by-step through the equation. When he solved for *X*, Holly said, "You are a lot smarter than you give yourself credit for. I knew you could do it."

In recognition of one group solving a difficult problem, she held her hands in the air and said loudly, "Ta-Da!" as she reminded the class that "When you work as a team, it is easier!"

Classroom Management and Discipline

During one instance, a student was whispering to a classmate and without hesitation, Holly calmly said, "If all the lines are parallel, Robert, what do we do next?" Robert quickly looked up and immediately went back to his math. Another classroom situation arose when she was working with students to determine the hypotenuse of a triangle and one student, not realizing how loudly his voice would carry, said, "Oh, shit!" Holly looked up and said, "What?" and he quickly apologized to her and she moved right along with teaching. Holly did not exacerbate the situation about the student's language; she had the student's attention enough that he apologized on his own. Another instance involved a student on his cell phone during a lesson and she called out to him and asked him to give her the phone or quietly go to the office. He handed her the phone without incident. She returned it to him at the end of the class period with a reminder about focusing on math during class.

Lastly, a situation involved group work as students were instructed to work on questions with a partner. Knowing a student was spending too much time texting on his cell phone, she asked, "Parker, are you done?" He answered her, "Almost." She calmly and politely said, "Have you gone over your answers with your partner?" His response, "Uh, no." She then without

raising her voice said, “Well, let’s do math instead of spending time on the cell phone.” He quickly placed it in his pocket and returned to his math and partner.

Holy consistently addressed students by their name and when helping the students solve problems, she prompted them and led them to discover the answer themselves instead of giving them the solution outright.

Pacing

During each observation, Holly began class on time and taught from bell-to-bell each day. With seven minutes left in class, Holly reminded the students to transfer their answers to their answer documents and turn in their homework. Pacing is crucial during class. Holly modeled this as the students continued to work. As she observed students checking phones, she reminded them to “return to math.” She continuously actively monitored their work. Students were allowed to visit as much of their daily work was done with a partner or team. These observations allowed students a discreet opportunity to ask the teacher questions about homework. She paced the classwork at an interval where students could visit, yet they were focused on their work at hand. At one point, one group was stymied with a question and she pulled a chair up to be on their level and discuss the solution. As needed, she retaught problems, and shared the questions with the class. She pointed them in the direction of the answers. For example, Holly stated, “What does *adjacent* mean, can someone help Ruben?” A student responded, “It means to touch.” Holly smiled, nodded, and said, “Right, so, which adjacent angles touch? Use this (as she points to a poster) to set up your equation and look at your choices.”

After the bell rang, Holly reminded the students, “We need to work on our quizzes, let’s refocus. You have your notes, you have each other, and you have your teacher.”

One of the CHS’s goals is to incorporate more writing into all classes. Holly differentiated her math lesson by giving the students two minutes to write the steps on how to solve a problem and make it a short impromptu essay. This not only helped the students with their general writing skills, but it gave them an opportunity to reinforce the math lesson.

Building Relationships

Holly understands the struggles the Math Models students have had in their previous math classes and state exams. She said, “Many times they can solve the problem correctly, but because they didn’t set up the equation correctly, they get the wrong answer.” One of the ways Holly assisted her students was demonstrating to the students how to draw a picture and illustrate the problem —to “create a visual” for the math equation.

During one observation, Holly quietly and discreetly talked to a student about his failing grade in a different class. She encouraged him to complete any missing work and move towards passing. In another observation, a young girl asking her if she would write her a letter of recommendation for color guard. Holly said she would be happy to and quickly recorded it on her to-do calendar as not to forget.

Holly’s Official Evaluation

During her official appraisal document, her supervising administrator noted that her students were engaged, class was directed with a clear set of expectations, and she had clear goals and objectives posted. Her students began class on time as their warm-up was ready for them as they walked in the classroom. She utilized technology and even “jumped out of the box

showing the students a neat trick using their cell phones to assist in working the problem." Other comments included: walked around during monitoring, students, retaught learning as needed, reinforced learning and promoted "positive courteous feedback." Her supervising administrator noted that she handled a discipline issue appropriately. One of her strengths he pointed out, "[The] teacher kept students moving at the pace that she felt students needed to be due to time factors." He also praised her for her "excellent communication with all her students…clear expectations" and she is "aware of her students' needs in regard to performance." Her appraiser also recommended adding more critical thinking problems to the lesson plans, sending notes home to parents via students, and findings ways to help at risk learners. Holly's evaluator noted on her annual appraisal instrument that she knew her students well and has a "keen interest in their performance and attendance."

Another source of evidence (email from colleague) verified that Holly had a collegial spirit as she filled in for another class and volunteered her time to help. Specific aspects of Holly's student teaching in relationship to actual teaching is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Holly's Data Analyses

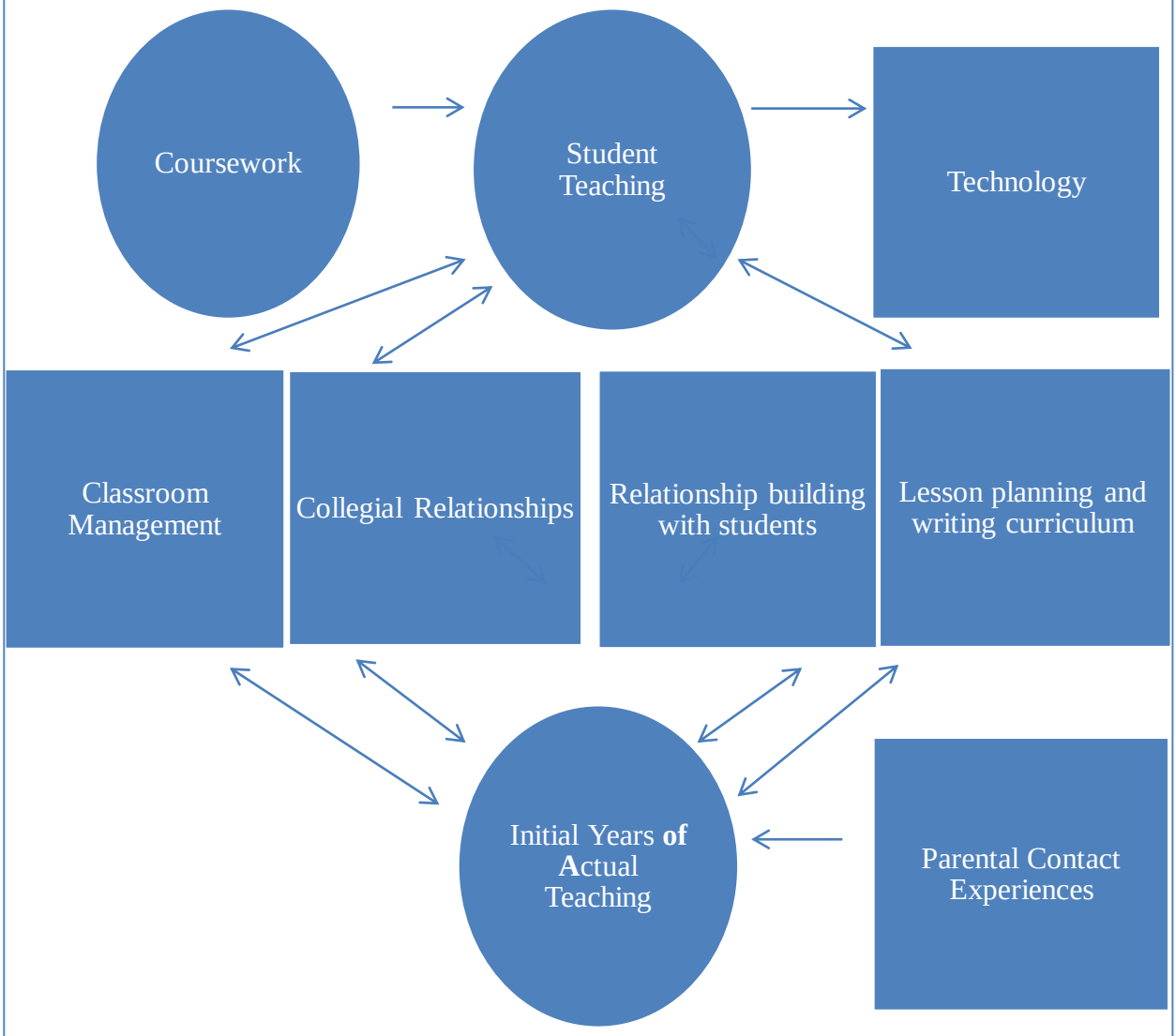


Figure 4. Participant flow chart detailing topics from student teaching connecting to actual teaching

Cindy

With four hours spent in Cindy's classroom, I discovered Cindy knows her geography facts and details well. The classroom was simple with large Texas and United States flags and World and United States topography maps on display. Her student desks were not clustered in small groups, but grouped into three large sections allowing all to see the Promethean Board from their seats. Cindy had her beginning class procedures in place because the students observed knew how to begin class. Cindy had a large array of topics to cover and teach in World Geography and AP U.S. History. Teaching the rigorous AP material required a factual, yet analytical approach. She displayed a friendly, warm, positive, and respectful demeanor across the observed classes, according to Appendix G (Zemelman, et al., 2012).

Primary Sources, Details, and Lectures

Cindy utilized an outline for the students to use as she walked them through the Power-Point which consisted of embedded maps, pictures, and video clips. Numerous modern day pictures, historic pictures, National Geographic videos, and History Channel video clips supported each lesson. Weekly and daily objectives were posted on the board. Observations included lectures and lessons on the U.S. in World War II, Myanmar, and reasons for the U.S. going to war (WWII).

Cindy noted in her interview that teaching the rigor of the AP program was a new challenge for her, as she was expected to have her students prepared for the exams each spring. On her appraisal document, her appraiser noted that she had instructional alignment and student engagement during her observed lesson. He also made note of her level of questioning on Bloom's Taxonomy at the comprehension level.

I also observed lessons on understanding President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the problems of the Great Depression as well as the changing role of the federal government. She utilized political cartoons, bar graphs, court cases, and an audio excerpt from a radio broadcast of a President Roosevelt speech. Students were able to group themselves with their friends and, she provided instant feedback on their questions and what they were learning.

Classroom Management

When students walked in and took their seats, Cindy reminded them to turn in work from the previous day. Their daily learning goal was on the board: U.S. Foreign Policy 1920-45 and U.S. Involvement in WWII. As the lecture began, one student offered the word, "xenophobic" as an addendum to a political cartoon and conversation on Hitler, Nazis, and Germany. This lecture included details on Germany's plan to rebuild their economy after WWI. Cindy responded with, "Good word! What does that mean?" The student explained the definition to the class. Cindy then led a group discussion on the reasons Great Britain perceived itself as a power-house at the start of WWII. At one point, several boys began giggling and Cindy redirected them, remarking, "The giggling can stop." The boys settled down and refocused on the topic at hand. One student helped explain the perceived power of Great Britain and their Navy and Air Force. Cindy related the strategy of the war and countries to the game of Battleship as she explained the size of the militaries. At one point, a maintenance worker was on the roof which is visible from Cindy's classroom windows. Students were enthralled with someone being outside on the roof of the school. Cindy quickly peeked out the window and said, "Ok, guys, he's just working. Let's refocus!"

During another classroom observation (grade-level), the students became more lively, energetic, and talkative. One student was consistently visiting with a neighbor, but Cindy shut it down immediately. Three boys were constantly checking phones while she passed out work. When she began the lecture on Foreign Policy 1920-45, she reminded students to put away phones. As the lecture on the United States' involvement in WWII continued, students became more animated to discuss as a whole. One student tried to even make a correlation between the United States and the Justice League as a descriptor for the Allied Forces. The students remained talkative and after the bell rings, Cindy apologized to me for their poor behavior. I told her it was my job as a researcher to simply watch her class and she did not need to apologize.

During other classroom observations, Cindy taught bell-to-bell and students knew when she began discussing the topic of the day that their private conversations ended. Cindy shared in between classes that student apathy and bad habits were some of the problems she encountered. When the next class period arrived, she waited until the bell rang, everyone was seated, and she lectured the students on skipping class. She told them there was too much work to be done in the three weeks remaining before the AP Exam, therefore, she needed everyone to be present and ready to work every day. She added, "Class is too important to miss."

Cindy's Appraisal Information

Her official evaluation for the school year was utilized to strengthen the findings of this study. This personal document noted that her students were engaged, her classroom was learner-centered, and she actively monitored her students and gave appropriate feedback. During her annual appraisal observation, her appraiser noted she had proper management of time and was polite and friendly with faculty and students. Some of her noted strengths included students

knew the expectations; she clearly defined their lesson for the day as she provided a rubric for an ongoing project; and when an incident arose with a student, she was able to redirect him and appropriately handle the situation. Specific aspects of Cindy's student teaching in relationship to actual teaching is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Cindy's Data Analyses

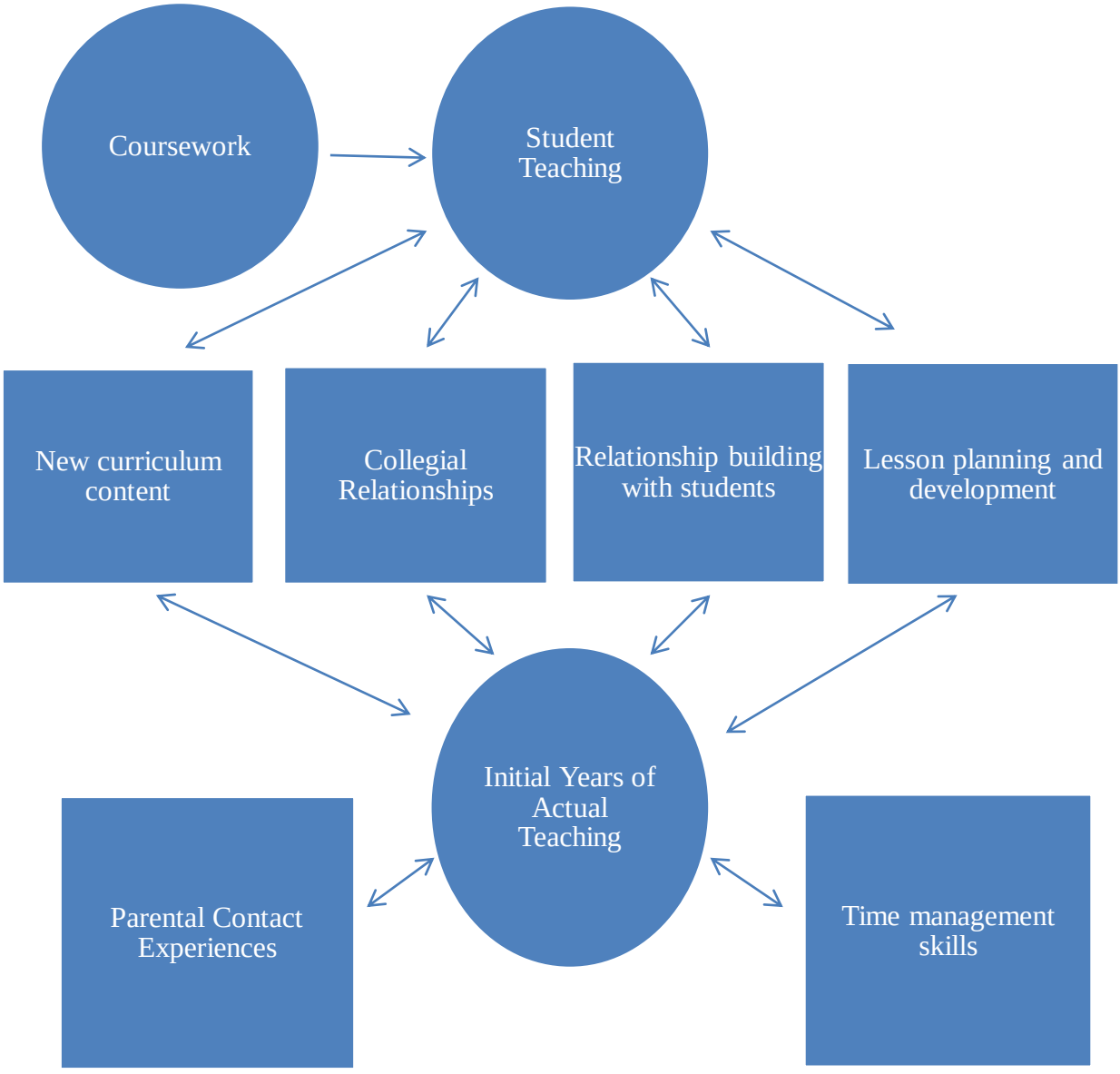


Figure 5: Participant flow chart detailing topics from student teaching connecting to actual teaching

Steven

Steven's room was void of commercial or school spirit decorations. He used his Promethean Board for lecture notes and outlines. Desks were arranged with half on each side of the room facing each other. Steven's room was plain and lacked curriculum decorations and classroom rules. Students were friendly as they entered and left the classroom with congenial greetings such as, "Hey, Mr. G!" While his lesson plans were not detailed, they did outline his lesson for the week and included some high-level questioning strategies and assessments in his activities. These were debating and proving the author's purpose in selected texts.

Steven had a strong rapport with his students. This was evidenced through the classroom discussions about their selected texts and the students' opinions on the material. Steven listened to the students' analyses on the selected texts and expounded on each point made. Two days each week, students come into Steven's class to play board games during their lunch periods. I was able to witness this as one day of observations was before and after the lunch period. Steven and his students placed the desks together to create a larger table and played games and chatted during lunch.

Classroom Observations

I spent four hours in Steven's classroom over the course of three visits and observed both grade level and AP classes. He utilized the Promethean Board for technology and for students to follow along as he used graphic organizers and notes. One classroom discussion over *Brave New World* by George Orwell became lively and entertaining as the students were able to explain the theme of government control.

As Steven and his students continued to discuss the theme of the novel: What forges the connection as the characters go through personal struggle? One student answered, "It is like a chain reaction," and he continued to compare it to Shakespeare and the emotions of dynamic characters. They discussed dynamic and static characters from the novel. Steven used a scene from the movie, *Silence of the Lambs* where Dr. Hannibal Lecter and Clarice touched fingers by accident and the physical emotions that are associated with touch. Steven also elaborated on the subjects of heretics and what religions push as beliefs as another theme of the novel. It was at this time during the lecture that a student was redirected because he was playing games on his phone. Steven told him to put his phone away and the student did so immediately. Students continued to raise hands to voice their opinions on the text. Students used words and phrases including "direct anger," "power," and "using him" to discuss the three appeals of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Steven continued to lead the discussion about "judging them harshly" and the author's style and meaning. They discussed the ideas as they related to the theme and the assembly line mentality of conditioning, intellect, and creating a fear of questioning authority of the book.

During another observation, Steven began class with a quiz and walked around actively monitoring the students during the exam. As he distributed the exam, Steven joked with his students, noting he wanted them to do their best on their test. "You better not fail me or else!" he quipped as they began the quiz. It was a light-hearted moment to remind the students to do their best as they took an exam. After the quiz, the class lecture focused on rhetorical analogies and the structure of appeals (Ethos, Pathos, and Logos). The selected text was a eulogy on Steve Jobs by his sister with attention to literary devices. Questions for the students included: What was the juxtaposition and situation? Utilizing exigency, audience, purpose, Logos, Pathos, Ethos, how

was the eulogy organized in form? Students were directed to analyze the diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language of the piece. The students examined the simple sentences, complex paragraphs, where the story was going, and where the story ended. They continued to point out syntax structures and rhetorical devices within anecdotes. The piece ended with Jobs' sister visiting him on his deathbed and the comment of making life "beautiful later." The students discussed how lives are interrupted by death while we are creating stories. The Ethos of the story gives the credibility to the author and the subject of the eulogy. These are a few of the conversations and lectures witnessed in the classroom observations.

Steven's Annual Appraisal

Steven's evaluation document included numerous strengths noting that he relied on curriculum frameworks and spent time working with his colleagues in their PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) to ensure aligned instruction and assessments. The appraiser noted that Steven worked well with his students who were "reluctant learners" as well as communicating to their parents their needs and ways to help them achieve success in the classroom. Moreover, the appraiser stated Steven has also worked hard to increase his EOC STAAR English II (End of Course State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) scores by offering extra help for his students. Lastly, the appraiser remarked that Steven works well with all students, including advanced learners, and works hard to build rapport with these students.

Specific aspects of Steven's student teaching in relationship to actual teaching is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Steven's Data Analyses

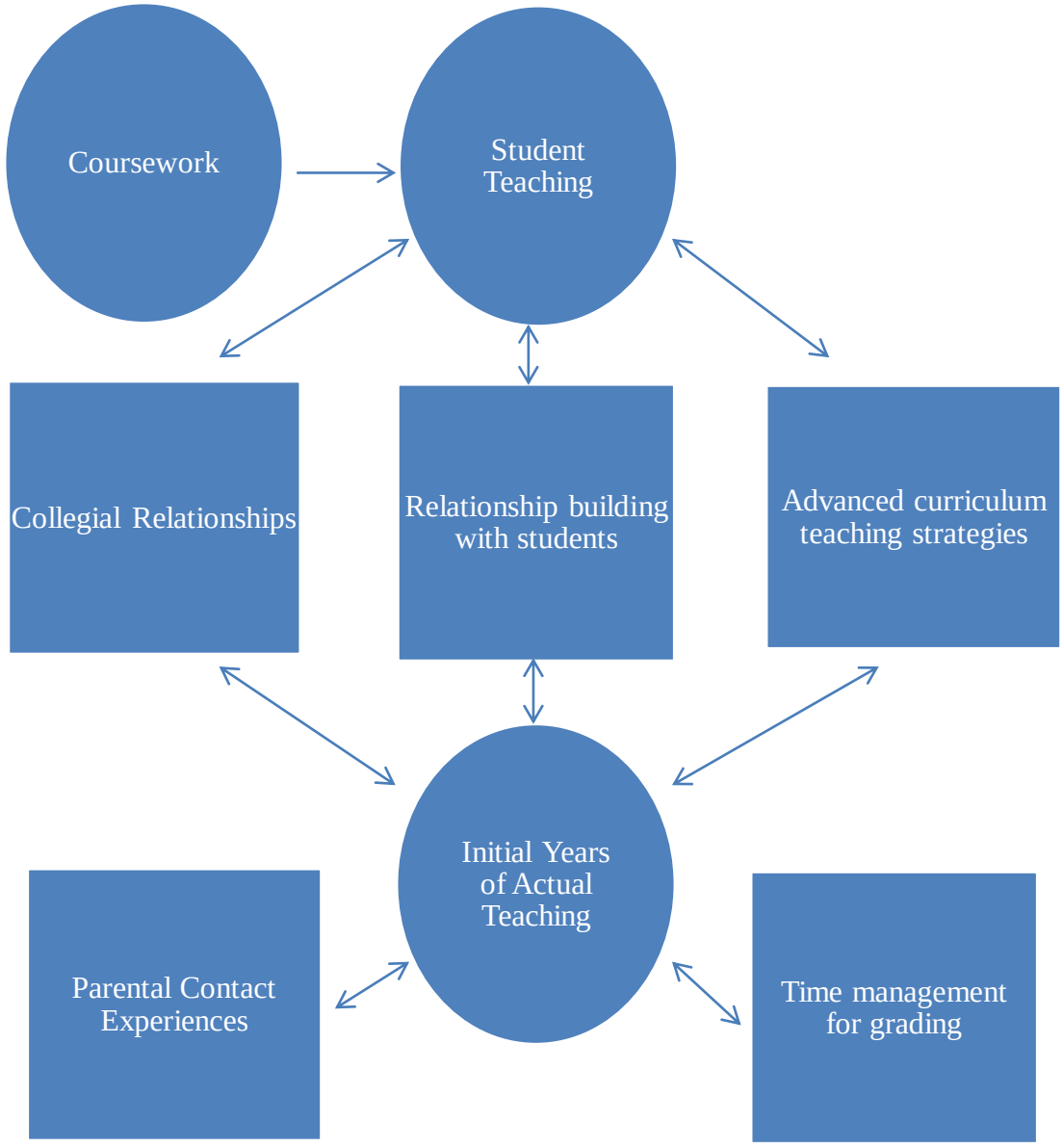


Figure 6. Participant flow chart detailing topics from student teaching connecting to actual teaching

Prevailing Themes among Holly, Cindy, and Steven

Time

There were a few areas where the three teachers experienced similarities. One of the components that surprised Cindy as she transitioned from student teaching to her true employment was the demand of time. “At this school, it is almost customary for new teachers to sponsor of a club or team.” Cindy said she was a co-sponsor/coach of cheer and spends many late evenings at CHS. Due to the number of cheerleaders and sponsors, CHS is four cheerleaders short of placing Cindy in 7th period Cheer class. Therefore, with the other two cheer sponsors already in the class, Cindy cannot have 7th period Cheer class and she teaches during 7th period. Unfortunately, this gives her an extra class to teach, papers to grade, and students to teach compared to her fellow cheer sponsors. Daily she leaves 7th period and hustles down to the gym to coach Cheer.

Steven also mentioned time management as something he was not prepared for. “I used to leave student teaching at 3:30 every day. Now, I find myself staying late and grading papers, offering tutorials, and planning lessons.” The reality of not having a backup grader for grading essays was an awakening for Steven. He pointed out that grading essays takes time and diligence as, preparing students for the AP exam is intense work. He explained, “The content is demanding and essays are not easy to grade.”

Lastly, Holly mentioned that her two supervising teachers occasionally would help her out with grading, but now, she spends time late at school grading papers.

Professional Development

All three teachers reported they did not regularly attend professional development sessions with their supervising teachers during their student teaching. Apart from faculty meetings (all three), Open House (Steven), and a few meetings with CHS cohorts, training at the school and district was non-existent during student teaching. Cindy said she attended faculty meetings to learn about the school and how it operated. "When they had TAKS testing, we [student teachers] were not even allowed to be on campus because we had not been trained."

Holly did attend summer training for technology. She taught a PSAT (Pre Scholastic Aptitude Test) class and attended a three-day workshop for TI nSpire (graphing calculators). The purpose of this workshop was to support and integrate technology into the classroom. This occurred after student teaching and before she was hired in the district. While not a requirement of the student teaching program, professional development is something that all teachers, whether first year or twenty-year veterans, participate in annually.

Communication with Parents

None of the participants engaged in direct communication with parents. The supervising teacher still acted as the front line communicator with parents or guardians. All three teachers had to clarify situations in which they dealt with students, but were never called or emailed directly.

Steven explained that all direct communication went directly to Dr. Bonilla and she would question him for an explanation of the situation. He said now as a teacher, he does not mind communicating and visiting with parents. This lesson he credits to being an intermural referee at the university. Steven said:

> I worked in situations where I had to explain myself when they were angry or upset by my decisions. That experience as a referee helped me with that. But during student teaching, I wasn't required to do anything like that.

He said that he wished he had had more experience talking with parents prior to full-time teaching. Due to the nature of his student teaching assignment, he only worked with advanced classes, and noted that AP classes and grade-level classes have different issues and concerns. In his grade-level classes, when he calls parents, he does so because their child "hasn't been to class, have a 13 average, or they cussed a student out during class. In AP classes, parents want reasoning and justification for grades."

Cindy had to act as mediator during this spring semester between parents and the CHS Administration. The EOC STAAR Exam and AP Exam dates were scheduled for the same date. Parents emailed and called Cindy and it was a coincidence the exams were the same day.. Cindy visited with the CHS administration about the concerns on the testing calendar and they made accommodations to move the EOC (as the state allows some flexibility) and keep the AP exam scheduled as planned (the AP exam does not allow any changes). She then had to revisit with parents to tell them the solution to the testing calendar.

A skill that Holly has had to learn as a full-time teacher is communicating directly with parents. The teachers Holly worked with during student teaching handled the communication with parents. However, she was able to share with the teachers one particular experience about a student in AP Calculus who had learning differences and per his IEP (Individualized Education Plan) was to receive extended time on his assignments. The student took this to mean he could do his homework whenever he wanted without penalty for late work. When it came time for the end of the six weeks, the teacher approached Holly about the missing work and she had

organized it in a separate file waiting for him to complete. The teacher relayed the information to the parent and all worked towards helping the student complete his outstanding work.

Cindy sent a letter home when she began her student teaching to inform parents that she would be in the classroom and let them know they could communicate with her. She sat in a few conferences with parents and Mr. Jones, but he did the talking. "The parents were sending emails to him and he would ask about stuff that he had not been involved with."

All three teachers said they wished they had had more experience with this as before they ventured into their own classrooms.

Instructional Rigor

Adjusting to the rigor of advanced placement classes was something that Steven and Cindy had to understand and execute. Cindy explained, "Knowing how to teach AP classes was a hard lesson to grasp and explaining it to parents is difficult. So, I don't think I had an adequate enough experience in my student teaching with this."

Steven mentioned in his interview that learning high-level questioning strategies has been important for his AP classes. These questioning strategies were not specifically outlined in his lesson plans; he did this during my observations as well as his annual appraisal observation. I witnessed him openly debate and assist the students as they discussed (under friendly terms) the meaning of a certain scene in *Brave New World*. He encouraged the students to discuss the various themes of the text as opinions differed among classmates.

New Skills

When asked what skills they have now that they did not have during student teaching, all three participants had varied answers. Cindy said her confidence level had risen since the 12-week internship.

> Teaching is really scary to have your own classroom. When I was hired, I was a floating teaching and I had three preps [curriculum preparation] and I had only taught one of them before. I just had no idea what it would me to learn this much content and grade this many assignments.

I asked the teachers what skills or experiences they can directly link back to their student teaching experience, and Cindy said being yelled at by her supervising teacher has made her prepared every day. She later shared with the department head what had occurred in the situation and the department head was shocked to learn about the conversation that had transpired. She blames herself for not being prepared, but she knows it was a learning moment that has made her prepare every day for the classroom.

Holly has also had to learn how to communicate effectively with colleagues and learn how to say no. Holly felt a personal desire to do things and help other teachers her first year in the neighboring district and found herself overwhelmed with obligations. She said there is a support system in place during student teaching but when you are employed and teaching on your own, this support system is gone. Holly was afraid if she said no during her first year of teaching, it would show weakness. During her first year, she planned a fundraiser and a talent show and attended numerous athletic games. She later learned that colleagues can help build bonds as one commiserates that "you are not alone."

Classroom Management and Discipline

All three participants mentioned that student discipline was never an issue in student teaching, as they all credit their supervising teachers for having strong classroom procedures

already in place when they arrived. As Steven pointed out, he was teaching primarily AP students, and when he told them to do an assignment, they did it. They experienced challenging situations but no one ever had an outright discipline issue.

Cindy and Holly each talked about building relationships as the most important skill they honed during their student teaching. Holly shared, "If we don't model and demonstrate that we care about our students then why will they want to work for us? It is because of the relationship that my students do what they do." Holly unequivocally believes that the value of building relationships is the most important skill she took away from her student teaching experience. Holly displays a maturity about the importance of relationship building with her students: "I think it is all about respect and it is all about relationships. When you have relationships with your students, it changes everything." Cindy reiterated this idea:

> Building relationships…has been the best way for me to get [my students] to like social studies. Honestly, kids don't like history, but I love it. They are taking multiple AP classes and they have extra-curricular activities and are just swamped. The last thing they care about is what happened in 1800. I had to build the relationship with them first. I know most of them like me so at least they will listen and try.

During one observation, students were analyzing a poem using TPCASTT (Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Attitude, Shifts, Title, and Theme) with partners. One group began a discussion on "drugs" and Steven told them it was inappropriate and to focus on the poem. When another student suddenly became interested in the topic after hearing the exchange of conversation, Steven redirected student #2, "You need to only worry about you and your group."

Differences Among Teachers

Lesson planning

During student teaching, all three participants were presented with differing expectations and protocol for lesson planning. Holly created lesson plans and turned them into Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster. She said her university professor "didn't care" about them. Holly kept detailed notes and plans on what activities she had completed and Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster would add their input on her weekly diary. Cindy followed the same procedure. Holly and Cindy both kept reflective journals of what went well and what did not with their lessons. Holly noted that she had created a Math Models lesson and the colors to represent proportion "went very well." Her lesson on linear functions was "extremely successful." She noted in another entry that her lesson on bearings did not go as she had planned. She made a mistake in her explanation, but she reflected in her journal, "I was able to show [the students] that even the teacher messes up!" Cindy noted she had incorporated a current event news article on Islam before the lecture and slide show on the Arab-Israeli conflict and it "went well."

Examining Steven's lesson planning documents, he noted at several points to include class discussion and analysis. These in-depth literature analyses were witnessed during the classroom observations. Steven did not shy away from delicate texts, such as *My Papa's Waltz* by Roethke. He asked students their interpretations and feelings towards the poem and its message. There were typically a few students who liked to voice their opinion often and at one point in the discussion, Steven said, "Ok, Daniel, let's hear someone else."

Lessons learned but not utilized

One of the aspects of student teaching that Holly learned and has not been able to implement in her own classrooms is the calculator technology. She was trained with TI nSpires and TI-84s calculator and computer programs. Today, her classroom is not networked for this

updated technology. During the 12-week student teaching experience, she used the Promethean Board, TI-84s, TI nSpires, and a teacher computer for quick, immediate feedback for student assessment. She polled or quizzed students and quickly sent their scores to the students. Because the TI nSpires had a full A to Z keyboard and the calculators were connected to her teacher computer, she could get answers immediately from her students. She said it made learning more hands-on and the students liked using the technology. She said her current schedule/lesson plans do not have room to include math labs, but she does wish she could integrate this technology into her own classroom today.

"Finding their Sea-legs"

It seems that all three participants have adjusted well to their careers, despite having different roads that led them back to CHS. As Cindy pointed out, she is looking forward to her third year because she has heard it is the "golden year." This notion coincides with Darling-Hammond (2011) that it takes three years for a teacher to become efficient in the classroom. Cindy said Mr. Jones was disconnected from her during this time, but he thought so highly of her, he later helped get her a job at CHS. She said her student teaching did not fully prepare her for the daily rigor and demands of teaching, yet she learned a great deal and is glad her job situation turned out the way they did.

Holly seems to have benefitted most from her cooperating teacher's influence on her classroom teaching. Through our conversations, interviews, and emails, it was obvious that Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster had more contact, more feedback, and more direct influence on her lessons and teaching styles. Holly felt she was able to grow and develop as a teacher during this time frame. "I would say that my student teaching experience prepared me 90% for my job. I

don't think you can get the last 10% until you truly are on your own—own classroom—own students."

Cindy said the stress level between student teaching and successfully running her own classroom was huge. When Cindy added coaching cheerleaders to her afternoon schedule, she did not realize how much time she would need for the normal days' activities and obligations.

> I don't really think I got how much extra stuff you have to do in being an actual teacher after you add in testing days, faculty meetings, and extra-curricular activities. When I was student teaching, I would leave at the bell because that is when Mr. Jones left. Now, if I leave by 4:30, that is considered early. You hear teachers complain about the amount of time they have to spend grading, planning, getting with parents, but, until you are actually doing it, it is hard to imagine the time involved.

Cindy had a comfortable presence in the classroom and a positive relationship with her students. During the interview, a student came into her classroom to make up a test he had missed and told me she "was the best ever—the bomb!" She loves the classroom, teaching and her current subjects. But more importantly, she loves her students.

Holly shared that she loved student teaching and had been nervous before beginning simply because of the money paid for her college tuition—what if she ended up not liking teaching? She said once she began teaching, she loved it, loved the students, and loved her supervising teachers.

Self-efficacy

Cindy expressed that Mr. Jones' supervision style worked for her because she was determined and self-driven. She exhibits traits of a teacher who developed self-efficacy, as she had a plan and desire to be successful in the classroom. Holly and Steven exhibit this trait as well. They both understood that their first teaching job (in another district) was not how they

wanted to spend their teaching career. They both relied on their student teaching experiences to motivate them and made plans to find new jobs. Both Holly and Steven mentioned that they did not want to stay in that district and knew they had to leave.

These incidents highlight one of the themes discovered in the literature on student teaching: self-efficacy. The literature described how many teachers must rely on their own efficacy in order to survive the first few years. The merits of a solid and positive student-teaching experience are numerous and the literature clearly outlines the key components of this experience. However, one of the intangibles that emerged from student teaching is the development of self-efficacy. Researchers understand the outcomes of a positive experience can include teacher retention, higher levels of thinking, and a sense of self-efficacy (Glickman & Bey, 1990).

Jamil, et al. (2012) support that theory, saying, "Teachers reporting a strong sense of efficacy upon completing their first year of teaching have greater job satisfaction and a more positive attitude towards the teaching profession" (p. 121). They add that pre-service teachers who hone their teaching skills and talents have a higher sense of self-efficacy at the end of their preparation experience. Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy may meet challenges, demands, and struggles with a desire and fire, therefore staying longer in the classroom (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). It is crucial that teachers develop this sense of empowerment to continue in the profession. Self-efficacy is the most important characteristic of a teacher and more important than anything else as it relates to the ability to deal with student and students with special needs (Bakar, Mohamed, & Zakaria, 2012; Busby, et al., 2012). Teachers who believe in themselves have an inner-ability and intrinsic motivation to continue to strive to meet the challenges of a diverse student population and their needs. Teachers have numerous

challenges in the classroom today. Belief in oneself may be the first step in creating the self-determination and desire to rise to the challenge of teaching.

All three teachers demonstrated a certain drive and desire to interact with students and demonstrate their knowledge of their subjects. Having a strong-based clinical experience was beneficial to these three teachers and probed to be foundation for success in their initial years of teaching. In Holly and Steven's case, their student teaching was the reminder of *how* teaching should really be. Holly and Steven had supervising teachers who were knowledgeable about their subjects; Holly and Cindy had supervising teachers who helped hire them at CHS. All three teachers had positive experiences that have helped springboard their careers.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated and documented the early teaching experiences of three recent college of education graduates. Through case study analyses, their student teaching experiences were linked to their actual teaching experiences. All three teachers reported that their student teaching experience was the strongest part of their teacher preparation, an idea consistent with other research. As Darling-Hammond (2006) notes:

> A challenge teacher educators and novice teachers face is the problem of enactment. This problem often surfaces in complaints that teacher education is too theoretical, by which teachers often mean they have not learned about concrete tools and practices that let them put into action the ideas they have encountered. (p. 37)

This study compared and contrasted the roles and actions of student teaching to actual teaching. The findings from this project align with other studies that support pre-service teaching as a crucial link for later success in the classroom.

Revisiting the Research Question

An overarching research question guided this project: How do new-to-profession teachers relate the elements of their student teaching experiences to their initial teaching practices and behaviors?

This study closely analyzed what concepts were learned and well-utilized, what concepts were learned and never used, and what concepts were never learned, but needed in initial years of teaching. This study answered the research question through the authentic experiences and stories of Holly, Cindy, and Steven, three participants in their second year of teaching at a comprehensive public high school.

Discussion

Alignment with Other Research

Findings from this study reiterate and support other work suggesting that the student teaching practicum is the crucial link between coursework and actual teaching in the development of an educator. Ravitch (2010) said if teachers are to bear the burden of failure or success of a student, it is imperative that "our teachers are well educated [and] not just well trained" (p. 13). She added, "Between 40-50% of new teachers do not survive the first five years…for whatever reason, the job is so demanding that nearly half of those who enter teaching choose to leave at an early stage in their career" (p. 177).

It is my hope that studies such as this can help to inform colleges of education as they plan various components of student teaching for future educators. Darling-Hammond (2006) believes that teachers need "handpick[ed] supervising teachers" that are "matched with the most appropriate person" (p. 157). She continued, "The kind of teacher education matters" as many "teachers feel unprepared" (pp. 33-34) for the classroom and good educational programs "structure the learning process and create a strong bridge between theory and practice" (p. 113). All three participants had different degrees of involvement from their supervising teachers, with Holly reporting the greatest benefit from Ms. Laney and Ms. Lancaster. In Cindy's case, while not confirmed by Mr. Jones, it seems that his interest in having a student teacher was to enable him time away from his classroom to complete his own work. While Steven reported excellent pedagogical supervision, he missed critical aspects of running and managing a class. The varying degrees of input and supervision from Holly's, Cindy's, and Steven's supervising teachers are in alignment with other studies targeting the student teaching phase of preparation. Cuenca (2011)

stated, “In the apprenticeship that is student teaching, the cooperating teacher serves as a gatekeeper to the experiential learning…[by] providing access to the tools and artifacts” of student teaching (p. 118). He continued that the supervising teacher must be informed and instructed on how to supervise “beyond an information packet that outlines responsibilities” (p 118). Wiggins, Follo, and Eberly (2007) state that the connection between theoretical coursework and field work “creates a more meaningful learning environment” (p. 661).

Teaching in Challenging Environments

This study seems to suggest that teacher preparation should not only include curriculum and classroom management, but it should also include diversity and cultural sociology coursework for the ever-changing classrooms. Holly and Steven made two separate comments that were interesting regarding teaching in difficult situations and diverse classrooms. Steven remarked that his first teaching post was in a school that was ethnically diverse and as a “straight, white, Christian male,” it was probably not the best fit for him. Holly noted her first school had “bad teachers and bad administrators” and that good teachers leave these schools because they desire to be in settings with strong administrators who support teachers. While the candidness of their remarks is admirable regarding their first teaching situations, it appears something was missing in their teacher preparation that would have made these first experiences different.

Colleges of education “face the challenge of preparing teachers [who are] ready to enter any classroom environment” (Roselle & Tiner, 2013, p. 45). However, despite ample proof of the importance of student teaching, we still have teachers unprepared for the struggle. The future of our country not only depends on how we educate students, but also on how we prepare

teachers for racially and culturally diverse classrooms (Marbley, Bonner II, McKisick, Henfield, & Watts, 2007). Cuenca (2011) asserted that the experience gained from participating in student teaching is invaluable in the preparation of future teachers. While student teaching is a powerful tool as pre-service teachers are able to integrate knowledge from their methodology classes and apply it to the classroom, student teaching needs to "be a transformative opportunity for pre-service teachers to shape or reshape their vision and perceptions of urban schools" (Roselle & Tiner, 2013, p. 46). Black (2003) added, "Just learning a methodology behind teaching a subject does not necessarily guarantee transfer of successful teaching of that subject in the classroom" (p. 3). She continued that there must be a direct connection between the university coursework and the teaching in the classroom. Kitsantas and Talleyrand (2005) said, "Today's American society is more multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural than any other nation in the world" (p. 628). If this is true, then our teacher preparation programs need to reflect this as well. Wiggins, et al. (2007) state that with the changing demographics of public schools across the states, many teacher preparation programs are increasing their attention to the "multicultural awareness of prospective teachers" (p. 653). They argue that through a student teaching placement in an urban class, pre-service teachers may develop an "understanding of community and a positive attitude toward cultural diversity" (p. 653) and by understanding these differences, it can help "promote an optimal learning environment" (p. 654). Kitsantas and Talleyrand (2005) add that the research shows that pre-service teachers who are exposed to cultural therapy and multicultural coursework have a more positive attitude towards people from other cultures in their classrooms.

Teachers as Lifelong Learners

Teachers must continue to be lifelong learners and understand the characteristics of the students who come to their class (McCarthy & Benally, 2003). They add that teachers need strategies that are culturally responsive for today's diverse classroom. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2010) said, "If schools are to be successful, supervision must respond to teachers as changing adults…[and] through appropriate supervision, teachers can be assisted in broadening their array of adaption and change strategies" (pp. 50 & 53). Even as adults, we learn as we grow. Marbley et al. assert that teacher preparation needs to "provide multicultural training and experiences that challenge, stretch, and expand pre-service teachers' worldviews, axiology's, and epistemology without harming or scaring the bright and gifted teachers away from working with students from low socio-class and minority backgrounds" (p. 8). They continue that while many teachers do feel prepared for the classroom, one area they wish they had had additional training was in ways to address the needs of English language learners.

Roselle and Tiner (2013) say one reason that student teachers may struggle once entering the classroom is because the schools and locations where they complete their student teaching may not reflect their schooling experience they had as a student. They may have created a vision of what it would be like to be a teacher from their own image of how they were schooled and it does not match with today's diverse classrooms. No matter where the disconnect lies, the "United States needs well-prepared teachers for urban schools" (p. 51). This reflects exactly what Holly discussed about her first teaching situation. She said that she had an incredible student teaching experience at CHS. Her first job was less desirable, therefore, after one year, she left and returned to CHS. She understood that it was important to have a strong student teaching experience, but not everyone gets to teach at a school like CHS. She said her student teaching and first year job were not aligned regarding faculty, students, or administrative

support. However, Holly poignantly said that as a college of education, we "need to have positive student teaching experiences because teachers do not want to have a terrible experience in order to prepare them for a tough first year." She explained the exact cycle that the literature laments: good teachers leave for better situations creating a revolving door in tougher situations.

Guerra and Nelson (2009) state that teachers have a desire to learn about diversity, however, teachers prefer to be with individuals who share their common experiences, values, and beliefs. They recommend that teachers move beyond their comfort zone and engage with others who are different from them and while this may not occur naturally, it is important try to create opportunities where these learning experiences can occur. Through these well-intentioned experiences, schools and their communities can engage in conversations that are necessary to change the beliefs and mindsets of those active in the schools. Nelson and Guerra (2009) say a school that engages its parents will become a better place for students. Changing the mindset of teachers and parents will benefit all parties involved, particularly, the students as the connection between home and school is crucial for student success. Milner IV (2004) reiterated the same sentiment that educators who create culturally relevant learning contexts and who are mindful of the students they are teaching, help build a strong connection for the students. "[Teachers] who see students' culture as an asset, not a detriment to their success" (p. 69) allow students to develop lifelong skills that are utilized inside and the outside the classroom. This empowerment is created and instilled in the students and "students are empowered to examine more intently what they are learning, to create, and to construct meaning, to contribute to the multiple conversations in a classroom" (p. 69). Gay (1997) said that multicultural education requires the "revision of some long held beliefs and assumptions about what constitutes quality curriculum

content" (p. 3) and that there is nothing un-American about multicultural education even though it is challenging to existing mainstream societal and conventional school practices.

One way to assist teachers is through the preparation at the college level. Another source is through professional development. Guerra and Nelson (2010) assert that through ongoing professional development teachers can "develop a pluralistic or social justice lens" (p. 55). This creates an understanding that there are multiple and diverse viewpoints as well as recognizes there are instructional tools, curriculum, procedures, and parental involvement programs that are biased. There must be an understanding of teachers change and the supervisor needs to know how to assist new teachers with professional development, curriculum, and group development. This assistance and intervention must be at the appropriate level to "stimulate teacher growth and instructional improvement" (Glickman et al., 2010, p. 50).

Holly mentioned that her theoretical classes were "pointless" as they were structured for elementary teachers. She appeared frustrated that she could not prepare a lesson that would be utilized at a later date. The theoretical classes are the foundation for teachers as they move from student to teacher and teachers must continue to grow and develop in their own learning. This is particularly crucial as the dynamics of the classes change and students come to school with varying needs and backgrounds. However, knowing what the teachers need is not an easy task, "Knowledge of how teachers can grow as competent adults is the guiding principle for supervisors in finding ways to return wisdom, power, and control to both the individuals and the collective staff in order for them to become professionals" (Glickman, et al., 2010, p. 50). Novice learners react to situations differently than expert learners and both require different types of supervision.

A Call for Leadership

One of the aspects missing from all three participants' experiences was the mention of leadership, sustained professional development, and mentoring. Researchers and school personnel will agree that school settings must develop a culture of collaboration and accountability among the adults all in effort to better help students and student performance. Developing leadership among teachers and others requires schools to rethink their current procedures in a better effort to identify and recognize the talents of the most effective teachers and "deploy them in service of student learning, adult learning and collaboration, and school and system improvement" (Curtis, 2013, p. iii). Through a combined effort of teachers and teacher leaders, there is a greater capacity for student performance as students' needs are met. "School systems share the same ultimate goal: increasing student achievement" (Curtis, 2013, p. iii). Darling-Hammond (2006) said that the strongest teacher preparation programs have strong ties among the university supervisors and the supervising classroom teachers where the student teaching is taking place. It is not a time to pass the student teacher from one supervisor to another; it must be a joint effort.

Teachers want learning and leadership opportunities as it can help "maximize their impact on both their students and their colleagues" (Curtis, 2013, p. 2). Through teachers becoming "innovators, researchers, champions of student learning, leaders of colleagues, and policy advocates" (Curtis, 2013, p. 4), they become strengthened and are driven by an idea of what teacher leadership should resemble. Strong and abled teachers not only should be provided with leadership roles, but, truly they must be provided these opportunities.

It is important to bridge the link between retaining successful teachers and helping students learn. Teachers want work environments that have clearly defined goals, a strong instructional culture, and that use collaborative efforts to promote a strong culture that embraces and protects great teaching. The creation of learning communities within schools allows building principals to identify and mentor lead teachers as well as promote ongoing teacher growth and development. None of the participants ever engaged in professional development at the school nor engaged in conversations with the building principal at CHS during their student teaching experiences. Fortunately, the participants found mentors either in their supervising teachers (Holly and Steve); Cindy found assistance in another teacher in the department who assisted her when Mr. Jones was unavailable.

The need for building leadership *and* teacher leadership is crucial for not only current teachers, but student teachers and new-to-profession teachers as they begin their careers.

Teachers must accept that just because they have graduated and have begun actual teaching that their learning shifts and takes on a different *kind of learning*. Glickman et al.(2010) stated, "It is important to recognize that not all adults appear to be equally ready for self-directed learning" (p.53)…[and] our knowledge of adult learning tells us that it is important to link learning about instructional innovations to teachers' past experiences" (p. 59). However, as teachers spend time in the classroom, they are able to learn from colleagues, students, and their professional community and are able to move from simple to complex explanations of students' behavior development and learning. The journey of adult learning is not measured in time or in classes—it is a continual process. Glickman et al. (2010) succinctly described the adult learning process, "A teacher functioning at a higher level of development is capable of thinking abstractly, reflecting on his or her own emotions, and being guided by beliefs and values that

ensure loyalty to the larger community" (p. 67). It is when teachers develop and grow that they are able to think about the child or student as a whole and not solely on one aspect of their development.

The statistics and numbers reveal that teachers are leaving the field altogether and the pool of teacher candidates continues to decline and, sadly, it primarily affects urban schools (Wiggins, et al., 2007). What can we do about educating and preparing teachers for diverse classrooms? How can we best prepare teachers for diverse schools in order to sustain their careers?

Through college preparatory programs and ongoing professional development, teachers will be able to weather the changes they see in their classrooms. It is crucial that teachers not only have the subject matter, classroom management skills, and pedagogy needed for teaching; but, they need cultural awareness that will allow all children to be successful as they strive to meet the academic needs their students. Mitchell (2009) summarized this notion: "Culturally diverse teachers discover many different languages and cultures in schools, and they find various ways of being successful with their students" (p. 6). Schools must take the lead role and develop professional development that will increase teachers' awareness of the types of students in their individual school. Ladson-Billings (1995) says, "Not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence, they must help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (p. 476). Teachers must take the lead and demonstrate for their students the notion of cultural competence and acceptance.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

It is important in closing to revisit the initial theories that shaped this research project. Experiential learning provided the lens in which I examined the growth and development of the student teachers. It was the application of theoretical classes and student teaching experiences and linking them to their actual teaching. Kolb (1984) believed that knowledge is created through experiences. The experiences in a pre-service teaching program were transformed into actual teaching moments. Discussing and analyzing these activities, events, and experiences provided the vehicle in order to reflect about specific moments and details that had been learned. The constructivist theory allowed me to describe, understand, and interpret the participants' pre-teaching and actual teaching experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected and subsequent analyses, below I offer several recommendations to enhance this program that primarily focuses on the implementation of the student teaching portion of educator preparation. The suggestions also focus on the hands-on activities that are part of the student teaching experience.

First, is to enhance this particular college of education's student teaching component by handpicking and training the supervising teachers. Training from the university would include specific structure for the 12-week process as how to phase-in the student teachers into taking over the assigned classroom. This information could list specific details on inclusion of parent-teacher interactions, testing protocol, possible Special Education/504 concerns, as well as a suggested timeline for implementation. This information could be clearly defined at a training session headed by university personnel. Supervising teachers must be expected to supervise and not allow student teachers to simply "survive on their own." Andrews and Quinn (2005)

reiterated this importance, "Providing support to beginning teachers is essential for two reasons: the need to retain qualified beginning teachers and the need for beginning teachers to be effective practitioners as soon as possible" (p. 110). Teachers need help with curriculum, instruction, and planning lessons. These components are crucial in the daily work of a teacher; all 3 participants missed them in varying degrees (see Appendix I).

Second, more carefully monitor the cooperating teacher at the school site to ensure he is fulfilling the needs of the student teacher. A university professor, with K-12 experience should be making these placements and communicating with the teachers at the school sites. While Mr. Allison was hired by the university to conduct observations, the study participants were unclear as to his title and link to the college of education. The participants said that their supervising teachers never had any contact with the university directly. Darling-Hammond (2006) said that some programs hand-pick their supervising teachers and train them in their methodology. This would be ideal because the placement of a student teacher with a trained teacher would eliminate haphazard placements. Darling-Hammond also suggested that [college] faculty serve on school and district committees and lend consulting expertise in areas such as assessment, whole language instruction, integrated curriculum, and technology. She reported, "Cooperating teachers are guided as well by the expectations outlined in the programs and by the kinds of evaluations or assessments they are asked to complete on candidates" (p. 156). The idea that supervising teachers do not have a script to follow is not a new concept. Cuenca (2011) said, "Cooperating teachers are essentially left to their own devices to figure out ways to support teacher learning" (p. 120). Hence, supervising teachers must be taught as well how to be the best supervisor for their student teacher as they provide access to the tools and trade of the classroom. He continued that the best supervising teachers "tethered" (p.124) their student teachers as they were able to

have a safety net as they taught their first lessons. “The security of knowing the cooperating teacher was there ‘just in case’ provided a reassuring environment” as the cooperating teachers were able to fill in the blanks as necessary during a lesson. This support was able to offer help if needed and was not seen as a threat or disruptive to the learning.

Third, include the addition of an education class that offers information on classroom behavior, parent-teacher conferences, Special Education laws, RTI (Response to Intervention), ARDs (Admission, Review, and Dismissal for special education), mandated state testing, English language learners, social issues in the classroom, and accountability measures. Guerra and Nelson (2009) said that teachers have a desire to learn about diversity; however, they prefer to be with individuals who “share similar experiences, values, and beliefs” (p. 65). They continue that teachers must move beyond their comfort zone and “engage with others who are different from them. Since this process tends not to happen naturally” (p. 65) someone must instigate a learning experience for others. “In this time of changing school demographics and widening achievement gaps, developing cultural proficiency is an essential step for teachers.” (Nelson & Guerra, 2008, p. 55). Milner IV said that the idea of teachers building a cultural competence is a critical aspect of a teacher’s work; in urban and diverse settings, that cultural competence is less clear for teachers to discover. “Educators who create culturally relevant learning contexts are those who see students’ culture as an asset, not a detriment to their success” (Milner IV, 2011, p. 69). Teachers who see students’ backgrounds as assets and part of their planning and implementation of lessons, allow students the ability and avenue to become empowered and to advocate for themselves. Essentially, embracing all students is something teachers must learn to do as teachers need to be prepared to teach all students well.

Lastly, consider a longer period of sheltered practice. While this is a serious concern and recommendation, it seems Holly, Cindy, and Steven would have welcomed more time to hone their skills during their teaching practicum. Darling-Hammond (2006) asserts that each field experience should be coordinated with campus courses within the education programs at the university; the programs she cited as leading the field of teacher preparation vary between 15-weeks to one-year.

Darling-Hammond (2006) believed that the goal for teacher education is more than preparing teachers to deliver a curriculum or get through a textbook. The goal is to create a teacher program that instructs teachers on how to ensure learning for students with a broad assessment of needs and learning styles.

Limitations

One of the downfalls of qualitative research, according to Merriam, is that some researchers do not believe qualitative studies are generalizable or add solid research to the area of study. However, case studies were the right and appropriate method for examining the student teaching experience and answering the research question. Although this work targeted three participants, these case studies add valuable information to the ongoing research of those preparing to be educators as well as those who plan for and instruct them. The case study was the vehicle to provide details and voice to the participants that would not be offered in a quantitative approach, simply because qualitative research and findings describe people and experiences. What makes a study rigorous or trustworthy is "the researchers' careful design of the study, applying standards well developed and accepted by the scientific community" (Merriam, 2009, p. 210). This study followed the approved IRB protocol to gather and collect data.

In qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings. This study answered the research question and supports the current literature that student teaching is the most critical component of the education and development of a teacher preparation program. Darling-Hammond said, "Inadequate preparation also increases teacher attrition, which exacerbates the revolving door that contributes to teacher shortages" (p. 14). Feiman-Nemser (1995) stated that because it takes between three to five years for a teacher to become proficient, it is imperative that teachers are trained well in order to retain a proficient teaching force. In a teacher's world, there are multiple demands made and emotional support is a huge need, especially for novice educators (Rajuan, Tuchin, & Zuckerman, 2011).

As the primary instrument of data collection and analyses, I utilized the interviews as "a primary source of data" in this qualitative research project (Merriam, 2009, p. 17). After administering the interviews, I spent time in the classrooms conducting observations and made connections "gleaned from being in the field" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). Observation is a research tool when it is systematic and addresses a specific research question. It is also part of the checks and balances in providing trustworthy results (Merriam, 2009). Adequate time was spent collecting data at CHS in Holly, Cindy, and Steven's classrooms. The observations, interviews, and document analyses triangulated and strengthened the findings. Merriam believes that observation is the best technique to use when an "activity, event, or situation can be observed first hand" (2009, p. 119). Observations included notes of physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversations, and subtle factors in classrooms. The soul of this study, however, came directly from Holly, Cindy, and Steven: telling me their stories. Information from interviews, observations, and documents were "combined and ordered into larger themes" as I

worked from “particular to general” ideas as the data became saturated (Merriam, 2009, pp. 15-16).

Recommendations for Future Research

Would this study produce the same results if repeated? I believe that every teacher who spent 12 weeks under the tutelage of a supervising teacher would have a different story to tell. This question can only produce the same results if student teachers are following the same scripted experience. I believe that this area of study would be interesting if replicated in an elementary experience. Another area of inquiry could involve replicating this work at a different university preparatory program. I am curious about other programs across the state as well as alternative certification programs and how well those teachers fare in their first few years of teaching.

Throughout our interviews and conversations, Steven was a more reticent respondent than the other participants. Holly was loquacious and was passionate about student teaching and the role it plays in preparing teachers. It was possible the personalities of the participants affected the outcome of this research in a small way, simply due to the amount of information that was shared with the researcher. This particular variable may need further research.

The three teachers in this study support the current research that the first years of teaching are a struggle, but teaching continues to get easier as the years pass. With the help of mentors and strong colleagues, these struggles were somewhat alleviated and these teachers were able to find and secure their place at a school where they all knew they wanted to be. Merriam clarified the issue of reliability. “Reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220).

Validation of Study

The qualitative method per Merriam's definition (2009) is to understand how people make sense of a particular process. Through the experiences of Holly, Cindy, and Steven, the case stories were crafted. These teachers shared their authentic experiences for this research project. Through their experiences, I discovered multiple interpretations and conclusions. The trustworthiness of the study comes through training, experience, and the track record of the researcher, as Merriam notes. In order to produce trustworthy results, "the validity and reliability of a study depend[s] upon the ethics of the investigator" (2009, p. 226).

The participants confirmed the study as they were able to read their stories and add/delete information as needed. Through member checking, they were able to confirm their stories were accurate. Moreover, two disinterested parties read the transcripts in their entirety and identified possible themes. Merriam (2009) describes an audit trail of how information is disseminated. "An audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). Merriam says the most important question for qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected. "Nevertheless, the researcher has an obligation to provide enough detailed description of the study's context to enable readers to compare the 'fit' with their situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 226). Through the richly, detailed, authentic experiences of Holly, Cindy, and Steven, this study validates current research.

Researcher's Reflection

This research journey has opened my eyes to view the classroom from multiple perspectives. The student teaching experience, while a crucial and integral part of the

development of a teacher, is often at the mercy of the cooperating teacher and how much time and effort he or she is willing to devote to growing, nurturing, and mentoring a student teacher.

Listening to the student teaching stories of Holly, Cindy, and Steven, it is obvious that I missed major components of teaching during my own student teaching internship. As Darling-Hammond (2006) notes, we teach like we were taught. This is what I did. I taught as I had witnessed my own favorite teachers teach their classes. Not once during my 12-week experience did my two supervising teachers sit down with me and discuss a lesson plan, curriculum, student behavior, or anything else pertaining to the classroom. Essentially, they dropped in once a week to say hello in passing and frequently, I had to purposefully walk to the Baseball Field House to find them in order to ask them questions. Neither teacher ever observed any lesson I taught.

I was fortunate when I was hired to have veteran teachers who took me under their wing and helped me that first year. Ten years of public education has taught me that no two days will ever be alike. No two students are alike. I feel a good teacher is a jack of all trades. Teachers must do numerous things, typically at one time. We are mentors, teachers, content masters, counselors, motivators, listeners, and sometimes even parents. Did I learn this in twelve weeks of student teaching? No, I did not. The best lesson I learned from student teaching was self-efficacy. Student teaching created a belief that I could teach, be an effective teacher, and I would be okay.

I believe now at the end of this research project and journey, that the education of a teacher is even more crucial than it was twenty years ago when I became a teacher. Our teachers have more pressure to perform with value-added standards, children with learning differences, the mounds of paperwork required from teachers, all while knowing their content and presenting

it in a variety of ways in order to reach every student. Like Holly, Cindy, and Steven, my theoretical classes did not prepare me for actual teaching and student teaching tried to despite my personal experience. If numerous teachers feel this, then why do we not make changes in our teacher preparatory programs that model the exemplary programs Darling-Hammond discusses?

Darling-Hammond believes that the best programs teach students to "understand the importance of building and sustaining a professional culture: conferring with colleagues, attending conferences, writing, and presenting papers, developing curricula, and keeping current with research" (2006, p. 57). Teaching is a complex business and it is crucial teachers are prepared for the challenges that are present in the classrooms. Colleges of education must prepare their students in order for them to have a lengthy career in the classroom. It is the responsibility of colleges of education and their faculties to instill in teachers the attitudes, values, and skills needed for running a classroom successfully. Darling-Hammond believes that "a teacher is not something one becomes, but rather something one is constantly becoming" (2006, p. 118).

Lastly, it is crucial that teacher preparatory programs arm teachers with the skills necessary to handle a variety of situations. Our teachers deserve it as well as the students they serve.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research: From Sheltered Practice to Classroom Teaching: The Experience of Three New-to-Profession Educators

Funding Agency/Sponsor: N/A

Study Investigators: Marla McGhee, Ph.D., Marnie Russell Choate, B.A., M.L.A.

What is the purpose of the research?
This study will investigate and document the early teaching experiences of recent college of education graduates. It will reflect upon and link their beginning experiences in the classroom to the student teaching component of their university preparation program.

How many people will participate in this study?
Three new-to-profession teachers

What is my involvement for participating in this study?
The participants are asked to give an honest account of their student teaching experiences to the researcher. All identifying information will be masked and protected. The researcher wants to understand what skills, lessons, foundations, etc. were learned and truly developed during this time. The researcher also wants to understand what skills, lessons, foundations, etc. were not developed during this time. If the participants feel comfortable letting the researcher peruse any professional documentation, it would be most welcomed as it will strengthen the case study research.

How long am I expected to be in this study for and how much of my time is required?
The observation period scheduled is approximately 6 weeks. It is estimated that the total time commitment for the participants will range from about 8-10 hours, depending on the interviews. The approximate time commitments are outlined in the chart below. The chart includes observation periods to inform the participants of the time the researcher will be in the classroom.

Interviews and Observations will include the following:	Expected Time Required (hours)
Initial phone calls and emails	1.00
Initial Questionnaire	.50
Scheduled conversations to discuss questionnaire while utilizing semi-structured interview	3-4
Classroom observations of participants by researcher will include 3 scheduled observation times to observe the teacher at their convenience.	3

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will they be minimized?
Potential risks are considered as minimal. Risks may involve stress or concerns associated with the demands of supporting students with learning disabilities and related needs. Other potential stressors may involve the amount of time required to participate in the research process. Should these concerns arise, the researcher may reduce the number of planned conversations or observations to lessen the time commitment if that can be accomplished without significantly impacting the study's outcomes. Other concerns may be associated with feeling as though your performance is being evaluated or that your principal or district is making you participate even if you do not really want to. This is not the case. Your employer cannot and will not require you to be involved in this study. Any data collected will neither influence nor impact your employment or job evaluation, and will be held in the strictest confidence.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study?
No. Neither compensation nor incentives are being offered for your involvement.

What is an alternate procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study?
While there is no alternate procedure, you can simply choose not to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
There will be no names used in this study nor will any identifying information be recorded on any materials related to the study. Your name, the name of your school, and the name of your district will not be disclosed. All data that is collected will be maintained in a secure location, where only the investigators will have access. All interview information and observation data will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

Is my participation voluntary?
Yes. You may refuse to participate without any penalty. You may also withdraw your consent to participate at any time -- even if you agree at first but change your mind later.

Can I stop taking part in this research?

Yes. You may refuse to participate without any penalty. You may also withdraw your consent to participate at any time -- even if you agree at first but change your mind later.

What are the procedures for withdrawal?
Simply inform the researcher (by phone, email, or in person) that you prefer not to participate. If you decide to withdraw from the study after it has already started, then the information collected will be excluded from the study and any of your responses will be destroyed. To withdraw, you may contact:

Marla McGhee at 817-257-5980 or email m.mcghee@tcu.edu or Marnie Russell Choate at 817-528-3969 or email marnie.russell@tcu.edu.

Will I be given a copy of the consent document to keep?
Yes, you will be given a copy of the consent document.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?
Contact Dr. Marla McGhee at 817-257-5980 or email m.mcghee@tcu.edu, or Marnie Russell Choate at 817-528-3969 or email marnie.russell@tcu.edu.

Who should I contact if I have concerns regarding my rights as a study participant?
Dr. Tim Barth, Chair, TCU Institutional Review Board, Telephone 817-257-4320.
Dr. Sally Fortenberry, Director of Office of Sponsored Programs, Telephone 817-257-6752.

Your signature below indicates that you have read or been read the information provided above, you have received answers to all of your questions and have been told who to call if you have any more questions, you have freely decided to participate in this research, and you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Participant Name (please print): _____

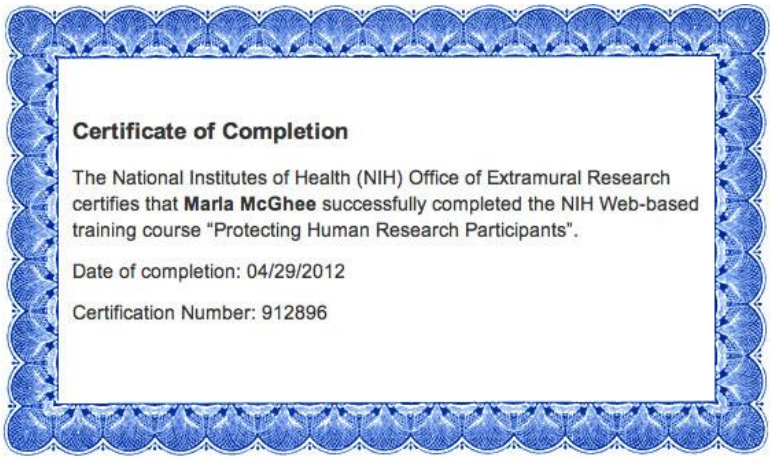
Participant Signature: _____ Date:_____

Investigator Name (please print):_____ Date:_____

Investigator Signature: _____ Date:_____

APPENDIX B

PROTECTING HUMAN RESEARCH -- PARTICIPANTS' TRAINING CERTIFICATE

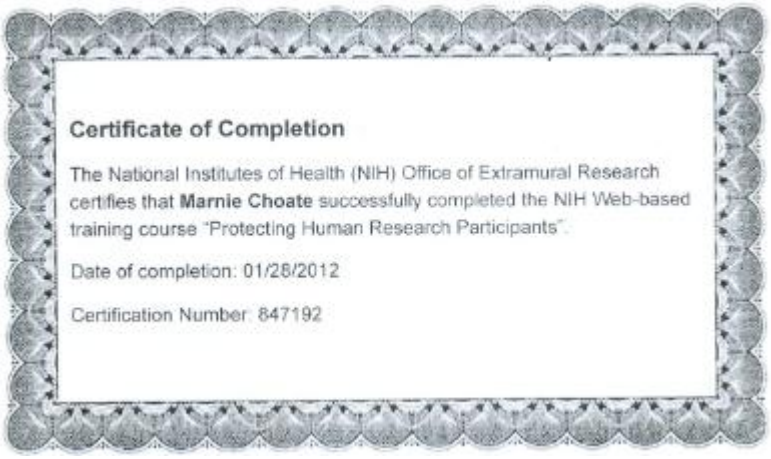


Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Marla McGhee** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/29/2012

Certification Number: 912896



Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Marnie Choate** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/26/2012

Certification Number: 847192

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT LETTER / EMAIL

January 14, 2014

Dear Colleague,

I was given your contact information by a member of your district's staff to gauge your level of interest in participating in dissertation targeting new-to-profession teachers.

I am a TCU graduate student and fellow public educator. As you know, the student-teaching experience is designed to give future teachers a real-world experience as they prepare for their own classroom. I want to know what lessons or skills you learned during student-teaching that assisted you most as you began your career, what skills you didn't learn, and I want to hear about your individual experiences. Of course, participation is completely voluntary and not required by your principal, school, or district.

Those who wish to join in the research will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire, allow me to interview them about their student-teaching experience, allow 3 classroom observations, and possibly answer emails if I need to clarify information. Moreover, it would be extremely helpful to view any walk-through feedback or appraisal documents you have received. This will simply allow an additional source of data to triangulate our conversations and observations. The total time commitment during the 6-week program will not exceed 12 hours, fewer than 2 hours per week.

I sincerely hope that you will consider becoming a part of this effort. If you choose to participate, please let me know by responding to this email. Attached is a copy of the consent form, which will also be available for your signature the first time we meet. If you do not wish to participate, no further action is required.

The information learned during this process can help to enhance our understanding of the student-teaching experience. Hopefully, it will also inform the development of future teacher preparation programs. Should you have any questions, or need any additional information, please email me at marnie.russell@tcu.edu or call my cell at 817. 528.3969.

I truly hope you will consider joining our study team.

Sincerely,

Marnie Russell Choate, B.A., M.L.A.

Doctoral Student, Texas Christian University

P.S. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The choice to participate is at your sole discretion and not required by your principal or school district. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time by informing the researcher. No incentive or compensation is being offered for your involvement. Your responses will be completely confidential and neither your name nor the name of your school will be disclosed by the researcher.

APPENDIX D

Initial Questionnaire

From Sheltered Practice to Classroom Teaching:

The Experience of Three New-to-Profession Educators

Interview Participant:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographic/Background Information

Age:

Gender: ___Male ___Female

University Year:

Location of Student Teaching:

Grade and Content of Student Teaching:

Location of Employment:

Grade and Content of Employment:

Years at Current Job:

Degree held and Major:

Certifications:

APPENDIX E

CASE STUDIES	Expected Time Required (hours)
Semi-Structured Interviews	
3 participants from the district will be interviewed. The purpose of the interview is to gather information regarding their student-teaching experience.	1.00
Potential follow-up phone conversations or email contacts for additional information	.50
Total Anticipated Time Commitment of Each Interview Participant	1.50 hours

6 Week Observations

Scheduled in cooperation with participant

Following the identification of the three teachers who are willing to participate

Observations, PDAS, and Follow-Up	Expected Time Required (hours)
Questionnaire	1.00
Building the story of the student-teaching experience-interviews	3.00-4.00
Three one-hour observations	3.00
Potential for follow-up conversations via phone or email	1.00-2.00

Total Anticipated Time Commitment of Each Participant	8.00-10.00 hours

APPENDIX F

From Sheltered Practice to Classroom Teaching:

The Experience of Three New-to-Profession Educators

Interview Participant:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Student Teaching

- What lessons were taught during this time frame?
- Did you learn about classroom management and discipline? If so, please describe.
- Did you learn about your content area? If so, please describe.
- Did you participate in the district professional development? If so, please describe.
- Describe in detail any activities or situations that caused you stress during your student teaching.
- Did you learn about lesson planning during your student teaching experience?
- Did you learn about communication with parents? If so, please describe.
- Was there ever a situation that made you question your choice of profession?
- What would make the student-teaching experience more effective?

Cooperating/Supervising Teacher

- Why was your supervising teacher chosen for you?
- What skills do you believe you honed during this time frame?
- How do you feel working with this teacher benefited you?
- Was there something your supervising teacher encouraged you to learn, yet it something that you haven't utilized in your classroom? If so, please describe.
- How was your supervising teacher helped you to prepare you as a prospective teacher?
- How has your university teacher/supervisor helped to prepare you as a prospective teacher?

Current Employment

- What work was required as part of the program during this time frame? Example: Did you have to turn in lesson plans? Did you have to keep a reflective journal?
- What has made you successful in your first-second year of teaching?
- Do you feel confident you have the requisite skills necessary for your own classroom?
- Can you describe in detail a time that you encountered something in your job that you

were directly able to relate to your student teaching experience?

- What is the relationship between student-teaching and later success in the classroom?
- What was the most valuable lesson you learned from student-teaching?
- What skills do you have now that you didn't have prior to having this job?
- What skills do you feel are necessary for a teacher to acquire in order to be a successful beginning teacher?
- How has your stress level changed from student-teaching to your 1st (and/or 2nd) year of teaching?
- How has your confidence level changed from student-teaching to your 1st (and/or 2nd) year of teaching?
- Did your student-teaching experience prepare you fully or completely to become a teacher?
- How has your job satisfaction changed from student-teaching to your 1st (and/or 2nd) year of teaching?
- What sources of support have been the most beneficial to you during your 1st (and/or 2nd) year of teaching?

Miscellaneous

- One thing I wish I had learned…

- I still want to learn…

- Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX G

From Sheltered Practice to Classroom Teaching:

The Experience of Three New-to-Profession Educators

Participant:

Indicators of Best Practice Checklist

Classroom Set-Up

Promotes Student Collaboration	**Yes**	**No**	**Not Required**	**Comments**
Set-up for teacher-centered instruction	☐	☐	☐	
Student-centered arrangement	☐	☐	☐	
Rows of desks	☐	☐	☐	
Varied learning spaces for whole-class, small-group, & independent work	☐	☐	☐	
Bare, unadorned space	☐	☐	☐	
Commercial decorations	☐	☐	☐	
Student-made artwork, products, displays of work	☐	☐	☐	
Textbooks and handouts	☐	☐	☐	
Varied resources (books, magazines, artifacts, & manipulatives)	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Classroom Climate

Actively Involves Students	Yes	No	Not Required	Comments
Management by consequences & rewards	☐	☐	☐	
Order maintained by engagement and community	☐	☐	☐	
Teacher creates and enforces rules	☐	☐	☐	
Students help set and enforce norms	☐	☐	☐	
Students are quiet, motionless, passive, controlled	☐	☐	☐	
Students are responsible, active, purposeful autonomous	☐	☐	☐	
Fixed student grouping based on ability	☐	☐	☐	
Flexible grouping based on tasks and choice	☐	☐	☐	
Consistent, unvarying schedule	☐	☐	☐	
Predictable but flexible time usage based on activities	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Voice and Responsibility

Are Balanced Between Teacher and Student-Directed	Yes	No	Not Required	Comments
Teacher relies solely on an established curriculum	☐	☐	☐	
Teacher chooses activities	☐	☐	☐	
Students are allowed to select books, topics, writing topics, etc.	☐	☐	☐	

Whole-class reading and writing assignments	☐	☐	☐
Students maintain their own records, but set-goals, self-assess	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Language and Communication

Deepen Learning	**Yes**	**No**	**Not Required**	**Comments**
Silence is purposeful noise and conversation	☐	☐	☐	
Short responses: Elaborated discussion with students allowed to question	☐	☐	☐	
Teacher talk includes student to teacher talk and student to student talk	☐	☐	☐	
Talk and Writing focus includes facts, skills, concepts with synthesis and reflection	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Student Work and Assessment

Inform Teachers, Students, & Parents	**Yes**	**No**	**Not Required**	**Comments**
Products created for teachers and grading, including real events and audiences	☐	☐	☐	
Classroom/hallway displays: No work displayed Only 'A' work All students represented	☐	☐	☐	

Identical, imitative products displayed including varied and original products	☐	☐	☐	
Products are seen and rated only by teachers	☐	☐	☐	
Public exhibitions are common	☐	☐	☐	
Data kept private in teacher gradebook (in private manner)	☐	☐	☐	
Standards set during grading	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Teacher Attitude and Outlook

Take Professional Initiative	**Yes**	**No**	**Not Required**	**Comments**
Is relationship with students: Distant-Impersonal-Fearful- Positive-Warm-Respectful Judging-Understanding-Empathizing-Guiding-Directive-Consultative (Circle or Highlight)	☐	☐	☐	
Attitude toward self is: Powerless worker-Risk taker-Experimenter-Creative-Active Professional-Solitary adult-Member of team with other adults in school-Member of networks beyond school-Staff development recipient-Director of own professional growth	☐	☐	☐	
View of role is: Expert presenter-Gatekeeper-Coach-Mentor-Model-Guide	☐	☐	☐	
Other	☐	☐	☐	

Adapted from Zemelmen, Daniels, and Hyde (2012)

APPENDIX H

LETTER HOME TO PARENTS

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

From Sheltered Practice to Classroom Teaching:

The Experience of Three New-to-Profession Educators

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Marnie Russell Choate and I am doctoral student in the College of Education at Texas Christian University. I will be conducting three one-hour observations at various times throughout the semester in your child's classroom. This research project is focused solely on the classroom teacher and will not be disruptive to the instructional process. Moreover, no audio or video recording will be taking place; I simply wanted to make you aware of my presence in the classroom.

Marnie Russell Choate

APPENDIX I

Components of Participants' Practices Checklist

Specific Components				
	Holly	**Cindy**	**Steven**	**Comments**
Appropriate Disposition	☐	☐	☐	
Management	☒	☒	☐	
Develop Curriculum	☐	☐	☐	
Create Effective Lesson Plans	☒	☐	☐	
Assess Continuously & Respond	☒	☐	☐	
Communication	☐	☐	☐	
Differentiation	☐	☐	☐	
"Basics of Learning" (Darling-Hammond)	☐	☐	☐	
Differentiation	☐	☐	☐	
Relationships	☒	☐	☐	
Reflect & Adapt	☒	☐	☐	
Positive Environment	☐	☐	☐	
Questioning & Scaffolding	☒	☐	☒	
Motivation & Engagement	☐	☐	☐	
Time Management	☒	☐	☒	
Mastery of Knowledge	☐	☒	☒	Cindy learned on own
Organization Skills	☐	☐	☐	

VITA

Marnie Russell Choate was born in Fort Worth, Texas on March 18, 1971. After completing her schoolwork at Trinity High School in Euless, Texas, Marnie entered Texas Christian University in the fall of 1989. She spent the summer of 1992 studying British history at Oriel College, Oxford University and graduated in December 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts in history and English from Texas Christian University. She also earned her Texas Teacher certification for Secondary education. She began working at Birdville ISD teaching Texas and American history, Spanish, and English. In January of 1994, she began her Master of Liberal Art degree at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She graduated in August 1995 and in 1997 left teaching for an 11 year hiatus. It was during this time, Marnie worked as a freelance writer for the Fort Worth Star Telegram. In 2008, Marnie returned to the classroom as an English teacher in the Hurst Euless Bedford ISD and in June 2011 began her own course work at Texas Christian University. Marnie graduated in December 2014 with her Doctorate in Education.

ABSTRACT

FROM SHLETERED PRACTICE TO ACTUAL TEACHING: THE EXPERIENCE OF THREE NEW-TO-PROFESSION TEACHERS

By Marnie Russell Choate, Ed.D., 2014
College of Education
Texas Christian University

Dissertation Advisor: Marla Weatherl McGhee, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

This study investigated and documented the early teaching experiences of recent college of education graduates. The study provided a path to reflect upon and link their beginning experiences in the classroom to the student teaching component of the participants' university preparation program. While many programs have certain criteria for its programs, many new-to-profession teachers face many challenges including: student motivation, planning and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Without adequate preparation, numerous pre-service teachers do not feel prepared for the challenging first years of teaching.

As teachers prepare for a career of teaching, they must prepare for the demands of the classroom as the classrooms continue to change and become more diverse each year. Therefore, our college programs must understand the importance of this ever-changing profession in order to better prepare our teachers for the classroom.

This study examines three new-to-profession teachers all in their second year of teaching. Utilizing case studies, the rich and textual data formed their stories. I co-created their narratives of their student-teaching practice and their story of the first two years in the classroom from interviews and classroom observations. Utilizing documents such as evaluations, reflective journals, and other personal documents, this study provided an in-depth analysis of what

concepts were learned and well utilized, what concepts were learned but seldom utilized, and what concepts were not learned, but needed in the initial years of teaching.

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