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**Understanding the Core Practices of the Student Teaching Practicum Within the Student
Teacher/Cooperating Teacher Relationship:**

Constructing A Framework for the Student Teaching Practicum Using an Ethic of Care

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Montclair, NJ

January 2021

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Emily Klein

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

**Understanding the Core Practices of the Student Teaching Practicum Within the Student
Teacher/Cooperating Teacher Relationship:**

Constructing A Framework for the Student Teaching Practicum Using an Ethic of Care
of

Candice Chiavola

Candidate for the Degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

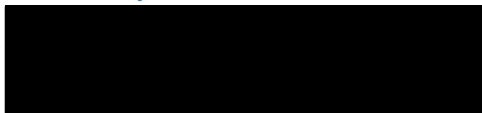
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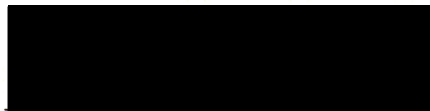


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December 14, 2020
Date



Dr. Emily Hodge

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Abstract

Often considered an experience in instructional preparation for preservice teachers, the student teaching practicum is both a practical *and* relational experience for both the cooperating teacher and student teacher. In this qualitative study, I examine both the instructional and relational core practices cooperating teachers enact *with* and *for* their student teachers during the student teaching practicum. Informed by case study methods, I first identified core instructional and relational practices and analyzed them through two texts: Mary Kennedy's *Parsing the Practice of Teaching* (2016) and Nel Noddings's *Caring and Moral Education* (2008, 2013). Using grounded theory, I then constructed a framework for the student teaching practicum, to inform the ways the cooperating teachers supported student teachers, both instructionally and relationally. This framework stresses the importance of context, emotion, and caring in addition to the practical within the student teaching dynamic.

Through semi-structured interviews of seven participants (four teachers and three student teachers) during the student teaching practicum, I identified the effects the role of caring (enacted by the cooperating teachers) on the participants and the practicum as a whole. It is in this space that power, collaboration, and collegiality were challenged and reimagined. The findings of this study build upon the ways cooperating teachers support student teachers, both pedagogically and relationally, provide a framework that teacher educators could use to inform the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic, and explore the role of caring in learning to teach. Implications for teacher educators and teacher education programs suggest how the student teaching practicum should be structured or modified to address the relational and caring components of it.

Keywords: student teachers, cooperating teachers, student teaching practicum, clinical experience, care, caring

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, Fran and Elio Chiavola, and brother, Mark Chiavola, who have shown nothing but respect and support as I worked toward this PhD.

We are not a perfect family, but we are a great one.

I am extremely fortunate to have you in my life.

To all teachers. The work we do is important and valid—always.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As a new student teacher in 2006, I was very fortunate to be placed with the school principal, who was also teaching a senior General Humanities elective. While I was initially concerned about, and somewhat intimidated by, being evaluated by a cooperating teacher who was also the principal of the school, I soon learned she was one of those principals who was first and foremost an educator. She provided me the ideal balance of support, freedom, and guidance. During my second-semester placement, I aggressively lobbied my graduate program to stay at the same school to work with a ninth-grade teacher who taught a double-period ninth-grade English class. Certification required a placement in a middle-school or ninth-grade classroom, and this teacher was willing to open her classroom to a student teacher.

My experience continued to be valuable, as this cooperating teacher—who became my mentor the following year, provided the right combination of support, kindness, assistance, and freedom like the previous one. I had an enjoyable, challenging, and fruitful student teaching experience and am still grateful for that learning and growth. I was able to innovate and use what I was learning in my coursework in the classroom. Both cooperating teachers trusted my judgment and treated me like an equal, not a subordinate. They celebrated with me when I was successful and assisted when I struggled. At times, I felt like they were colleagues with whom I had worked for years. I enjoyed going to my placement every day and working with my students and cooperating teachers. I was able to build confidence and skill as a prospective teacher.

At the end of my placement, I was offered a position at the school, and since that first year as a preservice teacher, I have watched myself develop and grow as a teacher, person, and professional. I paid attention to the transition from being a student teacher, responsible for one class, to a full-time teacher, responsible for five classes and how difficult that transition was. I

have watched myself grow and reflect on the practices I employed as a new teacher. So much has changed since those early years of teaching. I am the same professional, but my instruction has evolved with my experiences in the classroom.

I owe a large amount of my success as an educator to both of my cooperating teachers and the continued mentoring I received during my first year as a full-time teacher. I have these seemingly casual, insignificant snapshots of moments with my cooperating teachers that, looking back, were quite influential. I sat with my first cooperating teacher, who was the school's principal, in her office, and she passed along pages of a newspaper article about a current event affecting public schools, and then we talked about what we read. The natural collegial relationship was, in the moment, so important and I remember thinking about it as she passed each page to me. I felt like her colleague and she felt this news important and we should discuss it; my opinion mattered.

I worked with my second cooperating teacher, developing a co-taught unit, implementing literature circles for *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet*, feeling as if I was her equal as we took a chance on not one, but two new instructional practices. I never felt as though my voice or ideas were secondary or supplemental. At the same time, I never felt abandoned or isolated as I worked through my ideas and struggles.

Since then, I have tried to be that person for my student teachers, and even the teachers I mentor, both novice and experienced, having heard about and witnessed the experiences of teachers who were not nearly as fortunate as I was. I have seen these teachers struggle in the classroom, and even leave the profession altogether, often wondering if I would be where I am if it were not for the support I received as a student teacher. Since then, I have wondered how we can be sure more, and ideally all, student teachers have an experience as rich as my own. All

together, these experiences have led me to wonder what we can do to best support high quality mentoring in student teaching placements.

Problem Statement

Researchers and teacher educators have found that preservice teacher mentoring plays an important role in shaping prospective teachers' pedagogy, beliefs, and abilities (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Hawkey, 1997; Hobson et al., 2009; Nilsson & van Driel, 2010).

Mentoring, in this context and for the purposes of this dissertation, is defined as:

...the one-to-one support of a novice or less experienced practitioner (mentee) by a more experienced practitioner (mentor), designed primarily to assist the development of the mentee's expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the profession (in this case, teaching) and into the specific local context (here, the school or the college). (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 207)

I define preservice teacher mentoring as a teacher's formal clinical experience in classrooms where they are assigned to a teacher, who in turn *inducts* or *apprentices* them so they are prepared for the responsibility of teaching independently. Preservice teacher mentors usually model instruction for their student teachers, work with student teachers as they plan lessons, and ultimately serve as guides as student teachers *experience* the teaching profession. This is often known as student teaching, practicum, or clinical experience. For the purpose of this dissertation, I used the phrase *student teaching practicum*, as it was the most common wording most researchers used. Hobson et al. (2006) found that, of their initial teacher training, nearly 71% of participants found their school-based experiences most valuable of all their preservice teacher education. Student teachers found this experience helpful because it provided an authentic setting, they had opportunities to learn from practicing teachers, and they gained experience in

responding to day-to-day situations and issues related to teaching. In a study by Singh (2017), although the sample size was small, 92.8% of participants felt their field experience played an important role in their teacher preparation.

Mentors (also known as cooperating teachers, supervising teachers, or coaches) of preservice or student teachers play multiple roles in this construct. For the purposes of this dissertation, I used the term *cooperating teacher* as, again, it coincided with the language used by the institution in which I conducted research. The mentor serves as a guide to practical knowledge, a source of moral support (Awaya et al., 2003), a model, a partner (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996), a facilitator (Kullman, 1998) and an evaluator. Izadinia (2015) indicated mentoring should not be left to chance and that mentors should be chosen deliberately while Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) found that the roles of mentors and mentees are not clearly defined. While the research indicates the student teaching experience is a valuable and important one in the journey toward becoming a teacher, preservice teacher candidates have inconsistent experiences (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). The myriad roles and responsibilities cooperating teachers fulfill speaks to the complexity of the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic. Cooperating teachers guide their student teachers in learning to teach but also provide emotional and moral support. There is both a practical *and* relational component.

The Study

In this study, I explored the student teacher/cooperating teacher practicum to better understand the critical experiences cooperating teachers and student teachers identified during the clinical experience. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), 47 of 51 states (including the District of Columbia) require a clinical practical experience for prospective teachers (“Student Teaching”). However, there is quite a bit of variance regarding length of

clinical experience and quality of cooperating teachers. The site in which I am conducting research is located in one of the 47 states *with* a practicum requirement; this is also one of four states that requires at least 10 weeks of student teaching (175 hours) and that cooperating teachers be rated effective or highly effective on their most recent summative evaluation. Since every teacher candidate in the state must complete a clinical practical experience, and cooperating teachers are deemed effective before serving in the role of cooperating teacher, this practicum experience is a rich component of preservice teacher education. The purpose of this study was to examine the critical experiences, both pedagogical and relational, in learning to teach within the student teaching practicum. In this study, I asked the following questions:

- What core instructional and relational student teaching practices emerge from close analysis of the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship?
- How does the relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher influence student teaching practices and experiences?
- How do the findings contribute to the development of a framework that informs both the instructional and relational components of the student teaching experience?

Overview of the Dissertation

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I introduce the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that will guide the analysis of my findings: Mary Kennedy's (2016) *Parsing the Practice of Teaching* and Nel Noddings's (2008, 2013) *Moral Education and Caring*. I then move on to a review of the literature around cooperating teachers' core practices when working with student teachers. In Chapter 3, I describe the research methodology that guided this qualitative study, which was, at times, informed by case study methods. I also elaborate on the study's participants and the recruitment process and my methods for data analysis. In Chapter 4,

I present short descriptions of the study participants, the framework I constructed to address the final research question, and the major findings of the study regarding cooperating teachers' core instructional and relational practices and their effects on the student teaching practicum. In the final chapter, I explore the significance of the study for teacher educators, including cooperating teachers and teacher education programs. I end with study limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

To explore the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic, I drew on two frameworks: one conceptual and one theoretical. While these frameworks may seem unrelated, they complemented one another and allowed me to explore both the pedagogical and relational aspects of the clinical experience, as there is not currently a single framework that adequately explains the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. In my exploration of the literature, I discovered that the process of learning to teach is both about the practices as well as the relational piece of apprenticing with an experienced teacher. Thus, any framework that attempts to explain student teaching must consider both. I explore these frameworks here and then examine how they can be linked to do this. I begin by exploring Kennedy's (2016) framework, in which she seeks to build upon the efforts other researchers have made to identify the practices teachers must learn or master to be successful educators. I then explore the work of feminist researcher Nel Noddings (2008, 2013) to complement the pedagogical components of learning to teach with the relational component of caring.

Conceptual Framework: Parsing Teacher Practice

Teacher preparation, in general, has endured multiple attempts to “parse teaching practice” (Kennedy, 2016, p. 6). According to Kennedy (2016), “if such an analysis were available to us we would be more able to converse with each other about our goals and to provide more coherent guidance to novices about their future work” (p. 6). She began by examining previous efforts to identify the components of good teachers, effective instruction, or common teaching practices. She identified three attempts by other researchers before introducing her own. In doing so, she helped make sense of the kinds of problems people learning to teach must be able to address.

The first—“teacher do activities”—was the result of the Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study of 1929. The authors of the study, (Charters and Waples, 1929), through observation and interviews with teachers and administrators, created an extensive list of 1,001 activities teachers did “so that teacher educators could then identify knowledge that would be relevant to these particular activities” (Kennedy, 2016, p. 7). However, this approach suffered from three problems: (a) some practices were too broad while others were too specific; (b) it did not distinguish between the activities of good and poor teachers, or among the numerous practices in terms of value or meaningfulness; and (c) the extensive list of 1,001 activities was difficult or even impossible to address adequately in a teacher education curriculum. While Kennedy did not indicate this as a problem, the Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study also purposely ignored context and subjectivity, leaving teacher educators to apply the results of their study to their own populations and contexts themselves. Lastly, the extensive list of 1,001 activities was difficult or even impossible to address adequately in a teacher education curriculum.

The second attempt to parse teaching practice, “teachers make moves,” “focused more on discrete movements teachers made during the process of teaching” (Kennedy, 2016, p. 7). However, this attempt was also problematic. Created in the 1960s and 1970s, the researchers focused only on what teachers did while working with students in classrooms and did not include any work teachers did outside of classrooms such as lesson planning and assessing student work. Additionally, they only collected data through observations and did not speak to teachers and administrators at all. Lastly, unlike the Commonwealth researchers, these researchers were not interested in creating an exhaustive list but rather focused on moves that “mattered” and what

teachers *should* do (Kennedy, 2016, p. 8). Their work may seem to lack scope and was not focused on instruction but student motivation and management.

The third attempt to parse teaching practice, “teachers enact core practices,” is the most recent attempt and “focuses on broader, more meaningful patterns of observable behavior, patterns that reflect widely recognized pedagogical approaches or styles of teaching” (Kennedy, 2016, p. 8). While Kennedy (2016) believes this attempt to parse teaching practice is better than the two that preceded it, she still notes two problems. Core practices risk becoming “so procedural that their ultimate purposes are overlooked,” and novice teachers may focus on the core practices without attending to the context (i.e. time, place, and reason) of their use (p. 9). I include a summary of these early attempts as it helps frame why Kennedy developed her conceptual framework and why I adopt it as a means of understanding the needs of preservice teachers.

Kennedy (2016) believed “teaching practices can be understood if they are characterized as addressing one of these [‘five persistent’] challenges [‘faced by all teachers’]” (p. 10). She identified the challenges as: (a) portraying the curriculum; (b) enlisting student participation; (c) exposing student thinking; (d) containing student behavior; and (e) accommodating personal needs. According to Kennedy, focusing on challenges instead of solutions helped “novices learn to think strategically about how their actions address a larger purpose, rather than focusing on how to mimic a set of actions. . .” (p. 10). Lastly, Kennedy argued these challenges were both “universal in teaching” and “intrinsic to the process of teaching” (p. 10). If Kennedy believed this is a strong framework to apply to what teachers should know and do, then teacher educators should address the challenges in teacher education programs. A significant component of teacher education programs is the clinical or student teaching experience. Therefore, I hoped to examine

how teacher educators, in this case cooperating teachers, played a role in preparing prospective teachers to address these challenges and how they do this in the context of the student teaching dynamic.

The first problem that Kennedy (2016) identified was portraying the curriculum so that it is comprehensible to students and includes “some kind of live activity” in a specific space, with specific materials, and within a specific time frame (p. 10). This problem is one of teachers formulating and planning ways to convey and deliver the content included in the curriculum. Kennedy went on to assert that teacher educators, then, need to address this problem by ensuring teacher education programs are designed to address the judgment teachers need when making decisions for portraying curriculum and how they might evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of particular strategies and methods. Ultimately, teacher educators should encourage preservice and novice teachers to examine and evaluate the choices they make in delivering content and cooperating teachers should do this when working with their student teachers. This is a significant and paramount focus on the student teaching practicum and I hope to examine how cooperating teachers, if at all, do this in their work with student teachers.

The second problem Kennedy (2016) posed was enlisting student participation. This problem addressed the idea that “education is mandatory but learning is not” and teachers may encounter resistant student audiences (p. 11). Kennedy asserted that teachers, ideally, want their students to actively engage in the lesson, however, would prefer they cooperate over actively resist it. Students who cooperate, as opposed to resist, are less likely to distract the students who are actively engaged. Kennedy goes on to discuss the three principles of learning that apply to enlisting student participation: (a) students remember what they understand, and they understand what they actively think about; (b) context is important in understanding knowledge; and (c)

active thinking is important for students to remember, so teachers need to be mindful of what they require students to examine. Again, Kennedy stated that the implications for teacher educators is not to provide novices with particular strategies for this challenge but instead “help them understand the overall problems . . . so they are better able to devise their own solutions in the future” (p. 12). By helping student teachers understand the problem(s), they can begin to examine how they might address them in their clinical experiences. The process of teaching is only so effective without student participation, suggesting this will play an important role in preservice teachers’ experiences during their field experiences.

The third challenge Kennedy (2016) presented was exposing student thinking so teachers can better know what students do and do not understand. This is often done with formative and summative assessments, but Kennedy asserted “the most useful knowledge for teachers is the knowledge they have *in the moment*, for this knowledge can guide their actions in the moment” (p. 12). If teachers are adept at exposing student thinking “in the moment,” they can address student misunderstanding prior to the unit ending and the summative assessment being administered and graded. This challenge seems potentially difficult to address in a student teaching practicum, especially as student teachers are learning so much simultaneously. I sought to better understand how cooperating teachers assisted student teachers in learning to expose student thinking, especially “in the moment.”

The next challenge Kennedy (2016) identified was containing student behavior, both for safety and to minimize distraction during instruction. To address this challenge, teachers should create a space that is rich with rules and routines and continually oversee and remind students of expectations. At this point, it is important to stress that Kennedy believes these four challenges “are continually present in the classroom and all four must be addressed simultaneously and

continually” (p. 13). These challenges cannot be compartmentalized; rather, they occur at once and require teachers to navigate and address them concurrently. Novice teachers often indicated the classroom management was both a difficulty and priority for them, with Meister and Melnick (2003) finding that one in five new teacher respondents felt unprepared when managing the classroom. It is important to examine how cooperating teacher assist in this practice.

The final challenge Kennedy (2016) identified was accommodating personal needs while still addressing the first four challenges. Ultimately, teachers need to “create an atmosphere that he or she is comfortable living in” (p. 13). Kennedy tasked teacher educators with being clear about the challenges teachers will need to address but also “be[ing] clear about the variety of ways these challenges can be met and the importance of finding strategies that are consistent with their own personal needs” (p. 13). This problem is often overlooked, especially when novice teachers are struggling to address the demands of the students they teach and the other responsibilities they have, both professionally and personally. Again, Kennedy stressed the difficulty of addressing these five challenges because they can conflict with each other –students are human, so their responses to teachers’ instruction is fairly unpredictable, and so much of teaching is contextual and can vary by day, school, group, and even social and current events. However, Kennedy also believed teachers’ abilities to persist rely on addressing all five challenges even though they are difficult and conflicting. Again, when we think about student teachers in their field experiences, and the pressure they face as they obtain practical experience and real-life training, addressing these five challenges seems even more overwhelming. However, Kennedy’s framework proved to be a possibly helpful tool. If we can understand learning to teach as learning how to address these problems, then we can better examine the purpose and success of the student teaching practicum.

Overall, Kennedy's (2016) framework is interesting in that it is not prescriptive. She does not implore teacher educators do the following to ensure prospective teachers learn to teach. Instead, she examines the common challenges teachers face in learning to teach. Teacher educators should make efforts to address these challenges in preparing teachers based on context and personal need. For cooperating teachers, who are also teacher educators, I hope my study sheds light not only on *how* they addressed these challenges in their work with student teachers, but how they addressed them simultaneously even though they are at times conflicting. While Kennedy's framework to "parse teacher practice" is much simpler than the three that preceded it, it is still complex, subjective, and contextual. As Kennedy suggests, teachers need to address all five problems simultaneously, which is difficult as it is. Additionally, she suggests they are at times conflicting. This added a layer of complexity to the process of learning to teach.

Theoretical Framework: Caring and Moral Education

As stated in the introduction of this paper, my interest in the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic sprang from my own experiences as student teacher approximately twelve years ago. So much of that experience seemed serendipitous –I had the good fortune of working with thoughtful cooperating teachers who provided me what seemed to be an almost perfect balance of support and freedom. I was given space to try, experiment, fail, and grow while my cooperating teachers fulfilled their responsibilities for both the students we taught and myself. Since then, I have wondered if that experience was only mildly accidental. Luck may have led to me working with these cooperating teachers, but they also brought something to the dynamic that led to perceived increased success. I have since acted as a cooperating teacher to two student teachers and have thought about my own role as a cooperating teacher and the space I attempted to provide for the preservice teachers I mentored and worked alongside with varying degrees of

success. A successful student teaching experience is multifaceted. There is the pedagogical component, which Kennedy (2016) began to address in her problem-posing framework, and there is the relational component that interacts with how student teachers are able approach those problems.

The important thing to remember about the student teaching experience is that it happens in a context and web of relationships. The primary relationship is between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. It is complex because it is situated in a relationship that is not a traditional hierarchy but is also about the cooperating teacher playing an important role in the student teacher's learning to teach. It is both an expert/novice relationship and a collaborative, mutually beneficial one. It is both intimate and involves their daily lived working experiences, but still distant in that it is a professional dynamic. I explore a feminist theory that will frame both the literature on the core practices of cooperating teachers and the relational components of the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic. I argue that these two frameworks are best for explaining this relationship because they include components that traditional teacher preparation might overlook: moral education, caring, power negotiations, and empowerment.

American feminist, educator, and philosopher Nel Noddings explored the role of caring in her work, often addressing the field of education specifically. She introduced the concept of *moral education*, in which educators attempt to engage with students morally, so students will in turn continue to meet others morally. She believed “the maintenance and enhancement of caring” to be “the primary aim of every educational institution . . . and effort” (Noddings, 2013, p. 172). She described moral education as “one that is morally justified in social structure, curriculum content, pedagogy, and approved human interactions. It proves an educational climate in which it is both desirable and possible to be good” (Noddings, p. 172). I concur with Noddings's (2013)

concept of moral education, because it is well-developed and addresses the multitude of components of a strong educational experience. So often, we think education is about learning content or material; in reality, that is one portion of a complex synthesis of skills, practices, and behaviors. Noddings believed the teacher's responsibility was to engage in moral education with her students. I am interested in Noddings's explanation of moral education; however, I am interested in applying it to the student teachers' educational experience in which the cooperating teacher provides a morally educational experience for her student teacher—by which I mean a student teaching practicum that fulfills Noddings's definition of moral education. The components of Noddings's moral education worked together to create a healthy, responsible learning experience for the student, which is what student teachers need in learning to teach.

Furthermore, caring, both giving and receiving it, is a basic human need. An important priority that Noddings stresses is the importance of embracing the complexity of education, specifically regarding the process. Her belief in the importance of caring does not suggest that process and product are not important. Rather, caring, teaching, and learning must work together, coexist, and at times, take a figurative back seat to one another. Noddings's assertion was that caring, while not the sole priority of teachers, is a fundamental practice in which teachers (or teacher educators) should engage in their work with students (or student teachers).

Noddings (2013) then broke down the role of the *one-caring*, or teacher. For the one-caring, her aim is to enhance caring in herself and with the people with whom she comes in contact. She is, first, the one-caring and second, "enactor of specialized functions" (p. 176). Noddings did not believe that the teacher does not provide pedagogical support, but instead believed "she is prepared to put her energy in the service of his [the student's] projects" by listening to the student and looking at things "through his eyes and ears" (p. 177). Furthermore,

the one-caring has two tasks: “to stretch the student’s world by presenting an effective selection of that world. . . and to work cooperatively with the student in his struggle toward competence in that world” (p 178). The one-caring is tasked with both helping the student understand the world *and* participate in it. The teacher does this through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation.

To begin, teachers need to demonstrate or model moral behavior to teach students to become moral themselves. Noddings (2008) believes when a teacher models moral behavior and caring, students are more likely to learn caring and demonstrate moral behavior themselves. According to Noddings, “the modeling is an inevitable by-product of genuine caring” (p. 169). That is, teachers do not model caring because it is what caring teachers do. Rather, teachers who genuinely care organically model this for students. Modeling caring might include making efforts to learn about the student’s needs and background, talking, listening, negotiating, and recognizing when it is time to take a step back and allow the teacher space to work. For student teachers, I was interested in how cooperating teachers demonstrate both that they care for their student teachers (*that is, if they do*) and that caring is an important quality for the student teachers to learn and exhibit themselves with their own (current and future) students. Caring is not necessarily an innate quality we all share. Some people are, by either nature or nurture, more caring than others. I hoped to better understand how modeling caring plays a role in the overall clinical experience.

The second act of caring is dialogue. Noddings (2013) describes the purpose of dialogue as to explore ideas, understand, interact with the other, and finally, care. Notably, the dialogue is reciprocal—the *one-caring* both talks *and* listens. It is also open-ended, cooperative, and “implies a weakening of professional structures” (p. 186). She also advocates for dialogue as a

form of dialectic in which those speaking explore their deeply held feelings and beliefs, and the feelings that come with them, to better understand the other person's feelings and beliefs with which the person does not agree. Noddings's view of the role of dialogue is that it is a reciprocal process in which both teacher and student engage to better understand one another and develop a more caring relationship. Noddings (2008) expanded on dialogue by explaining how it functions in language (expanded and polished), logic (learned, exercised, corrected, applied), thinking (encouraged within safety), problems (shared and addressed respectfully), connections (made among disciplines), and knowledge (transmitted informally) (p. 170). In general, dialogue between the *one-caring* and *cared-for* should be open, exploratory, and reciprocal. Noddings's (2008, 2013) beliefs about dialogue are interesting when we think about the student teaching experience. I was curious as to how the nature of the dialogue in which cooperating teachers engage with their student teachers affects the overall clinical experience, including the frequency, type, purpose, and tone of the dialogue.

The third caring act, practice, is situated heavily in the role of students practicing care themselves. Noddings (2013) suggests that students participate in community service-like activities (caring for other humans, animals, or the environment) to develop their own caring competence. While this aspect of practice is not necessarily relevant to student teachers, the importance of them learning caring competence is. Noddings asserts that students participating in a range of service activities will help "students to stay in touch with the intellectual objects of their schooling" (p. 191). This component of being the *one-caring* could be applied to teacher educators working with student teachers, as well. Noddings believes that exploring a broad range of service activities and experiences will lead to an introspective look at the subject within individual lives and experiences. This will encourage the student to interact with the subject

matter and “make direct, receptive contact with it . . .” (p. 191). Noddings proposes that teachers offering experience with a variety of subject matters make up a curriculum that is aimed at receptivity and relatedness. While student teachers are not necessarily able to participate in various service activities in addition to their clinical work, teacher educators can provide multiple types of experiences within that fieldwork to address this component of caring such as attending student games and activities and parent teacher conferences or meetings. I was interested in exploring how cooperating teachers model and help develop this kind of dialogue and practice with student teachers, especially while still being cognizant of the student teacher’s own needs.

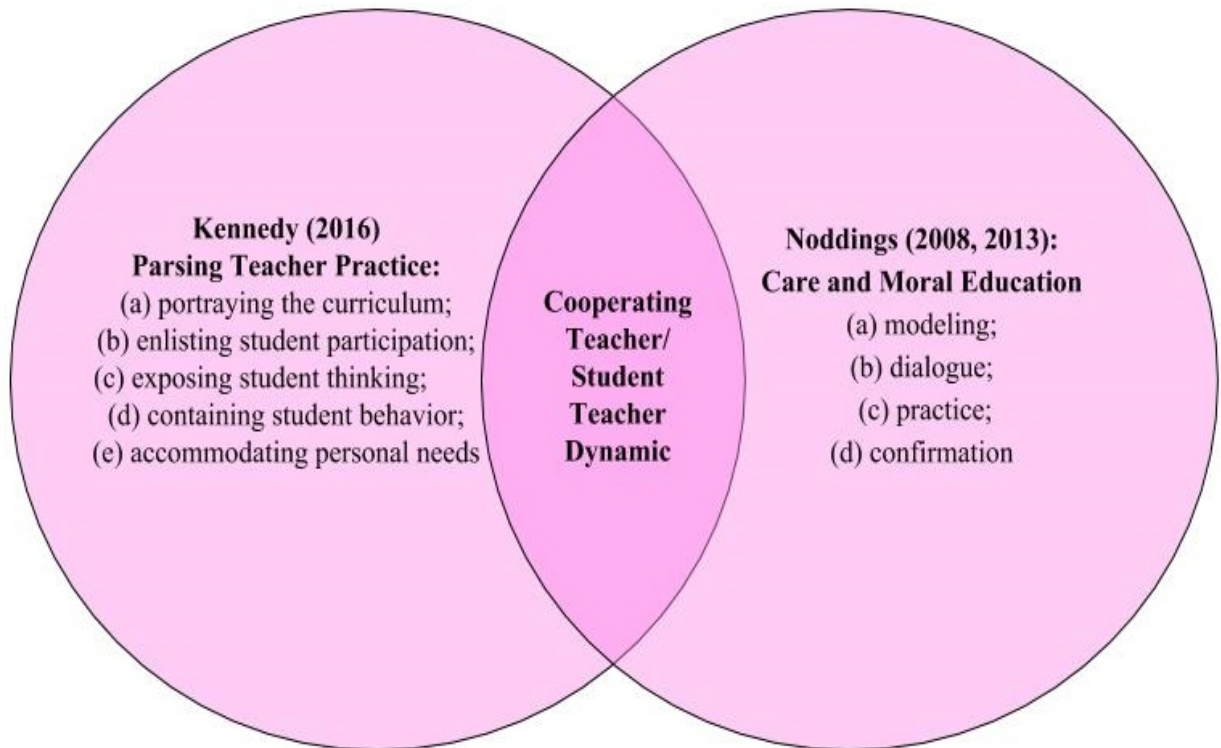
The final component of enacting the role of *one-caring* is confirmation or evaluating the *cared-for* in some way. This practice can seem at odds with caring. Providing a grade or evaluation to a student can intrude upon the caring relationship they are building. The *one-caring* may struggle between the student’s “employing community” or school of education and the student himself (Noddings, 2013, p. 194). Since Noddings (2013) stresses the relational component of the student/teacher dynamic, the evaluative requirement can become difficult. She noted that sometimes teacher and student just explore without creating a final product and that “confirmation refers to the carer’s conscious act of affirming or confirming the morally best in another” (Noddings, 2008, p. 171). This, too, can be the case with a cooperating and student teacher. The need to evaluate the student teacher’s progress is understandably important but the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship is built on trust and collaboration, which can make the evaluative/confirmation component complex and even counterproductive.

However, Noddings (2013) is not suggesting that evaluation is unnecessary. Rather, the *public* nature of it is, and could lead to damaging the relationship. Furthermore, since the student

teacher and cooperating teacher are working cooperatively, the evaluation is really one of both teacher *and* student. The teacher is not only interested in his¹ (the student teacher's) "intellectual life" or growth but also his "ethical life" (p. 196). Therefore, while evaluation is necessary and even important, the manner in which teachers enact it should focus on the individual and his growth; it should be completed in cooperation with the student, as well. As I set out to examine the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic, especially the relational components of it, I wonder how the formal evaluative requirement impacts it. Again, while there is merit for the evaluative nature of the experience, its effects on the experience or the participants' relationship is worth further examination and analysis. In this dissertation, I sought to better understand the role of feedback and evaluation within the student teaching practicum and how it coincided with, if at all, Nodding's (2008, 2013) beliefs about the role of confirmation in a caring relationship.

Figure 1 demonstrates *how* I framed my inquiry into the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic, both instructionally and relationally. While there is a healthy amount of research on the instructional component of the student teaching practicum, and that research is sometimes supplemented with data about the relational component of it, a framework that looks at them equally and in tandem does not exist. This overlap and cooperation of both the instructional and relational practices is what guided my data collection and analysis. This overlap is what I refer to as the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic.

¹ Noddings (2013) refers to the *one-caring* as *she* or *her* and to the *cared-for* as *he* or *him*.

Figure 1*Feminist Conceptual and Theoretical Framework for Student Teaching*

Chapter Three: Literature Review

The purpose of this review is to synthesize recent literature regarding the student teaching or preservice teacher mentoring experience in terms of qualities of a preservice teacher mentors or cooperating teachers. It is by no means an exhaustive review of the literature. Instead, I focused on empirical studies, literature reviews, and conceptual pieces written within the last 19 years that explored the relationship and dynamics of student teachers and cooperating teachers. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015) identified this as “a time frame [that] coincided with new accountability expectations and the emerging policy focus on teacher quality/teacher preparation” (p. 12). This time frame speaks to the student teaching practicum which is an important component of teacher preparation.

I use the following search terms: “preservice teacher mentoring,” “cooperating teacher student teacher experience*,” “mentor* student teachers.” From there, I looked for pieces written after 1999 that addressed the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship, focusing specifically on the roles and actions of the cooperating teachers(s). The reference lists at the end of pieces often proved to be extremely helpful in locating further pieces, as did reading work by researchers seemingly interested in the student teacher practicum. Ultimately, I was left with empirical studies, literature reviews, and conceptual pieces that described what effective and ineffective cooperating teachers and student teaching practica looked like in practice. One additional note: I only included pieces that featured work around the traditional student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. While there are other models teacher education programs implement, with multiple student teachers or cooperating teachers, I focused only on the traditional model of one student teacher and one cooperating teacher as that was the focus of this dissertation study.

After reviewing the literature, I indicated five categories of core practices of cooperating teachers for student teachers: (a) collaborating with student teachers; (b) supporting student teachers emotionally; (c) supporting student teachers professionally; (d) supporting student teachers pedagogically; and (e) sharing power. These core practices were positive, helpful, and played a role in student teachers' development as teachers. Next, I applied the conceptual and theoretical frameworks I described in the previous sections to these literature review findings to explore how the research about student teaching has been explored and explained, focusing specifically on Kennedy's (2016) problem posing framework, Noddings's (2008, 2013) beliefs about moral education and caring with the goal of understanding what has been studied regarding the core practices in the clinical experience, and also, what has not.

Collaborating with Student Teachers

As with most relational occupations, collaboration is a key component of the student teaching practicum. Cooperating teachers and student teachers should collaborate to address student needs and provide thoughtful, responsible instruction. Specifically, collaboration proved to be a significant core practice that led to student teachers taking more risks and developing confidence and many studies explored the role of collaboration, both when planning and teaching. To begin, however, I explore the research on the core practice of collaboration in general. Izadina's (2015) study explored how mentoring relationships led to changes in preservice teachers' professional identities. She conducted semi-structured interviews, observations, and collected reflective journals as teachers moved through two student teaching placements. Her study explores a lot of the perceptions student teachers hold about their field experiences and roles as teachers. She found that a collaborative, supportive relationship led to student teachers developing confidence to take risks and experiment with their instruction. The

student teachers with the more positive views of their field experiences indicated their cooperating teachers were experts who were willing to provide the time and space to work together and share knowledge. In a study that explored how the mentoring relationship and participants' positionality could be disrupted, Patrick (2013) found that student teachers craved a more collaborative student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship but did not have one. Similarly, Anderson (2007) concluded that while student teachers were grateful for autonomy, some also craved a more collaborative relationship with their cooperating teachers. Findings from a study by Rajuan et al. (2007) found that student teachers expected collaborative relationships with their student teachers "to better understand how to *improve, help, discuss* and *share* dilemmas that occur spontaneously in classroom situations" (p. 234). Levin and Rock (2003) examined the effects of collaborative action research on both cooperating and student teachers and found a variety of benefits for both parties such as more opportunities to work together and understand the partner's pedagogical beliefs and relationship building. Caires et al. (2012) found that sharing experiences (i.e., joint exploration of beliefs, joint construction of meanings) led to further self-exploration or exploration of the teaching profession. Similarly, findings by Clarke (2006) indicated that when student teachers and cooperating teachers shared their own lives, experiences, and backgrounds, they could explore how these factors "shape their work as educators" (p. 917). In all, collaborative skills and practices are an important part of the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic.

Regarding collaboration specifically, Noddings (2008, 2013) discusses the caring relationships teachers have with their students and the importance of dialogue and confirmation. The cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic is intrinsically collaborative, but to what extent varies. Both components of her caring framework require a trusting, open, and honest

relationship. In the studies that indicated collaboration was a key part of the clinical experience, both the cooperating and student teacher contributed to the work, even though the cooperating teacher might be seen as the expert.

Co-planning: According to recent research, it is imperative for cooperating teachers to understand the importance of collaborative planning with their student teachers because doing so often led to improved lessons and instructional strategies. Nilsson and van Driel (2010) were interested in, among other things, the instructional, pedagogical, and subject matter knowledge student teachers gained from their mentors while collaboratively planning and reflecting on each other's science lessons. They found that the cooperating teachers helped the student teachers recognize how their planned instruction could be improved before delivery. For example, one cooperating teacher suggested the student teacher explain a planned experiment to her the way she would to the students, engaging in a sort of role-playing scenario. Furthermore, the student teachers learned about their own subject matter knowledge when they explained "*what* and *how* they wanted to teach" to their cooperating teachers (p. 1312). Lastly, issues of pedagogy such as pacing and classroom management are "extensively school-based" and cooperating teachers, through both modeling and collaborative planning and discussion, assisted student teachers in understanding how to interpret and manage student behavior and facilitate class discussions.

The benefits of co-planning varied but a key commonality was the generosity of the cooperating teacher throughout this core practice, whether that be with time or resources. In a survey by Montgomery and Akerson (2019) on student teachers' perceptions of collaboration during the practicum, 89% of participants considered co-planning with their cooperating teacher productive. Additionally, participants indicated co-planning helped develop a deeper understanding of curriculum (72%), built their confidence (70%) and prepared them for future

collaborative work (89%). Fairbanks et al. (2000) found that developing curriculum together through a “give-and-take” conversation allowed the two to learn from other another, offer suggestions, share differing opinions, and ask questions (p. 106). The cooperating teachers even learned from their student teachers during this process. For example, one cooperating teacher began to “question his practice and consider alternate approaches” (p. 109). Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) indicated that student teachers appreciated when co-planning occurred well in advance and cooperating teachers shared resources. According to Barnett and Friedrichsen (2015), co-planning units led to the student teacher’s development and knowledge of instructional strategies.

When co-planning, another common factor was the manner in which the cooperating teachers spoke with and challenged their student teachers. Smith (2005) found that co-planning was a potentially rich aspect of the cooperating teacher/student teacher experience but required “negotiating a shared discourse” which could be difficult for cooperating teachers who are working with a cooperating teacher with more experience and power (p. 68). Nguyen (2009) asserted that student and cooperating teachers who took a “pedagogical and philosophical inquiry stance” could challenge one another’s beliefs and values while co-constructing knowledge (p. 660). The pair could work together to improve lessons and think more critically about their planning and intentions. According to Graves (2010), regular communication (both face-to-face and through dialogic journals) about planning and teaching led to positive relationships and a lack of it led to negative ones.

The first problem Kennedy (2016) poses in her framework, portraying the curriculum, could be addressed through collaboration. Kennedy speaks to the difficulties teachers face in deciding both *what* to teach and *how* to teach it. Co-planning with a cooperating teacher would

make this process a bit less daunting. Cooperating teachers are familiar with both the curriculum and instructional strategies. During co-planning sessions, cooperating teachers guide student teachers' thinking, address their questions and concerns, and help them work through plans for addressing students' needs so student teachers can properly and effectively portray the curriculum.

Furthermore, Noddings's (2013) belief that dialogue is an important component of caring is evident in the enactment of co-planning. The *one-caring*, in both talking and listening to the student teacher, is demonstrating she cares but is also allowing the student teacher to work through ideas and feel his contributions are valuable. Noddings's (2013) assertion that dialogue is reciprocal is also applicable to co-planning and the literature indicated it was beneficial for both the cooperating and student teacher (Fairbanks et al., 2000; Nguyen, 2009).

Co-teaching: Co-teaching was originally a construct in which a general education and special education teacher work together to deliver instruction in a class made up of both general education and special education students (Cook & Friend, 1995). This construct can be applied to the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. It has recently become more common during clinical fieldwork, likely to take advantage of there being two adults in the room and maintain cohesion for the students. In this case, the role of the cooperating teacher is not didactic, in which the preservice teacher silently observes before assuming responsibility and the mentor provides feedback to the preservice teacher after the lesson; nor is it a traditional co-teaching model in which both teachers have equal power and responsibility in the classroom. While both teachers share all aspects of planning and teaching, the power dynamic cannot be truly shared because the cooperating teacher is the teacher of record and with that comes responsibilities that student teacher cannot have. Instead, the cooperating teacher is positioned as both guide *and* co-learner.

Within co-teaching, there is an obvious relational component: two people are working together and simultaneously to achieve a shared goal. However, the cooperating teacher inherently has more authority in the classroom and I am interested in how this practice both helps the student teacher's growth and possibly hinders it.

Recently, there has been a trend toward student teachers and cooperating teachers co-teaching as opposed to the traditional construct of the student teacher teaching independently while the cooperating teacher observes and provides feedback (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach et al., 2010; Heck et al., 2008). While different researchers implemented or studied the practice in different forms, the benefits of cooperating teachers engaging in the process proved to be beneficial for student teachers, themselves, and the students in the class.

Research indicates that a truly collaborative understanding of co-teaching, in which co-teaching begins from the moment the student teacher walks into the classroom, is beneficial for both the preservice teacher and the mentor (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach et al., 2010; Heck et al., 2008; Kamens, 2007). The cooperating teacher can maintain an *active* presence in the classroom, rather than simply handing the class over to the preservice teacher while the cooperating teacher observes the student teacher from the back or side of the room (Bacharach et al., 2010; Heck et al., 2008; Kamens, 2007; Nilsson & van Driel, 2010).

The benefits for cooperating teachers vary based on the teacher and the context; however, in general, they could build and maintain relationships with the students they will teach once the preservice teacher completes his or her clinical experience. Additionally, the preservice teacher benefits from potentially enhanced collaboration and communication skills, better understanding of curriculum and co-planning, and enhanced classroom management and instructional leadership skills (Heck et al., 2008). Teacher candidates also expressed feeling more established

as students saw them as “real teacher[s]” (Bacharach & Heck, 2012). Scantlebury et al. (2008) found that the co-planning aspect of co-teaching became a professional development activity because “teachers shared ideas, reflected on past experiences, and collectively developed mutual understandings for practice” (p. 972). It also led to a mutual understanding of student goals and classroom instruction. Soslau et al. (2018), in their study, examined the role “huddling” played in the student teachers’ learning while co-teaching with the cooperating teacher. They described huddling as “brief impromptu conversations that often take place during teaching enactment” (p. 100). They found that student teachers initiated the majority of huddles, which focused on classroom management and instructional strategies. Huddles were beneficial because they provided a further opportunity for student teachers to improve their instructional practices in the moment. Results from two studies indicated that the co-teaching model’s biggest flaw was the lack of time they could incorporate for co-planning (Eick et al., 2004; Guise et al., 2017). While this co-teaching construct is fairly new and underused, research indicates it is a valuable practice for cooperating teachers and student teachers to explore in their partnerships. However, findings by Guise et al. (2017) spoke to the need for attention to an understanding of learning and communities of practice in order to implement it well, as working together to promote learning requires dismantling power structures.

In all, collaboration between student teachers and cooperating teachers is a core practice that benefits both involved because they develop shared practices, build a stronger relationship, and learn how to communicate more effectively. Furthermore, cooperating teachers found the opportunity to teach with another person productive and eye opening as they began to question their own practice and intentions.

When co-teaching, student teachers can focus on three of the problems Kennedy (2016) presented: (a) portraying the curriculum; (b) enlisting student participation; and (c) containing student behavior. Research has indicated that co-teaching during the student teaching practicum was beneficial for both the cooperating and student teacher. If teacher educators are preparing teachers to address the problems Kennedy poses, co-teaching is an efficient way to do so. For example, when the student teacher and cooperating teacher are huddling, they are discussing ways to improve or alter the work, whether that has to do with student participation and behavior or the content or method(s) of delivery (Soslau et al., 2018). Regarding Kennedy's (2016) challenge of exposing student thinking, she suggests it is done in the moment. Co-teaching is a way to address this need. Co-teachers can communicate about what they see and experience while they are working together and with students. While there are many benefits to co-teaching, the most important factor is that it addresses issues contextually and in the moment.

Again, co-teaching is also a relational activity. Therefore, Noddings (2008, 2013) elucidates how the relationships between the cooperating teacher and student teacher inform their ability to engage in the core practices of learning to teach and collaborate. Co-teaching requires finesse regarding how people speak to and support one another, which both researchers address in their work. While co-teaching positions both participants as teachers, the inherent power dynamic is an aspect of the student teacher practicum that I will discuss further in a later section of this dissertation.

Supporting Student Teachers Emotionally

As with most relationship-based processes, researchers have found cooperating teachers need to provide emotional support to their student teachers. Although the sample size was somewhat small (n=28), Singh (2017) created a questionnaire based on previous research. Its

purpose was to gauge the quality of student teachers' clinical experience. Singh found that 75% of participants felt their field experience "provided opportunities to practice teaching in a controlled and supportive environment" (p. 187). The student teachers felt the classroom was safe and they could take risks without fear or judgment. According to Rajuan et al. (2007), student teachers expected their cooperating teachers to be *considerate, patient, and calm*, to serve as a "safety net" and appreciate student teachers' efforts and hoped to establish a personal relationship. In a study in which they wanted to examine student teachers' perceptions about their practice during field experience, Caires et al. (2012) found that student teachers who received emotional support had positive perceptions of their achievements and progress. According to Koerner et al. (2002), cooperating teachers needed to be caring and careful of their student teachers' feelings, supportive, honest, and trustworthy. Similarly, Ambrosetti (2014) concluded that a supportive mentoring relationship helped ensure student teachers' needs were met. According to findings by Izadinia (2015), a student teacher appreciated emotional support and the feeling of "being there for her" her cooperating teacher provided (p. 5). This helped the student teacher build confidence. Malderez et al. (2007) reported that cooperating teachers should take student teachers' emotional states and welfare into account when working with them as their study confirmed what many others had already found: student teaching is a highly emotive experience and emotion could be both enabling and disabling for the student teacher.

Research indicates cooperating teachers need to listen to their student teachers, consider how they feel, and attempt to support them when they are struggling and celebrate them when they succeed. Supporting student teachers emotionally may be more difficult than the others to identify as emotions are complex and subjective and providing emotional support is not necessarily a practice one can learn to do. However, the research suggests it is an important

practice for cooperating teachers to enact and cooperating teachers should be mindful of the emotional support student teachers may need as they move through their practicum.

The fifth problem Kennedy (2016) poses is teachers accommodating personal needs while addressing the four other challenges. By supporting student teachers' emotionally, cooperating teachers are attempting to address the components of profession that are often overlooked or undervalued. As is the case in many professions, the demands of teaching often take priority over the teacher's own needs. Cooperating teachers providing this emotional support are aiding in addressing the challenge of teachers being mindful of their own needs.

Additionally, the ways in which Noddings (2008, 2013) conceptualizes caring are especially relevant regarding supporting student teachers emotionally. She believes that the role of the *one-caring* is to provide support and confirmation to the *cared-for* while she learns. This is an important piece toward enacting the practice of supporting teachers emotionally. The research indicated that *support*, *safety*, and *patience* were important to student teachers (Rajuan et al., 2007; Singh, 2017). Noddings's (2008, 2013) work on caring, especially through modeling, dialogue, and confirmation, would address these needs. Noddings (2008) suggests that caring can be modeled. By taking an interest in students' needs and backgrounds, students will develop their own caring and moral behavior. In this case, the students are the student teachers and her notion of modeling still applies.

Supporting Student Teachers Professionally

Part of the difficulty in teaching comes from adapting to a new work environment and negotiating the various logistical and professional components of the job. According to researchers, cooperating teachers should act as guides for student teachers, demonstrating how to go about acclimating to a school's culture or what one student teacher called "the rules of the

school and what is really going on” (Rajuan et al., 2007, p. 235). According to Singh (2017), 100% of participants in the study felt the student teaching practicum helped them “realize the realities of the school” (p. 187). Peralta and Burns (2012) conducted a study in which they examined what they called “microteaching placements” or smaller, shorter fieldwork experiences before a full student teaching placement (p. 127). They found that field experience helped preservice teachers develop professional identities. They began to understand just how much work went into one teaching day and began attempting to prioritize the amount of work teachers complete daily. In research by Fairbanks et al. (2000), findings indicated that student teachers struggled with integrating into their new placement’s culture and norms. For example, cooperating teachers helped student teachers develop relationships with faculty and staff and provided advice about balancing instructional responsibilities with non-teaching responsibilities (making copies, contacting parents, grading).

According to Patrick (2013), student teachers appreciated acknowledgement by staff and faculty at their student teaching placements. Cooperating teachers should act as liaisons between the student teachers who are likely new to the building, and the faculty and staff, with whom the cooperating teacher should be familiar (Patrick, 2013). Caires et al. (2012) found that satisfactory conditions and acceptance by the school community contributed positively to student teachers’ senses of professional identity and self-fulfillment. According to Hobson et al. (2006), student teachers viewed their field placements favorably when they could collaborate and communicate with other teachers and the principal and were treated professionally. Again, the relational piece proved critical in helping student teachers navigating their professional world.

Furthermore, the researchers found that student teachers appreciated being able to observe other teachers in the building. Malderez et al. (2007) found when student teachers did

not feel embraced or respected by the staff at their placement, they could potentially feel isolated or unwanted. When other teachers welcomed student teachers into their classrooms and offered assistance, student teachers felt increased collegiality. Larkin (2013) suggested cooperating teachers “connect student teachers to the larger political world of the school” including teachers’ legal rights and responsibilities, budgets, contract negotiations, and evaluations (p. 42). The professional aspect of teaching will be present in any school at which a student teacher eventually works and preparing student teachers to navigate that terrain will help them adjust to their future fulltime positions. Furthermore, the research again points to the need for relational support and interaction during the clinical experience.

Preparing teachers professionally is a core practice that may come more easily to some cooperating teachers than others. Having strong relationships with other faculty and staff is not a requirement for teachers but is helpful for a variety of reasons. Acting as a liaison and model for student teachers in this capacity will not only make their experiences more manageable but demonstrate the importance of developing their own relationships with colleagues when they go on to teach fulltime.

Kennedy’s (2016) framework does not address this core practice. Her work focuses mostly on the work teachers do with their students with the exception of accommodating personal needs. Even through that challenge, however, she does not mention the professional community in which teachers work. However, Noddings’s (2008, 2013) work on caring does support this core practice. As cooperating teachers strive to assist in their student teachers’ growth, and do so by modeling caring, and engaging in dialogue and practice, student teachers are, ideally, being prepared for all facets of teaching, including the professional component of the job.

Supporting Student Teachers Pedagogically

A large portion of the cooperating teachers' core practices revolved around the pedagogical support teachers need to do the work of in-classroom teaching of their students. Singh (2017) found that 100% of participants felt that the student teaching practicum helped them understand the “realities of . . . [the] classroom” (p. 187), and 82% felt it increased their pedagogical content knowledge. Regarding general pedagogical support, cooperating teachers provided instructional support, modeled instruction for their student teachers, and provided feedback to their student teachers that helped them better understand and reflect on their work in the classroom.

Providing Instructional Support: Cooperating teachers are sources of support for the instruction student teachers deliver and provide quite a bit of assistance in *how* student teachers teach their content. However, this core practice is multifaceted and complex as it requires a delicate balance of support and autonomy and is often contextual and based upon the specific needs of the student teachers. To begin, Fairbanks et al. (2000) analyzed the Effective Mentoring in English Education (EMEE) project to understand the role mentors played in learning to teach. One key finding was that cooperating teachers provide access to their “craft knowledge” defined as “thinking which underlies experienced teachers’ classroom practice” (p. 106). Researchers have found that many mentors were unwilling to allow student teachers to try what they were learning in their university coursework (Patrick, 2013; Tannebaum, 2016). Ultimately, Tannebaum (2016) indicated that one thing student teachers wanted was rarely provided to them—to satisfy the “urge to ‘experiment’” or autonomy (p. 102). Similarly, Koerner et al. (2002) indicated it was important for cooperating teachers to provide autonomy to student teachers, allowing them to “take over” (p. 47). Likewise, Hobson et al. (2006) and Frick et al.

(2010) found that student teachers who most valued their field experiences appreciated being able to try new ideas and experiment. Similarly, according to Rajuan et al. (2007), the opportunity to experiment and “explore their own ways of teaching” was important to student teachers (p. 236). While cooperating teachers at times enacted the core practice of providing instructional support, they also struggled to provide autonomy to their student teachers and allow them to enact practices from their coursework. These contradictory practices may point to the lack of trust between the student and cooperating teachers, or the difficulty cooperating teachers have with their students’ progress being someone else’s responsibility.

However, there were positive results from cooperating teachers providing instructional support, as well. Nilsson and van Driel (2010) found that conferring about *what* the student teacher’s intentions were behind a pedagogical choice during planning time led to student teachers focusing more on pupils’ learning rather than just the “delivering” of instruction (p. 1312). Barnett and Friedrichsen (2015) conducted a case study to better understand a cooperating teacher’s strategies for developing a student teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge and found that field experience played a role in the student teacher adopting a more “student-centered orientation” (p. 658). Singh (2017) found that participants felt their field experience helped them “clarify theories of teaching and learning” (85.7%); “develop rapport with children” (96.4%); “develop knowledge of class procedures” (96.4%); and learn about “informal assessment procedures” (89.2%) (p. 187). Like Singh (2017), Peralta and Burns (2012) indicated that field experience helped preservice teachers bridge theory, course content, and practice, plan effectively, and interact with and provide feedback to students.

Regarding pedagogical support, it seems that student teachers value assistance in taking chances and enacting the strategies about which they learn in their university coursework.

Providing instructional support requires cooperating teachers to remain comfortable as student teachers enact practices and strategies with which neither may be familiar. However, in general, focusing on *what* student teachers do in the classroom and *why* they plan to do it is an important practice for cooperating teachers to enact.

Instructional support addresses two challenges Kennedy (2016) poses: (a) portraying the curriculum; and (b) enlisting student participation. Teacher educators, as Kennedy states, should work with preservice teachers in examining their instructional choices and strategies in delivering content. The instructional support cooperating teachers provide often spoke to these challenges. Furthermore, the methods teachers use play a large role in student participation and the support student teachers receive in delivering instruction. The research behind instructional support also focuses on the students' reactions toward and participation in the instruction delivered by the teacher and/or student teacher. However, it also seems that findings regarding instructional support are somewhat inconsistent. While cooperating teachers often strove to support their student teachers' instructional practices, many struggled to allow them the autonomy and freedom to take risks or enact what they learned in their teacher education coursework

Modeling Instruction: Another core practice that led to supporting student teachers' pedagogical practice was modeling instruction. Singh (2017) found that 100% of the participants in the study felt field experience "provided opportunities to observe models of exemplary practice" (p. 187). Anderson (2007) argued the importance of modeling because oftentimes "those were the only mental maps they [student teachers] had" (p. 314). For some student teachers, the only teaching they experience outside of their coursework and experience as students themselves is what their cooperating teachers model for them. Nilsson and van Driel

(2010) found when student teachers observed their cooperating teachers, they better understood how to work with pupils, pace lessons, and “interpret classroom events” (p. 1313). Furthermore, when student teachers observed their cooperating teachers, the student teachers could better understand how to manage unforeseen situations in the classroom (i.e., none of the students in the class understood or attempted to answer the teacher’s question). Peralta and Burns (2012) found that field experiences allowed preservice teachers the opportunity to observe their cooperating teachers’ teaching, management, and organization strategies. Similarly, according to Anderson et al. (2005), observing their cooperating teachers led to student teachers having a better understanding of classroom management techniques, and pedagogy (confidence and enthusiasm, providing clear instructions, and teaching ideas). In a study by Barnett and Friedrichsen (2015), the cooperating teacher modeling critical reflection of instructional strategies invited the student teacher to do the same.

Many studies reveal the benefits student teachers experience by having strong models. Fairbanks et al. (2000) found observing their cooperating teachers and then talking about what they observed provided student teachers with access to the cooperating teachers’ *craft knowledge* or “thinking which underlies experienced teachers’ classroom practice” (p. 106). By observing their cooperating teachers’ practice, student teachers could better understand “professional knowledge that ought to be emulated but not slavishly imitated” (p. 107). Furthermore, cooperating teachers modeled “interpersonal interactions” with both students and other professionals and helped the student teachers negotiate their own professional relationships with other faculty and staff in the building (p. 105). Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) found that student teachers highlighted “their cooperating teachers’ ability to model effective” practices as beneficial, specifically instructional practices, classroom management, and student support.

Nguyen (2009) concluded that the best way to maintain a supportive student teaching environment was to model instruction and strategies with which the student teacher was struggling.

In general, student teachers benefited greatly from observing their cooperating teachers' practice. It is important for cooperating teachers to model instruction as it helps student teachers better understand the practical components of teaching and the work that goes on in the classroom in real time. When cooperating teachers model instruction for their student teachers, they are addressing many of the problems Kennedy (2016) poses, specifically how to portray the curriculum, enlist student participation, expose student thinking, and contain student behavior.

Providing Feedback to and Interacting with Student Teachers: The manner(s) in which cooperating teachers interact with their student teachers proved to be a significant core practice. Student teachers benefit from concrete, specific, and collaborative feedback. Clarke (2006) was interested in how cooperating teachers framed and reframed their mentoring practices, using aspects of reflection to better understand these practices. His study revealed that all five cooperating teachers recognized they needed professional development in providing feedback and interacting with their student teachers. Barnett and Friedrichsen (2015) found that having discussions about content, instructional strategies, and assessments led to the development of the student teachers' knowledge of students, content, and instruction. According to Clarke (2006) and Sayeski and Paulsen (2012), student teachers appreciated explicit feedback with specific practices on which to focus for future lessons. Chaliés et al. (2004) conducted a study examining the interactions between cooperating teachers and student teachers in post-lesson interviews. Findings indicated that oftentimes, the interactions were superficial meaning "one of the teachers (or both simultaneously) was involved in a separate interpretive process in

parallel to his participation in the discussion” (p. 767). However, despite this finding, they also found post-lesson interviews assisted in professional learning for the student teachers.

The way cooperating teachers delivered feedback was also addressed through research. In a study by Nilsson and van Driel (2010), cooperating teachers stressed the importance of student teachers’ intentions behind their choices, which encouraged the student teachers to focus on the student learning *in addition* to instruction. The cooperating teachers suggested rephrasing the question or simplifying it so students might consider it in a different way. (i.e., “What happens to the water?” could become “What *is* water?”). According to Izadinia (2015), student teachers valued honest and continuous feedback and Nguyen (2009) indicated that student teachers found feedback most helpful when it was timely. Grossman et al. (2009) reported that feedback “can help novices develop ways of seeing and understanding complex practices” (p. 285). Overall, timely and honest feedback was helpful for prospective teachers.

Providing feedback was also important when completed through reflective exercises. According to Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) and Eick et al. (2004), the best feedback was multimodal, with cooperating teachers utilizing written feedback on lesson plans and written weekly assessments in addition to verbal feedback. In support of this need for multimodal feedback, Fairbanks et al. (2000) found the use of dialogue journals to be beneficial when student teachers were attempting to understand the choices and intentions behind their cooperating teachers’ actions and decisions. Furthermore, when cooperating teachers shared their own reflections with their student teachers, they provided access to “the process of critical examination common to many teachers” (p. 107). Lastly, these authors found that cooperating teachers posed questions for the student teachers to encourage professional growth (p. 108).

Providing both positive and negative feedback to student teachers was an important component of the student teaching practicum that led to growth. In a study by Koerner et al. (2002), results indicated it was important for cooperating teachers to give “positive and constructive feedback on successes and failures, lesson plans [and] instruction” (p. 47). Similarly, Hobson et al. (2006) found that student teachers valued feedback that was comprised of both the strong and weak aspects of the student teachers’ work. Their participants indicated that the positive feedback increased their confidence while the constructive criticism helped them improve. Not surprisingly, in the same study, student teachers who received minimal or no feedback from their cooperating teachers had negative views of their field experience. In a study by Smith and Avetisian (2011), when the student teacher’s mentor took a developmental approach to providing feedback, (“one that recognized incremental accomplishments rather than expecting immediate proficiency”), the student teacher indicated a more positive experience (p. 347). According to a study by Haciomeroglu (2013), student teachers often did not receive feedback regarding their lesson plans or instruction, which resulted in student teachers relying on their past experiences as learners as opposed to teaching practices supported by research.

Providing feedback that is timely, detailed, and multimodal is a core practice that helped student teachers grow and develop. Its use also resulted in more positive experiences for student teachers as they could understand what they were doing well and how they needed to improve. Noddings’s (2013) explanation of the role of dialogue in caring addresses this core practice. Noddings’s focus on the speaking *and* listening required in a caring relationship speaks to the need for open, honest, reciprocal communication. Noddings (2008) further elaborates on dialogue and its functions in logic, thinking, problems, and knowledge and through feedback, cooperating teachers are addressing these components. However, what the research fails to

address is that feedback happens in a context. That context is the relationship between the two participants—so the same feedback may be experienced differently based on the relationship.

Sharing Power

The student teaching process is inherently complex and student teachers and cooperating teachers often struggle to find a balance of power within the relationship and process. However, it can be difficult to address issues of power because inherent in the cooperating teacher's role is the responsibility of evaluating the student teacher. Research indicated that cooperating teachers should find an appropriate balance in which student teachers can explore their roles as teachers without feeling either overlooked or under supported. Guise et al. (2017) found that when the cooperating teacher and student teacher engaged in a traditional practicum experience (without co-teaching), they were limited in their ability to “engage in reflective practice . . . as a result of the expert/novice dynamic” (p. 379). The lack of collaborative practice exacerbated the power dynamic that existed between the two teachers. At the same time, according to Sayeski and Paulsen (2012), student teachers indicated “‘being treated as an equal’ as an important feature in their development” (p. 125). Similarly, in a study by Graves (2010), she found that the more successful student teaching pair in her collective case study had a nonhierarchical relationship and the student teacher “was treated ‘just like another teacher’” (p. 16). Both studies revealed the importance of relationships that were collegial and free of power differentials. Furthermore, these findings lend legitimacy to the concerns indicated in the study by Guise et. al. (2017). Scantlebury et al. (2008) utilized the term *co-respect* to indicate the importance of sharing power as “teachers [cooperating and student teacher] viewed each other as peers and had the expectation that each person provided valuable insight and knowledge that improved his/her

teaching” (p. 975). This study brings to light the idea that more than person in this relationship has knowledge to offer.

The student teachers in many studies indicated the need for and benefits of a less hierarchical relationship. Frick et al. (2010) conducted a narrative analysis to explore how cooperating teachers can facilitate the transition from student to teacher/professional student teacher. They found when student teachers felt their mentors “unilaterally dictated how the mentoring relationship should unfold,” student teachers felt learning was “done to them and not with them” (Frick et al., 2010, p. 433). Furthermore, the researchers found that student teachers felt cooperating teachers who spoke over them were “diminishing their role” (p. 974). This finding speaks to the student teachers’ desire for a more equitable as opposed to hierarchical partnership. Patrick (2013) found that a lack of respect and authority was missing from the student teachers’ experiences which made the process more difficult. Student teachers often felt they could not experiment with their ideas and did not have a voice in the classroom (p. 213). Similarly, Koerner et al. (2002) indicated that student teachers wanted the space and encouragement to take risks and try new techniques. Alternatively, according to Izadinia (2015), cooperating teachers should provide support through a non-hierarchical relationship, so student teachers would be eager and comfortable sharing their views and ideas. According to Caires et al. (2012), collaborative practices eliminated competition and individualism and the pair could function more as a unit. Smith and Avetisian (2011) conducted a case study in which they compared aspects of the apprenticeship model of mentoring with a developmental approach and found that when the mentor utilized a developmental approach (letting the student teacher learn from her struggles) as opposed to an apprenticeship model (in which the student teacher follows

the lead of the cooperating teacher), the pair shared power in the relationship and the student teacher found the experience more beneficial.

Being mindful of the ways power plays a role during activities in which cooperating teachers and student teachers engage could begin to remedy the power conflicts that might arise during the clinical experience. Smith (2005) found that there was an intrinsic power dynamic that was evident even in the co-planning aspect of the work and the student teacher felt stifled and somewhat intimidated in disagreeing or making suggestions to her cooperating teacher. Similar findings by Anderson (2007) indicated that student teachers felt pressure to conform to their cooperating teachers' instructional styles and methods. Both studies demonstrate the powerful position cooperating teachers have in this partnership. Fairbanks et al. (2000) reported that cooperating teachers eventually began to recognize "their capacity to learn from their less experienced colleagues" (p. 109). In this case, the cooperating teachers and student teachers engaged in a reciprocal learning process in which both participants had expertise to share. Similarly, Anderson (2007) indicated that when student teachers described their relationship as *informal* as opposed to *formal*, reciprocal learning occurred.

Being mindful of the power dynamic and intentional about sharing it is a core practice that benefits both teachers, as cooperating teachers are more likely to learn from student teachers in a situation in which student teachers have a voice and opportunity to make suggestions. Student teachers felt more likely to have decision-making power to enact strategies and ideas when the cooperating teacher made an effort to create a relationship based less on power and more on collaboration and opportunity.

Noddings (2008, 2013) in her work on caring education speaks to sharing power. In a caring relationship, the *one-caring* works to negotiate *with* the one *cared-for* and dialogue is

reciprocal. The work is not done *to* the student but *with* her; all work is shared. Even in evaluation, Noddings (2013) suggests it occur in cooperation with the student and work to evaluate both parties.

Chapter Three: Methodology

To examine the critical experiences of cooperating and student teachers, I conducted a qualitative study. This method is appropriate for this study because qualitative research is best “when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between and researcher and the participants in the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 45). Furthermore, it was appropriate when analyzing “natural,” “real-life settings as the ‘action’ happens” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 68). In this case, the clinical experience was an authentic setting, and the data I collected was based on the actions of both the cooperating and student teacher as they happened and in context. Additionally, qualitative research is context dependent, encourages participants to elaborate on their experiences, minimizes power relationships that exist between the researcher and participants, and aids in developing theories that are “partial and inadequate” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 45). Merriam (2009) indicated qualitative research seeks to identify how people “interpret their experiences and construct their worlds” (p. 5). As I was attempting to better understand the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic based on the personal experiences of people working through this dynamic, a qualitative study complemented this goal.

Since I was interested in the experiences that cooperating teachers and student teachers consider critical during the clinical experience, a qualitative study allowed the participants to examine and share their experiences during the practicum. The field experience is contextual, occurring in sites of practice—in this case the classroom. Furthermore, one of my goals in this study was to develop a framework that can be used to make sense of the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. Qualitative research, through participants sharing their experiences, aided in the development of this framework. As I stated in the previous section,

there are frameworks to examine teacher practice and preparation, and frameworks to address the relational components of the work teachers and people do, but there is not one that addresses both. In the following section, I describe the type of qualitative study I conducted, how I recruited participants and selected sites, and finish with the types of data collected and analyzed and ethical considerations for the study.

General Qualitative Study Informed by Case Study Methods

To examine the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship, I conducted a general qualitative study that did not fulfill the qualities of a specific type, however, was informed by case study research methods. The clinical experience is a requirement for every prospective teacher. My purpose in conducting the study was not to alter the experience but observe and analyze it as it authentically exists. Furthermore, as a researcher, I explored “a real-life, contemporary bounded system” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 96). Merriam (2009) also stressed the importance of an intrinsically bounded system. For this study, the intrinsically bounded systems or cases will be the student teacher/cooperating teacher pairs. In this study, the participants completed a required clinical experience, student teaching, with a cooperating teacher, in the real-life setting of a secondary school with actual students who attend the school. The case was bound, chronologically, by the beginning and the end of the practicum experience, which was the start, and end of the semester. However, it is important to note that some of the participants’ relationships actually began the semester prior to data collection. Since I was interested in the dynamic between the cooperating teacher and student teacher, though, binding the study by this semester was appropriate for the my purpose.

I conducted a qualitative study examining four pairs of cooperating teachers and student teachers. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), this will allow for examination across multiple

contexts and make it easier to generalize while Merriam (2009) and Yin (2018) suggest a multisite study can lead to more compelling findings. When conducting case study research, the researcher is the primary collector and analyzer of data and the final product is “richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2009, p. 39). I pulled from features of descriptive case studies. According to Merriam, this type of case study will result in a robust description of the phenomenon, in this case the clinical experience of learning to teach. This description should be “complete [and] literal” (p. 43). In the following section, I elaborate on the way I constructed the framework based on the data I collected to inform the clinical field experience.

Grounded Theory

While I conducted a study using general qualitative methods, I also used grounded theory methods to build a framework. After the participants experienced the process, in this case student teaching, I developed a framework that begins to make sense of the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. Again, while there were frameworks for preparing or developing novice teachers, there is a lack of work around how we specifically prepare student teachers during the clinical experience. The clinical experience is multifaceted and complex, and there are many factors that can affect it. For example, the site, cooperating teacher, students, and the school community all come into play when thinking about this practice. A grounded theory approach was appropriate in this case because it allowed the data to generate the framework or, at the very least, “a process, an action, or an interaction” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 82). The data collected and the experiences examined, in this case the experiences of student and cooperating teachers, informed a substantive theory or framework that can then be applied to practice, the clinical experiences of preservice teachers (Merriam, 2009). While frameworks have been created, revised, and elaborated upon for teaching practices, and ample research exists regarding the

clinical/student teaching experience, what was lacking is a framework for what this particular experience of learning to teach looks like. I was interested in the critical experiences that occur during the student teacher/cooperating teacher practicum. The framework emerged spoke to this. This framework, however, emerged from the conceptual and theoretical frameworks I discussed previously (Kennedy, 2016; Noddings, 2008, 2013). In this sense, the study was not purely grounded theory in the sense of the phrase, but grounded because the data, along with previous frameworks, contributed to a new framework.

There was a specific type aspect of grounded theory in which I was especially interested and consider most relevant to the purpose of my proposed study. Charmaz (2014) proposed a social constructivist perspective regarding grounded theory. In this form of grounded theory, Charmaz stressed the researcher's interpretation of the data. She also stressed that the developed theory should focus on the experiences of participants within embedded networks, situations, and relationships. Furthermore, Charmaz purported the importance of exposing hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity. In developing a framework for student teaching, these components played an important role, especially related to the previously discussed feminist work of Noddings (2008, 2013).

Site and Participant Selection

I conducted my study in public schools in a northeastern state. I invited participants from public schools (grades K-12). The specific schools depended on the results of my recruitment efforts. To recruit students, I worked with a large state university in the Northeast, visiting students enrolled in the Clinical I course, and teachers enrolled in the university's doctoral program. The Clinical I course required 125 hours of field experience in a classroom. At the time of my recruitment, the students were completing their initial fieldwork in preparation for the

following semester, which is the student teaching portion of their coursework. They were progressing to Clinical II which was a Monday through Friday student teaching experience with the same cooperating teacher with whom they worked the previous semester. The teachers in the doctoral program were part-time students who taught in various schools within the same northeastern state. After explaining my proposed study in person, I followed up with the volunteers who were interested in participating. Their student teaching placements or school locations dictated the sites in which I conducted the research.

To recruit participants, I used purposeful sampling, allowing for the most helpful information regarding my research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Merriam (2009) suggested the first step in case study research is establishing criteria for case selection, which was student teachers or cooperating teachers in a K-12 school. However, participants' content areas were irrelevant. I was not interested in *what* they taught, and I was interested, to a degree, in *how* they taught. I was most interested in how the student teacher and cooperating teacher worked together, their dynamic, and their thoughts about content and how to deliver it to students. Since I was examining multiple groups of participants, I wanted to compare them to “draw otherwise inaccessible conclusions” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 99). All of my participants had student teaching placements that were similar enough. They worked with one other cooperating teacher at a time, at a public school in the same part of the state. All of the student teachers were in their final semester of coursework within their teacher education programs and their cooperating teachers all had experience in that role—although to different degrees.

To recruit participants, I received consent from the Graduate Program Coordinator. I recruited student teachers from the Master of Arts in Teaching clinical courses and through the undergraduate program coordinator. Finally, I approached students in the doctoral program in a

similar way, visiting a class and explaining the study and the requirements for participation. Interested students were referred to me by their professor or emailed me directly. I then emailed them information about the study and consent forms (see Appendices A, B, and C). This information included all requirements for study participation: two interviews and follow-up via email, phone, or text if necessary. It is important to note that in Appendices A, B, and C, the original requirements for the student eventually changed because of difficulty obtaining district approval with the original requirements. What I actually required of participants was much less than originally planned. Finally, the interested student teachers reached out to their cooperating teachers for their initial consent and the interested cooperating teachers did the same with their student teachers. I had four pairs of teachers willing to participate, however one student teaching participant had a split placement. She conducted half of her student teaching practicum in an elementary school with one cooperating teacher, and then moved on to a high school with a different cooperating teacher. Therefore, while I had four pairs of teachers, one student teacher was a member of two different pairs. As a result, my participants consisted of three student teachers and four cooperating teachers.

Yin (2018) stressed the importance of choosing multiple cases with the intention of either a literal or theoretical replication (p. 55). While I could not ensure theoretical replication with absolute certainty, I assumed each of the pairs would provide a unique view into the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. While similarities existed, I did not focus solely on them. In all, I was interested in the similarities, differences, and nuances of each pair. The relational aspect of the work played a role in the experiences of both the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The cases, then, worked in synthesis to ultimately address my proposed research questions.

Data Collection

Qualitative research does not dictate specific methods of data collection, so I planned to use a variety of data (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2018) suggests six forms of data collection in case study research: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. However, due to limitations within school districts in which the participants taught, I could not conduct any on-site data collection. Since I also used methods associated with grounded theory research, my data collection was not also considerate of this method of qualitative research. Ultimately, I collected data through two semi-structured interviews per participant. It was my goal to create a framework that would speak to the critical experiences of the student teaching practicum. By analyzing data with this goal in mind, I hoped to better understand how to maximize the student teaching practicum, both professionally and relationally.

Semi-structured Interviews

I conducted two separate semi-structured interviews with both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher prior to or early in the 2018 school year/semester (see Appendices D, E, F, G). I conducted the first round of interviews in August and September, prior to or in the early stages of the student teaching practicum. According to Merriam (2009), interviews are ideal for case study research as they allow in-depth, intensive data collection of a few participants, so that was my focus in my questioning. Through these interviews, I focused on the relationship that already existed between the student and cooperating teacher since they had (with the exception of one pair), worked together the previous semester. During this Clinical I experience, the student teachers spent 125 hours observing their cooperating teachers over the course of one semester (two days per week). After some observation time, they also taught a small portion of a

lesson, usually in small groups or for short periods of time. While the interview questions were preplanned, the subjectivity of the teachers' experiences required flexibility in my questions. A previous answer often dictated the following question. Because the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic is relational and contextual, the nature of the interview reflected this. Yin (2018) describes case study interviews as "guided conversations rather than structured queries" (p. 118). Merriam (2009) indicates, "less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways" which is why semi-structured interviews were best (p. 90). I was truly interested in understanding the relational dynamics of this practicum, so providing the participants the power and comfort to tell their stories was important. Questions focused on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks on which I elaborated in the previous section. That is, they were related to the problems posed by Kennedy (2016), and the relational and caring components of Noddings (2008, 2013).

At the end of the student teaching clinical experience, I conducted a second set of separate post interviews. Yin (2018) suggests that one purpose of case study interviews might be "to corroborate certain findings that you already think already have been established" (p. 119). That being said, I entered the interview without any preconceived notions and allowed the participants to provide their experiences and commentaries. These questions were similar to the questions for the first interview and built on the work they had been doing and the relationship they had continued to build. Yin (2018) identifies the importance of interviews as they "provide explanations of key events" (p. 118). This semi-structured interview focused on the semester-long practicum. Specifically, I focused on the relational aspect of the student teaching experience. This was an opportune time to allow the participants the time and space to articulate their experiences as student and cooperating teachers. Again, while I entered the interview with

preplanned questions, the subjectivity of each participant's experience required a loose, flexible approach. This would take place once the evaluation has been completed. Finally, once I had transcribed and coded my data, I followed up with participants as necessary to ask clarifying questions if necessary. This data collection was all done through email and often confirmed what I had thought. These questions often revolved around logistical or personal details of which I was unsure and needed from the participants. The majority of my findings came from the participant interviews.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2009), "the process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 169). I analyzed data as I collected it, revisiting it as the study continued over the span of approximately four months. Merriam (2009) also suggests collecting and analyzing data simultaneously. This method prevented data from becoming unfocused or repetitive. Continuous data analysis also helped me revise and modify interview questions for subsequent interviews. Yin (2018) stresses the importance of organization and data maintenance, especially when conducting case study research and collecting multiple sources of evidence from multiple cases. I saved all data, including interview transcriptions and personal notes, in a password-protected digital storage program to prevent any loss. This method also addressed efficiency and organization as everything I needed was in the same place.

Since I conducted a multisite study but using tools of grounded theory in developing a framework, Yin's (2018) method of "working your data from the 'ground up,' was an appropriate method of analysis. This is also known as inductive analysis (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). I closely examined all data looking for patterns and "useful," relevant," or "innovative concepts" (p. 169). As I revisited the data, I began to assign codes to concepts that spoke to the

critical experiences of the student teachers. These codes eventually revealed themes among the cooperating teachers' practices and the student teachers' practicum experiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) outlined methods for coding grounded theory research I used in data analysis. The first step was open coding (developing categories), axial coding (interconnecting the categories), and finally selective coding (generating propositions that relate to the categories) (p. 203). I looked across the four pairs and found "issue-relevant meanings" (p. 206). Regarding my use of grounded theory, I was especially interested in these meanings as they were the basis of my framework I constructed for use before and during the student teaching practicum. This framework became a tool that could be used as a framework to guide the clinical experience (see Figure 3).

My data analysis was guided, in large part, specifically by one of the purposes of my study. While I was interested in the critical experiences within the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic, another goal was to build a framework with which to examine this component of preservice teacher education. After I have coded my data, I used analytic memos "to capture emerging thematic ideas" which became the basis of the framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 194). This also included diagramming relationships among the codes or emerging concepts. The purpose of this was to synthesize the data as it spoke to my research questions. Specifically, the memos addressed practices, both professional and relational, that play a critical role in the student teaching practicum. Once themes began to emerge from the data, I collected them in a table, including specific examples of each theme that emerged.

Creswell and Poth (2018) used the term *naturalistic generalizations* to describe "generalizations that people can learn from the case for themselves apply learning to a population of cases, or transfer them to a similar context" (p. 206). This was especially relevant

to my data collection and analysis as I was able to take the data from these cases and apply them to a broader concept of the student teacher clinical experience. I took a *cross-case synthesis* approach in my data analysis (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). This helped “synthesize any within-case patterns across the cases” (Yin, 2018, p. 196). These patterns, generalizations, and themes became the foundation of my framework.

Ethical Considerations

I obtained approval from my institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and adhered to the principles of ethical research of human subjects. To ensure anonymity, participants and their schools were given pseudonyms and were also given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence or repercussions. Finally, I obtained informed consent and protected participants from harm and deception.

Researcher Positionality

I paid particular attention to avoiding bias, which is especially common in qualitative research informed by case student methodology, however, since I went into my study with the goal of building a framework, any preconceived notions would interfere with my ability to do so (Merriam, 2009). Maintaining an objective stance during data collection and analysis was of the utmost importance. However, my own biases and assumptions existed, even if I attempted to maintain objectivity. I began this work with the assumption that the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic would be as influential in student teachers’ experiences of learning to teach as it was in my own.

Enhancing Data Validity and Reliability

Since qualitative research can never capture an objective truth or reality, I made efforts to increase construct validity, external validity, and reliability. To address validity, I employed

triangulation. It is important to note that my initial intention was to collect multiple methods of data, however, circumstances beyond my control made that impossible. I did collect multiple sources of data and was able to triangulate through comparing and cross-referencing comments the participants made about the same experiences during interviews (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). Regarding external validity, or the findings' ability to be generalized and transferred, the use of "rich, thick description" was a start in addressing this, so readers could themselves understand the results I attained from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2009). While I do not provide rich descriptions of the participants themselves, the data semi-structured interviews provided valuable and thorough portraits of the participants' practicum experiences. Furthermore, I conducted member checks to ensure I interpreted the data I collected from participants fairly and accurately.

In this chapter I outline the methodology I used to conduct a study focused on cooperating teachers' core instructional and relational practices during the student teaching practicum to develop a framework for the student teaching practicum that addresses both the practical *and* relational components of the student teaching practicum. In the next chapter, I elaborate on the study participants, and present my framework and findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study I conducted regarding the core instructional and relational practices cooperating teachers enacted when working with their student teachers. After interviewing each participant twice, once early in the student teaching practicum and again after it had ended, I analyzed the data to answer the following research questions:

- What core instructional and relational student teaching practices emerge from close analysis of the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship?
- How does the relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher influence student teaching practices and experiences?
- How do the findings contribute to the development of a framework that informs both the instructional and relational components of the student teaching experience?

I began data analysis focusing on the first research question, looking for core instructional and relational practices at least two of the cooperating teachers enacted in their work with their student teachers. As I stated earlier, this study was inspired by my own experiences as a student teacher thirteen years ago. My cooperating teachers provided me with a balance of instructional and relational support that I felt played a role in my success as an educator. Earlier, in the literature review, I explored the five categories of both instructional and relational core practices of cooperating teachers for student teachers: collaborating with student teachers, supporting student teachers emotionally, supporting student teachers professionally, supporting student teachers pedagogically, and sharing power. My findings demonstrate similar, but not the exact same, core practices. I suggest that, in fact, it is important to separate them into two distinct and significant categories: instructional and relational.

My data analysis resulted in four instructional core practice themes: (a) modeling; (b) co-teaching; (c) providing pedagogical support; and (d) assessing student understanding. To address the second research question, I focused on the core relational practices which resulted in four themes: (a) providing personal support; (b) providing professional support (c) offering feedback; and (d) disrupting power imbalances. I then read through the data again focusing on the second research question. The following three themes emerged about important aspects of the student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship: (a) maintaining equity and disrupting the traditional hierarchy; (b) fostering trusting relationships that challenge the traditional teacher/learner dynamic, and (c) creating space for risk-taking that is foundational for professional growth.

For analysis of my findings and themes, I applied two frameworks from two sources: Kennedy's (2016) *Parsing the Practice of Teaching* and Noddings's (2008, 2013) *Moral Education and Caring*. Kennedy's (2016) framework, which proposes teachers address five challenges: (a) portraying the curriculum; (b) enlisting student participation; (c) exposing student thinking; (d) containing student behavior; and (e) accommodating personal needs, helps *reframe* teacher preparation so that it is not prescriptive, but rather encourages prospective teachers and their teacher educators to navigate addressing these common challenges. Noddings's (2008, 2013) philosophy focuses on relationships and the way caring plays functions in and affects in them, at times paying specific attention to caring's role in education. The application of these frameworks better illuminates the ways cooperating teachers provided instructional strategies and relational support during their work with their student teachers.

In Figure 2, I present my findings and clarify which apply to Kennedy's (2016) framework, which apply to Noddings's (2008, 2013) framework, and which apply to both. Since I was interested in the intersection of the instructional and relational, this figure provides a visual

representation of each finding which elucidates the findings that overlap which became the basis for the framework I constructed (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

Findings: Cooperating Teachers' Core Instructional and Relational Practices

Theme	Kennedy's (2016) <i>Parsing the Practice of Teaching</i>	Noddings's (2008, 2013) <i>Moral Education and Caring</i>
Core Instructional Practices		
Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portraying the curriculum • Containing student behavior • Enlisting student participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building
Co-teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • portraying the curriculum • Containing student behavior • Enlisting student participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural inclination
Providing pedagogical support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson planning • Assessing student understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portraying the curriculum • Exposing student thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue
Core Relational Practices		
Providing personal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodating personal needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating teacher is first and foremost <i>one-caring</i> and, second, enactor of specialized functions”
Providing professional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodating personal needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing the student teacher for the <i>entire</i> experience of the work or what Noddings (2013) calls the “effective world” (p. 176).
Providing feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation
Disrupting power imbalances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing power • Enacting reciprocal dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Preserve the uniqueness of human encounters” (Noddings, 2013, p. 5). • Fundamental universality • Reciprocal caring

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering student teachers 		
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Constructing a Framework

The final research question in this study was satisfied by creating a framework that addressed *both* the instructional *and* relational components of the student teacher practicum to better understand their effects on the student teachers' experiences in the student teaching practicum within the larger framing of their teacher education coursework. There does not exist a framework for how cooperating teachers work with and prepare student teachers instructionally *and* relationally despite the fact that teaching is inherently both practical *and* relationship based. Below, based on my data analysis, is a framework I constructed to examine what the student teaching practicum should look like if it were framed as both an instructionally *and* relationally focused component of preservice teacher education. In the framework (see Figure 3), I focused on how the cooperating teachers enacted both instructional and relational practices to prepare the student teachers and the effects of these practices on the student teachers' practicum experience.

The goal of the framework is to provide a guide for what the cooperating teachers should do, why they should do it, and how it benefits both their student teachers and them. The top half of the framework focuses on the instructional aspects of working with student teachers and emphasizes how the student teaching practicum is the dominant way preservice teachers begin bridging theory from their coursework and practice from their student teaching. This part of the framework addressed all five components of Kennedy's (2016) framework on parsing teacher practice: (a) portraying the curriculum; (b) enlisting student participation; (c) exposing student thinking; (d) containing student behavior; and (e) accommodating personal needs. The cooperating teachers in this study prepared the student teachers for all five challenges Kennedy

(2016) proposed teachers know how to address in their own ways, not using prescriptive methods and strategies.

The bottom half of the framework focuses on the relational practices cooperating teachers enact with their student teachers which highlights the benefits of Noddings's (2013) work in the student teaching practicum: moral education, caring, power negotiations, and empowerment. It is in this portion of the framework that we can see the way serving as a cooperating teacher benefits the cooperating teacher *as well as* the student teacher, specifically regarding the cooperating teachers' opportunity for learning and possibility of building collegial and possibly even personal or friendly relationships. *This* is the radical thinking behind revising the way we approach the student teaching practicum—focusing on the relational in addition to the practical. The cooperating teachers' practices led to disrupting the traditional hierarchy of cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic, placing both on a continuum of collegiality in which each act as teacher *and* learner throughout the practicum. It is teacher educators' hope that the student teachers bring this dynamic to their work with their own students in the future. This section of the framework also places emotion at the center of the student teaching practicum where it has always existed but has never been explicitly addressed. Finally, the relational practices aided in the student teachers beginning the development of their teacher identities which does not occur automatically but needs to be nurtured.

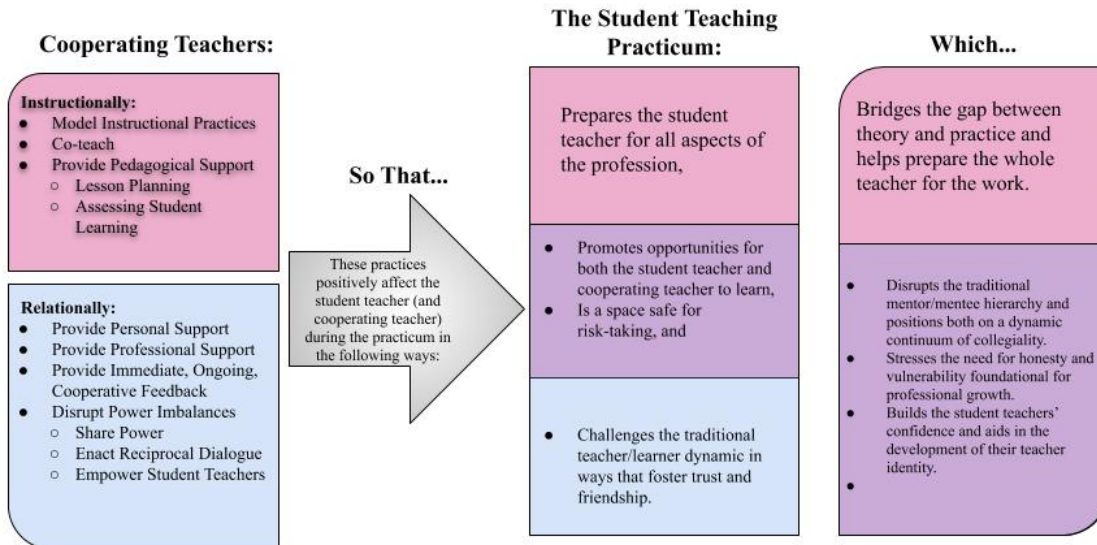
It is necessary to make one final note about the framework, and that is where the top and bottom halves intersect. The intersection of instructional and relational components of the student teaching practicum and the effects of those intersections on the practicum, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher are what guided my inquiry through this study in the first place. The points of intersection predominantly guide my analysis of findings. In these

instances of instructional *and* relational intersection, it is evident that the relational components of the student teaching practicum, often disregarded and under researched, are just as important to our understanding of the experience and its role in teacher education as the instructional components of it.

The final effect of a student teaching practicum that focuses on both cooperating teachers' core instructional and relational practices is what Noddings (2013) referred to as practice, or opportunities for students to practice care themselves in schools. She suggests community service-like activities for students with other humans or animals function as "apprenticeships in caring" (Noddings 2013, p. 187). While in her work, she was referring to teachers as ones-caring and students as cared-fors in a traditional school setting, I am applying it to the student teaching practicum. However, in caring for their student teachers and modeling caring of their own students *for* their student teachers, cooperating teachers were also modeling the importance as acting as one-caring in general. None of my findings explicitly address this effect, but it was happening as the cooperating teachers enacted Noddings's (2013) components of caring. The student teachers were experiencing it themselves and, hopefully, continuing to act as ones-caring in their roles as teachers and possibly cooperating teachers in the future.

Figure 3

An Instructional and Relational Approach to the Student Teaching Practicum



The Participants

Before I discuss the findings of this study, I provide a brief description of each participant, both individually and as part of a cooperating teacher/student teacher pair. Below, I briefly describe each participant to provide a fuller understanding of my findings.

Mary, Kendra, and Danielle

Mary was a preservice teacher at a medium-sized state university in northern New Jersey. At the time of the study, she was in the final year of pursuing a Master of Arts in Physical and Health education, having attained an undergraduate degree in Exercise Science. Physical education teachers in New Jersey are certified for K-12, so she had a split student teaching placement. She had some experience in a pedagogical setting, having worked as a teacher's assistant prior to and during her graduate studies. Mary worked with both Kendra and Danielle during her first experience in Clinical I, so they had already begun establishing and professional

and personal relationship. Mary was kind, thoughtful, and personable and worked part-time as a personal trainer during her student teaching placement and coursework.

For the first half of her placement (approximately eight weeks), she was as student teacher at an elementary school in a city in northern New Jersey with Kendra. Kendra was a physical education and health teacher in her thirteenth year of teaching. In addition to being Mary's cooperating teacher, she was also the science team leader and, generally, a leader within the school community. She was a member of many of the school's teams and committees. Prior to Mary, she had approximately 19 other student teachers, so she was comfortable with the requirements and expectations that came along with working with a student teacher. During this placement, Mary and Kendra did not teach health; they only taught physical education.

For her second placement that semester (another eight weeks), Mary worked at a high school in the same city. Her second cooperating teacher, Danielle, taught both health and physical education each semester. When Mary arrived, she was teaching both classes depending on the period. Danielle was in her sixteenth year of teaching during the time of the study and had approximately seven student teachers prior to Mary. Bilingual, Danielle taught classes that had large numbers of Spanish-speaking students. This was relevant in her work with Mary. She had children at home and was candid with her own experiences as a student and novice teacher when working with Mary.

Samantha and Joanna

Samantha was an undergraduate student at a medium-sized university in the Northeast, and while she worked toward her BFA, she obtained teaching certification in K-12 education. At the time of her student teaching placement, she was in the final semester of her undergraduate degree. She had two different student teaching placements because she was certified K-12, the

first one at the elementary school in the same district as her secondary placement. Prior to her student teaching placement, she completed her practicum observing at a local elementary school one day a week per semester and one day per week with Joanna. During this time, she would occasionally co-teach with both teachers, but did not write lesson plans. Throughout college, she also worked as a nanny and camp counselor, often incorporating art into her interactions.

Joanna was in her thirtieth year of teaching in a diverse but somewhat segregated public 7-12 school in a suburban town in the Northeast. She had an undergraduate degree in interior design plus a master's degrees in art education and worked for twelve years as a retail visual merchandising executive before eight years at a parochial school, eventually transitioning to the current one. In addition to teaching art, she was the lead teacher for the visual and performing arts department, which required her to facilitate communication between her colleagues in the department and the administration. Joanna served as an unofficial leader in her school because of her long service and had a strong understanding of the school's community. She also made an effort to form relationships with colleagues and students which was evident in her work at the school, both as a teacher and colleague.

Lauren and Charlotte

Lauren was a student teacher in the dual master's program (General Education and Special Education) at the university she attended, with a bachelor's degree in biology. She originally planned to continue with a degree in physical therapy but, after experience in an outpatient clinic, decided not to continue. She began work as a substitute teacher and enjoyed it, soon becoming a paraprofessional and beginning her master's program in the evenings. Before working with Charlotte, she did an observational practicum at a different high school, where she

mostly observed two different math classes, but also taught a few times under the supervision of the teacher with whom she was paired.

Charlotte was in her seventh year of teaching math at a public school in a large city in the New Jersey. She had a BS in applied mathematics (with a statistics concentration), and a minor in business and a master's degree in mathematics education. Before entering the teaching field, she worked as an insurance broker. At the time of data collection, Lauren was the fifth student teacher she had worked with throughout her teaching career. Charlotte was thoughtful and organized and this was evident in her work with Lauren and their students.

Core Instructional Practices

To begin, during the student teaching practicum, while working with their cooperating teachers, a set of core instructional practices emerged that cooperating teachers enacted when working with their student teachers. For the purpose of this study and the core practices I describe, I am using a definition by Ward et al. (2020), based on Forzani's (2014) work, core practices as "the central teaching tasks that teachers need to accomplish in order to teach" (p. 38). In this study, the cooperating teachers enacted these practices because the student teachers needed to master them in order to be effective teachers, both during the student teaching practicum and after it. However, the cooperating teachers implemented these practices based on the need and context of the placement and the student teachers. They provided foundational skills necessary for the student teachers to teach their students. Based on my analysis, the teachers modeled instructional practices and managing student behavior, co-taught with their student teachers, provided pedagogical support, and helped with assessing student learning in an effort prepare the student teachers for the demands they will encounter in delivering instruction and working with students.

Modeling as a Core Instructional Practice for Pedagogical Teacher Preparation

As I mentioned, these core instructional practices are those that the mentor teachers enacted for student teachers. Here, I talk specifically about the idea of modeling as a central way to help student teachers learn these practices. The cooperating teachers in the study modeled core instructional practices when working with their student teachers in an effort to prepare them for the work inherent in planning and conveying content to students, which is a challenge Kennedy (2016) refers to as “portraying the curriculum.” By *modeling*, I mean demonstrating to their student teachers *how* they do things. Often, these were accompanied by an explanation of *why* the cooperating teacher made the choices she made, too. The student teachers then seemed to adopt the cooperating teachers’ moves and adapted them to fit their own teacher identity. Through modeling, the student teachers began to build their own repertoire of teaching practices. As Singh (2017) indicated in her study of a group of teacher candidates after their student teaching practicum, 100% of participants found modeling helpful because it provided the opportunity to observe “exemplary practice” (p. 187). Studies indicated that modeling helps student teachers interact with students (Nilsson & van Driel, 2010), acquire classroom management techniques (Anderson, Barksdale & Hite, 2005), or even better understand cooperating teachers’ thinking (Fairbanks et al., 2000). The participants in this study found their cooperating teachers’ modeling especially helpful regarding instructional practices that the student teachers used as a basis for developing their own practices and identities.

The modeling the cooperating teachers did addressed the three components of Kennedy’s (2016) framework: portraying the curriculum, enlisting student participation, and containing student behavior. Specifically, cooperating teachers modeled routines, language, lesson planning, cell-phone use, parent outreach, and redirection. Through modeling, the student teachers began

to better understand how to address each of these challenges, but they were also able to begin adopting *and* adapting in ways that they were most comfortable. Kennedy (2016) indicated the importance of prospective teachers “finding strategies that are consistent with their own personal needs” (p. 13).

The cooperating teachers in the study often modeled various core instructional practices, both content-specific and general, and the student teachers expressed gratitude for these practical suggestions they could then enact themselves. For example, Mary indicated that Kendra would share her lesson plans: “They [the lesson plans] would show me how she does it and then I can take it from there.” With her second placement, because of lack of time, she was not able to observe Danielle’s teaching methods before enacting her own. Mary indicated that she preferred the experience she had with Kendra because it was more helpful and “I got to see her teaching style. Then I used her teaching style and then I found my own.” Similarly, Charlotte provided Lauren with her lesson plans for a specific topic or lesson and Lauren would “tweak it . . . to make it my own.” For both Mary (with Kendra) and Lauren, the cooperating teacher provided models of lesson planning and instructional strategies and the student teachers could then adapt them to fit their own personal preferences and developed teacher identities. For example, Mary suggested a way to use colors for the students’ spots when they came into the gymnasium which built on Kendra’s original method of lining the students up. Lauren, in planning a lesson on direct and inverse variation, made a discovery about cross multiplication that Charlotte had not noticed, and Lauren made sure to share it with Charlotte and also address it specifically in her lesson. Additionally, in this case, the student teachers also introduced an alternative way of teaching something that the cooperating teachers found helpful.

Joanna and Samantha's method for planning instruction was a bit different. While Joanna did model instructional practices for Samantha, they were more specific to Joanna's own past experiences and personality. For example, Joanna introduced art history with stories she had collected over the years, some learned from a previous graduate school professor. One story is about John Singer Sargent, an American expatriate portraitist who composed wonderfully accurate portraits for wealthy clients—perhaps too accurate or often too flattering and was eventually exiled to England. She shared the story of the legendary “Madame X” scandal and others involving Sargent and subjects he painted who eventually saw their portraits themselves on a trips to various museums years later. Stories such as these were effective in engaging the seventh graders in a topic they may not have found that interesting and they helped Joanna “make it as real as possible.” However, Samantha expressed dismay indicating, “I never learned that in school, how to do that. What I'm learning in school is so dry.” Joanna's modeling of this instructional practice supplemented what Samantha was learning in her teacher education program. Joanna drew on her own experiences from years prior, saying “I try to show her [Samantha] options that I didn't learn in school because a lot of this that I learned in school was not as valuable as it could have been, I think.” Joanna's modeling, though, like Kendra and Charlotte's, allowed the student teachers to begin developing their teacher identities and practices, using the cooperating teachers' best practices as a starting point. Both student teachers observed how the cooperating teachers used their own experiences and personalities to guide their work, but then started thinking about their own ways of approaching the material that was more natural to them and their own experiences. Joanna's modeling also brought up a component of teaching that often goes unaddressed in teacher education methods courses which is the ways teachers bring their personal selves into their work in the classroom. In this way, Joanna was

connecting the personal to the pedagogical in way that can only be done in the context of teaching in a classroom with students, addressing a frequent gap in teacher education coursework. One's teaching identity emerges in the context of practice in the classroom with students.

Modeling also proved to be helpful in how the student teachers learned to manage and create classroom community, or what Kennedy (2016) refers to as the challenges of containing student behavior and enlisting student participation. While each teacher had her own method, the importance of modeling it for the student teachers played a role in their own emerging practices in managing the classroom. Mary, for example, began mimicking her cooperating teacher, Kendra's, language in managing students' behavior during the lessons, adopting phrases such as "I'll wait" or "This is your gym time. This is your gym time. You're wasting your own time; you're not wasting my time." Mary was concerned because she did not have "a very big presence" the way Kendra did. However, she was able to adapt Kendra's methods nonetheless to manage student behavior during her lessons, using concrete language Kendra provided as a model. Kendra modeled other strategies like "sideline assignments" for students who had to sit out after being reprimanded and discussed why she did not use others in class (e.g., blowing a whistle) although she shared even those strategies were options for Mary. Similarly, Charlotte modeled classroom behavior by using a spinner (an interactive widget) on her SMART Board for calling on students during lessons. She also modeled, early on in Lauren's placement, discussion strategies and student expectations and routines. Lauren was then able to continue the work that Charlotte began modeling before she began as a student teacher. These norms included addressing student cell-phone use in class and how to redirect students who were having side conversations. Danielle's approach was similar and since Mary began her placement in the

middle of the semester, Danielle had already established classroom procedures that were intended to keep the students on task and focused, such as coming in, copying the lesson objectives, and beginning the do now activity. Danielle also modeled how to handle student cell-phone use in class and encouraged Mary to address these issues in the class the same way Danielle would. Danielle also had Mary contact parents when students repeatedly caused disturbances in class, another practice she will likely need to use throughout her career. Kendra, Charlotte, and Danielle all focused on modeling specific strategies they had adopted throughout their careers to manage a safe and well-run classroom, a prominent concern for prospective and novice teachers.

Joanna's modeling of managing the classroom was much more context-dependent, and she stressed the importance of student-teacher relationships in addressing student behavior, which is related to Noddings's (2013) beliefs about caring. As Joanna had experience with students in her classes, specifically, and teaching in general, she and Samantha would debrief often about *how* Joanna handled specific behavioral situations in the class and *why*. Joanna explained that she was much more communicative when Samantha was working with her so Samantha could see how Joanna maintains the classroom and why she makes the choices she does—essentially “pulling back the curtain” on her teaching moves. For example, if a student had a specific question, when Samantha was there, Joanna would announce the question to the class because other students might have the same one. But she was also trying to demonstrate the importance of being clear and direct for Samantha. When Samantha first arrived, she would whisper to Joanna when a student was doing something wrong and they began to see her as a “tattletale.” Joanna encouraged her “not to fall back on a set of rules because kids are programmed to balk at rules.” She encouraged Samantha to “find your own way.” In this case,

Joanna did not introduce Samantha to specific strategies she uses in the classroom in general but rather specific strategies that are based on Joanna's knowledge of and relationship with various students.

In Noddings's (2013) writing on caring, she states, "Our motivation in caring is directed toward the welfare, protection or enhancement of the cared-for" (p. 23). Joanna's modeling developing relationships as a form of classroom management for Samantha to draw from, putting Samantha's well-being at the center of her intentions. Specifically, Joanna had one student who acted out often and she found that calling him up during art demonstrations allowed him to get the energy he needed out while she still maintained control of the class. However, she still encouraged Samantha to form those relationships herself in order to maintain classroom behavior and modeled how she herself did it. She urged Samantha to find her own strategies based on developing those relationships and managing student behavior herself, keeping Samantha's welfare at the heart of her intentions, preparing her for managing the classroom in the future.

While most of the cooperating teachers were more prescriptive in their modeling (Kendra, Charlotte, and Danielle), they all provided a basis from which the student teachers could work and adapt. Modeling seemed especially helpful in student teachers beginning to make connections between the theory they learn in their teacher preparation courses and the practice of actually teaching. The modeling began to serve as a proverbial bridge between learning to teach at the university level and learning to teach in the classroom. However, in the case of Joanna and Samantha, Joanna was also exercising caring (Noddings, 2013) in her approach to modeling for Samantha how to manage the classroom, stressing the importance of relationship building in the process. Addressing the framework, modeling is one of the core instructional practices that had minimal impact on the relational components of the practicum with the exception of the Joanna

and Samantha. Even in this case, though, the impact was not at the forefront of Joanna's intentions because she was helping Samantha with classroom management, which is a common struggle new teachers face. Modeling proved to be, predominantly, a practice that helped the student teachers prepare to teach, bridging the gap between coursework and practice.

Co-teaching

Studies indicate that both the student teacher and cooperating teacher benefit from co-teaching, something adopted more and more frequently in their preparation program (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2010; Heck, Bacharach, & Dahlberg, 2008; Montgomery & Ackerson, 2019; Morton & Birky, 2015; Murley et al., 2014; Stobaugh & Everson, 2019; Thompson & Schademan, 2019). While co-teaching was not explicitly required (but sometimes suggested) by the student teachers' teacher education programs, they, nonetheless, engaged in it throughout the student teaching practicum and it proved to be beneficial. Through co-teaching, the cooperating teachers addressed Kennedy's (2016) framework similarly to the way they did in the previous finding of modeling—in portraying the curriculum, enlisting student participation, and managing student behavior. However, this finding also addresses Noddings's (2013) ethics of caring. What was most striking about the co-teaching the participants enacted in this study was how naturally they moved into and out of it. They did not discuss co-teaching before they did it and all of the participants found it to be beneficial. According to Noddings (2013), "Ethical caring, the relation in which we do meet the other morally, will be described as arising out of a natural caring—that relation in which we respond as one-caring out of love or natural inclination" (p. 5). As the findings indicate, the cooperating teachers "jumped in" when they felt the student teacher or the students could benefit from additional assistance, in an organic and natural way.

All four pairs of participants engaged in co-teaching, although at different levels. All of the student teacher/cooperating teacher pairs engaged in the “one teaching, one assisting” model of co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 5). For example, for Mary and Danielle, Danielle would “jump in and help on the other end” of the gym because it was such a large space. But Mary was “in total control.” Danielle would also help Mary when she taught physical education to the bilingual students. Since Danielle spoke Spanish fluently, she would “translate when necessary.” Similarly, Danielle also indicated that she would “help on the other end” when they were teaching in the gymnasium, working with students farther away from Mary in the large space in which they taught. With both cooperating teachers, though, Mary maintained the dominant presence in the space. When working with Kendra, Mary indicated that for classes that were more challenging because of student behavior, they would share responsibilities. Mary said, “I’ll do the warmup, she’ll do one game, and then I’ll do a different game. We’ll both teach the skill.” Mary also shared that they would both teach when students were working on a specific skill or game by providing individualized attention to students struggling or doing well who could improve even more. Having two teachers in the gymnasium allowed for more students to receive individualized attention. This type of co-teaching is what Cook and Friend (1995) refer to as team teaching, sharing the delivery of instruction with both teachers taking turns speaking. Mary said she liked it “because it makes me feel more confident . . . If I forget something, she can jump in and help me.” As Mary was learning to teach, she appreciated the metaphorical safety net her cooperating teacher could provide in the form of co-teaching. According to Cook and Friend (1995), “This approach requires a high level of mutual trust and commitment” (p. 7). Both teachers must be comfortable with the other and a natural power-sharing has to occur as teachers move in and out of the dominant role. Traditionally, in a student teaching practicum, the student

teacher and cooperating teacher do not co-teach and many programs do not require or even suggest it.

Similarly, Lauren and Charlotte also co-taught in this less traditional, more collaborative and reciprocal manner, in a “one teaching, one assisting” way (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 5). Lauren said, “she’ll let me lead, and she knows that if there’s something that I miss, cause she’s done this a couple of years [she can just jump in].” Charlotte added that sometimes Lauren would ask her a clarifying question during the lesson and Charlotte would enter into the conversation to support her teaching. She also said, “If at any point I felt like the kids weren’t quite getting it, I would like raise my hand and ask a question to the class.” Both indicated that Lauren “was still at the forefront” to “lead the lesson” but Charlotte was there as a support that maintained a natural presence in the classroom during instruction. Doing so allowed Lauren to take the lead, but also be confident that if she was struggling or students needed more support or information that Lauren was not noticing, that the support was there. The focus was both on helping the student teacher in a time of need and making sure the students also received what they needed to learn the material

Joanna and Samantha followed a similar pattern of “one teaching, one assisting” (Cook & Friend, 1995, p.5). While Samantha led the lesson, Joanna would “jump in if I forget to say something, or we sort of build off of each other.” Samantha also mentioned how helpful it was to have two teachers in the room “both circulating the room, making sure that everyone’s doing what they’re supposed to do.” There are parallels of Samantha and Joanna to Mary, Kendra, and Danielle. It seems that co-teaching during these elective classes (Art, Physical Education), in which students could be working independently and at their own pace in large spaces, was helpful for providing students more individualized help when necessary. In these classes, it was

more common for students to be working at their own pace which benefitted from more individualized assistance. This also, again, put the focus on the students' learning; the student teacher and cooperating teacher worked together to address the students' needs. Furthermore, Joanna indicated she found co-teaching so helpful, both for herself and for Samantha. For Joanna, co-teaching allowed her to learn new things about which Samantha was especially knowledgeable. For Samantha, it helped the students see her as an authority figure because she was even teaching their art teacher things she had not known before. Joanna described it as the students "saw the vulnerability in me which gave them hope that, 'oh, if she [Joanna] can't do it, maybe I can learn it.'" Joanna further indicated that students "really got to depend on her, and now they're devastated she's not there." Co-teaching and seeing Joanna work with and learn from Samantha inadvertently helped with Samantha's relationships with the students as they began to trust her more as Joanna made her trust in Samantha visible.

Co-teaching during the student teaching practicum provided benefits for the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and even the students they were teaching. The participants were able to provide additional help to the students, build on each other's work, and build the student teachers' confidence and skillset. This applies to Kennedy's (2016) framework, much like modeling did, specifically regarding portraying the curriculum, enlisting student participation, and containing student behavior. The participants' co-teaching served a practical purpose most teachers would appreciate—having two knowledgeable adults in the room to support student learning. Furthermore, the cooperating teachers could provide in the moment feedback to the student teachers when students were struggling to understand the material. The student teachers could then adjust their instruction accordingly. Also, the cooperating teachers had a line of vision, from a different part of the room to better assess student understanding throughout the

lesson and share those findings with the student teacher. Lastly, in the elective classes, which often take place in large spaces where students work at independent paces, co-teaching helped manage student behavior by providing additional assistance as students practiced the skills they were being taught.

Noddings's (2013) framework does not explicitly address collaboration, but her work revolves around relational work which speaks to the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship in general and co-teaching specifically. The co-teaching was helpful for the student teachers to think about their actions in the moment and adjust their practice during the lesson. The cooperating teachers drew on their own knowledge and experience to help the student teachers while they led the lessons. They were happy to teach with the student teachers because they cared for their student teachers *and* their students and it was beneficial for both. For example, Joanna said there were things Samantha knew that she did not and it was helpful for her to learn from Samantha when they co-taught, so she enjoyed doing it because it both helped her learn but also helped Samantha gain credibility and build confidence with their students. In is in this space that we see the overlap of the instructional and relational components of the framework. Although Joanna was the only one who explicitly stated co-teaching positioned her as a learner as well as teacher, the other cooperating teachers may have found this to be true, as well. Joanna's co-teaching with Samantha transformed Joanna's position as the sole expert and instead placed her as a colleague to Samantha who had knowledge to offer, challenging the traditional hierarchy associated with any type of mentor work in which one person knows more and can help the other learn. In this way, learning to teach during the student teaching practicum is *also* relational. Even with Kenda and Mary, the pair team teaching required trust as the

researchers suggested it would (Cook & Friend, 1995). Both had no problem enacting it, though, and for Mary, it allowed her to build confidence in the gymnasium.

Providing Pedagogical Support for Student Teachers

When anyone thinks about the student teaching practicum, learning what content to deliver and how to deliver it is likely what primarily comes to mind. The participants in this study were no different in that a large part of what the cooperating teachers did was provide pedagogical support regarding conveying content, planning instruction, gauging student understanding, and enlisting student participation (Kennedy, 2016). What seemed important to the student teachers was learning and implementing new strategies for delivering instruction. The first problem Kennedy (2016) posed in her framework, portraying the curriculum, revolves around how teachers plan to deliver instruction. She explained that this challenge is less about *what* teachers teach but instead *how* they choose to teach it. However, she was careful to note that when referring to what teachers do, it is important to remember “we should be hard-pressed to insist that any particular curriculum portrait was *the* correct or best procedure for teaching any particular bit of knowledge” (p. 10). How teachers deliver instruction is personal and dependent upon the content and even the group of students with whom the teacher works each year. Secondly, she noted that “decisions about how to enact a given piece of curriculum content entail a lot of personal and professional judgment” (pp. 10-11). Therefore, it is the job of teacher educators (in this case cooperating teachers) to teach novice teachers (in this case student teachers) how to evaluate what Kennedy (2016) called “portraits,” the comprehensible ways teachers portray the curriculum, “so they can flexibly design their own portraits over time” (p. 11). The cooperating teachers were, in a sense, whether or not they knew it, teaching their student teachers how to eventually evaluate their own choices and work.

Lesson Planning. To begin, the cooperating teachers helped their student teachers with lesson plans in various ways. In a study by Fairbanks et al. (2000), researchers found there was value in cooperative planning with both the cooperating teachers and student teachers learning. According to Smith (2005), the difficulty in co-planning potentially exists because of the intrinsic power dynamic within the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic and dialogue needs to be shared and equal. However, all participants indicated that collaborative lesson planning was a rich aspect of learning to teach or, as Samantha put it in a thank you note to Joanna at the end of her placement, “how to be a teacher for real.” All of the cooperating teachers, in different ways, allowed the student teachers to exercise agency in how they were planning to deliver the content to the students.

For Mary, Kendra told her all she needed to keep was the lesson objectives from Kendra’s original lesson, but Mary could alter the lesson however she would like to. Kendra also shared her lesson plan format with Mary, which Mary found more manageable than the format required by her teacher education program. Kendra helped Mary narrow down the scope of her planning. Kendra reminded her:

You just want to focus on the main thing that you want the kids to learn today. The fact that they’re going to be running back and forth across the gym, they know how to do that already. What are you teaching them today? What are they learning from you today?
That’s what you need to do.

Here, Kendra was helping Mary narrow the scope of her planning, both to save her time when lesson planning but also to encourage her to focus on the core objective of the lesson and not every component the students will complete. Kendra and Mary, in discussing lesson planning in general, also talked about the purpose behind the extensive plans required by Mary’s teacher

education program. Kendra indicated teacher preparation's format was "to help them think about certain things" and Mary realized she would be able to take what she learned in that kind of lesson planning but adapt it when she was working as a teacher full time.

With Danielle, the process was a bit different. They would meet ahead of time and discuss the unit on which they would be working and how the lessons would be broken up. Danielle would share the textbook, previous ideas for lessons and activities, and slides she used in the past, but Mary would work on it at home. She would then come back in and run her ideas by Danielle for feedback. They would do this for one week's worth of lessons at a time, even though Danielle usually planned for two weeks at a time. She understood Mary was just beginning with her and planning one week at a time seemed to work better. While Mary had good experiences with both Kendra and Danielle, she preferred Kendra's method because she was able to see what Kendra did and then "used her teaching style and then found my own." It seems the planning Mary did with Danielle did not provide the guidance and modeling she wanted.

Similar to Kendra and Mary, Charlotte would provide her old lessons for Lauren and they would discuss them, but Lauren would "either put my input or tweak it." Lauren did not feel the lesson plans were too prescriptive, but instead described them as "a starting point" and she could eventually "make it my own." Interestingly, Charlotte concurred that she provided her lesson plans as a starting point for Lauren. But she worried she did not practice "starting from scratch" enough with Lauren. She further explained "I am not sure if she's that well-prepared to do that on her own." While Charlotte's concern was certainly valid in that student teachers might not have colleagues in the future who have plans to share and they will need to plan independently, from nothing, Lauren found the method she and Charlotte developed helpful, saying "I have had

a very good experience for Clinical II and it's because of her." Even though Charlotte felt she, in some ways, let Lauren down in preparing her for teaching, Lauren actually felt she benefitted from Charlotte's method in helping her plan lessons. Given the incredible number of things student teachers attend to, this scaffolding opportunity helped them to focus and manage their workload.

Samantha and Joanna worked in a way that was more similar to Mary and Danielle. A lot of the planning occurred during their preparation periods. Samantha said, "we always sit down and plan the lessons out and bounce ideas off of each other." Samantha said if she was planning from home, she could call Joanna on the phone to discuss ideas, but most of the planning occurred in school. Samantha indicated that they had some freedom with the curriculum and the only requirement was that the lesson or project could be linked to the state standards so they would organically plan lessons from the bottom up. Joanna thought when they worked together, they did a good job of "combining theory and practice." Joanna continued by saying "she was very good about having an idea, and bringing it in, and having her plans for her PowerPoints" but sometimes, her idea for a lesson, Joanna knew from her own experience, would not work practically because "there wasn't enough meat there." So, Joanna would help her hone the idea into something that could work for their classes. Toward the end of her student teaching placement, Joanna gave Samantha more freedom to plan on her own. There were lessons that Joanna suspected would not be successful and she was correct. Joanna explained, that toward the end, "She's had success, so it doesn't matter if she has a failure." But Samantha did not see it as failure but rather an opportunity to learn. After the lesson, she would be able to clarify why the lesson did not work which was valuable for her future planning and teaching.

When I spoke with the participants about planning instruction, there was limited discussion about content. They focused instead on the methods and moves they made in learning to plan and deliver instruction. All of the cooperating teachers provided space for the student teachers to safely experiment with exercises or teaching methods for the specific content they were teaching. In Joanna and Samantha's case, she even allowed Samantha to take chances that she was sure would not work because she found value in Samantha eventually figuring out *why* they did not work. Kennedy (2016) indicated that we should not evaluate a teachers' lesson based on "process-product research" but instead "according to how its content is portrayed, acknowledging that many portraits are possible, many are plausible, and some are downright brilliant" (p. 11). All of the cooperating teachers in this study seemed to recognize and value this idea. They welcomed their student teachers' ideas and were not apprehensive about allowing them to take the lesson in their own direction.

Noddings's (2013) notion of dialogue speaks to the nature of the planning participants did: "Instituting open and genuine dialogue implies a weakening of professional structures" (p. 186). She also mentioned "If dialogue is to occur in schools, it must be legitimate to discuss whatever is of intellectual interest to the students who are involved in dialogue" (p. 183). While Noddings was referring to specific topics that parents, administrators, and even teachers might consider controversial (e.g., religion, sex, death), she was also stressing the importance of allowing the students' interests to have a place in the conversation. The cooperating teachers did this; they opened their classrooms and students up to the student teachers who had their own ideas and intentions. While the cooperating teachers and student teachers shared a goal, to deliver quality instruction to the students, the cooperating teachers gave the student teachers a voice and agency in how they would accomplish the goal. The cooperating teachers were co-

planners and not just students who learned how to plan lessons and deliver instruction. Therefore, this finding suggests it is important to stress not only the need for collaboration during the student teaching practicum, but also the need for cooperating teachers to be flexible and open while the student teachers begin formulating their own ideas of what instruction looks like for them personally. My proposed framework, regarding planning instruction, indicates the importance of cooperating teachers stressing the ability for the student teachers to take risks in their instructional planning and delivery which is necessary for professional growth and the development of their teacher identity. Again, co-planning requires trust, honesty, and collaborating—all relational factors that play an important role in preparing student teachers.

Assessing Student Understanding. Kennedy's (2016) problem-posing framework explicitly addresses student assessment as a challenge that teachers need to overcome. She referred to it as "exposing student thinking" and described it as follows: teachers "can never be certain what their students understand, don't understand, or misunderstand, so [they] must continually find ways to expose their students' thinking" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 12). She elaborated, saying, "if teachers don't know what students understand at any given moment, they can't know whether to repeat, whether to elaborate, or whether to move on" (p. 12). Kennedy differentiated this challenge from traditional summative assessments as she believed "the most useful knowledge for teachers is knowledge they have *in the moment*, for this knowledge can guide their actions in the moment" (p. 12). When teachers have a better grasp on student understanding as they are proceeding through a unit, they can adjust their lessons as necessary *before* the final assessment.

Kendra and Mary worked collaboratively to develop a variety of methods they could use to assess student understanding. They incorporated strategies that included student self-

assessment, peer assessment, and traditional assessment the teachers could use, depending on the task. One of Kendra's student growth assessment (SGO) goals was "to allow students to . . . engage more in their learning and invest more in their learning" so she spent a lot of time thinking about ways assessment could help with this and she conveyed it to Mary, too. Together, they developed a "What Stuck" board where students could put Post-its with explanations or drawings or what they took away from the day's lesson. Mary found this tool helpful in knowing whether she had to go back and teach something again because students struggled to understand it. Mary also began to learn the importance of collecting data when assessing student learning. For example, she developed a peer assessment but simultaneously assessed the students herself and after charting all of the data she and the students were able to compare their findings; the two constructed a variety of strategies they used for this peer assessment.

With Danielle and Mary, this was not nearly as involved. Their work around assessment was more of a reactive process in which Danielle would observe Mary while Mary taught, and she would take notes on which students were raising their hands and asking questions. Danielle and Mary would ask students to use thumbs-up/thumbs-down to assess whether or not they understood the content. For Danielle and Mary, evaluating student understanding in the moment or right after the lesson did not occur collaboratively. However, they did often look at student work together and come up with normed grading strategies for essays and other assignments. What is interesting to note here is Mary did not bring the strategies she developed with Kendra to her second placement which might speak to the contextual nature of learning to teach and teaching in general. Some practices heavily rely on the situation in which they were created and introduced, and that might be the case for Mary and Kendra's work at the elementary school level.

For Charlotte and Lauren, similarly to Danielle and Mary, Charlotte would observe as Lauren taught, and “jump in and support” when a student or a few of them were confused. If there was a part of the lesson that required students to practice independently, they would both circulate the room and check in with students. Charlotte said, “Based on that and their classwork and homework assignments, [we decided] how we were going to change the upcoming lesson or assignments to ensure that we address those misunderstandings.” Even when Lauren was teaching, Charlotte made an effort to check for understanding which would then help them plan or modify future instruction. Lauren added “she supports when she sees that somebody’s confused and I guess I’m not doing such a good job at explaining it to them.” What is notable about this, similar to the situation with Danielle and Mary, is that Charlotte and Lauren were not developing strategies to check for understanding the way Kendra and Mary did, meaning the work in assessing student understanding was contextual and emergent. It is not clear if this will have helped Lauren in the future when she does not have a cooperating teacher working with her *while* she is teaching because neither participant indicated if this practice was one that Lauren began to pick up and enact herself. However, Charlotte and Lauren did often look at student assessments to find trends of students struggling. They would then backtrack to try and understand “where those confusions might have occurred or where there was misunderstanding.” In this case, they would then plan their approach to teaching the content. They found that students were not accessing their prior knowledge when approaching some mathematical concepts, so they would spend more time stressing that in future lessons.

Finally, with Joanna and Samantha, this practice of in-the-moment student understanding assessment, continued to a degree. Samantha indicated there were times Joanna, while observing her, would notice if students were confused and she would either approach Samantha quietly to

let her know students were struggling or make a general statement like “Can you clarify this for me and everyone?” However, Joanna said one of Samantha’s greatest strengths was creating lessons and PowerPoint presentations that clearly explained the instructions in a way Joanna was not as successful at doing herself. Joanna often felt students would say to her “what are you talking about? Could you stay on one subject?” With Samantha, since her lessons were so well-planned and organized, students seemed to understand more clearly what they would have to do. However, Joanna did make suggestions. For example, she encouraged Samantha to leave more time for class discussion, saying:

If they start doing the project, you might not know ‘til the third day who’s not getting it. But if you have a class discussion about it, and you really pull everybody into the discussion, you can at least have an idea of the holes, the gaps in your instruction. What you missed.

Joanna made this suggestion to encourage Samantha to catch any misunderstanding before students began working independently after noticing how difficult it can be working with individual students who are struggling at different points of the process. For Joanna and Samantha, there was some indication that Joanna was reactive in preparing Samantha for gauging student understanding, but she also provided Samantha with strategies to prevent student confusion and anticipate students’ questions.

The participants’ experiences and practices in this study were quite varied regarding this component with some being more explicit about it than others. For example, Kendra and Mary focused on assessment explicitly, but it is important to note that it coincided with Kendra’s chosen SGO, allowing students to engage more in their own learning. She and Mary

collaboratively came up with practices to address Kendra's SGO but these practices were also important for Mary in general. Kendra said:

I told her that's [checking for understanding] one of the biggest components that you're going to have to cover as a phys. ed teacher . . . you have to have proof that these kids or show evidence that these kids actually know what you're teaching.

Kendra recognized how important this practice was and with Mary, came up with ways to measure and assess student understanding in the moment and directly after the lesson. However, it is important to note that Mary did not take these practices with her to her second placement. In her high school placement with Danielle, checking for understanding was something Danielle pointed out to Mary and not something they cultivated and put into practice together unless they were grading student work. But Kennedy (2016) stressed the importance of it being *in the moment*. This type of assessment provides immediate information to teachers regarding their next steps during and following instruction. Charlotte and Lauren's experiences were, to a degree, quite similar. Although they would circulate the room to check for student understanding in the moment, Lauren also relied quite a bit on Charlotte "jumping in" if students seemed confused. Finally, Joanna and Samantha seemed to find some balance between the two methods with Joanna interrupting when necessary. However, she also gave Samantha suggestions for ensuring she had a better understanding of student thinking before she began a large project since students work independently and at their own pace during art class. This was a way Joanna tried to help Samantha manage the individual attention students might need throughout the project.

Kennedy (2016) stressed the difficulty of this challenge because, even in a class full of "highly engaged students," teachers are tasked with gauging where each student is in terms of understanding and their understanding is related to their prior experiences and knowledge which

varies by student. A framework that specifies why *and* how cooperating teachers and student teachers can address this practice is necessary. This is one of the more difficult practices that comes both with experience and knowledge. Classes are large, students are different, time is limited, and teachers must maintain classroom behavior, deliver instruction, *and* assess student understanding in the moment simultaneously. However, again, my proposed framework suggests that this core practice helps student teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice, with student teaching providing the classroom context necessary to really begin work around assessing student understanding with someone who has experience and can provide guidance.

Core Relational Practices

While the instructional support cooperating teachers provided for their student teachers seems obviously necessary, the relational support is just as essential during the student teaching practicum. Some of the core practices the cooperating teachers enacted were relational—they did not focus on practice. Instead, they focused on the student teachers themselves—their feelings, experiences, and concerns. The core relational practices the cooperating teachers enacted in working with their student teachers are providing personal support, providing professional support, providing feedback, and disrupting power imbalances within the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. This group of findings was guided more by Noddings's (2008, 2013) work around caring in education. It also aided in developing my proposed framework, stressing just how much of the work cooperating teachers do with student teachers in relational. However, the framework also indicates how these practices factor into the student teachers' experiences and development during the practicum experience.

Providing Personal Support for Student Teachers

The experience of student teaching and the process of learning to teach are difficult ones. Student teachers, in general, value student teaching experiences that are emotionally supportive (Caires et al., 2012), caring (Koerner et al., 2002), and safe (Singh, 2017). The cooperating teachers, in various ways, provided emotional and personal support for the student teachers to ensure their success in the classroom, make their work easier, alleviate their stress and anxiety, and help them prioritize their various additional responsibilities (e.g., coursework, jobs, edTPA, family obligations).

Both Kennedy (2016) and Noddings (2013) addressed the importance of the cooperating teachers providing personal support. Kennedy's (2016) proposed challenge of "accommodating personal needs" is naturally relevant to this finding. However, her initial introduction of this challenge is framed around teachers "finding a way to address the first four problems in a way that is consistent with their own personal needs" (p. 13). She suggested teachers need to find ways to address the pedagogically challenges of teaching in ways that they feel are true to their own teacher identities. However, what is even more relevant in this case is the idea that:

We tend to focus on content, teaching techniques, and learning theories, all relevant to the work, but we do not address the fact that teaching is intensely personal and interpersonal work . . . One way we could help novices better adapt to their chosen profession is by being more clear about the full set of challenges that are intrinsic to it. (p. 13)

In this regard, Kennedy supplemented the first four challenges that revolved around the practice of teaching and indicated there is indeed a personal component that teachers need to be able to attend to, as well.

Noddings (2013) stressed the goals of the one-caring in caring for her student teacher. Regarding cooperating teachers providing personal support, it is evident that, in caring for their student teachers, cooperating teachers were both looking out for their personal needs and preparing them for the demands that were to come. In this regard, Noddings (2013) explained, “Clearly, in professions where encounter is frequent and where the ethical ideal of another is necessarily involved, I [teacher] am first and foremost *one-caring* and, second, enactor of specialized functions” (p. 176). Noddings (2013) believed the teacher’s *primary* obligation was to care. Accommodating personal needs demonstrates the importance that caring plays in the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic.

Mary indicated that Kendra made a concerted effort to understand how she was feeling. She would ask Mary questions to better understand what Mary called her “home life.” For example, she was well aware that Mary worked a part-time job as a personal trainer every evening. Kendra also drew on her own experiences as a teacher to prepare and support Mary for the work they were doing. Kendra expressed, “sometimes I feel like I am being punished for being a good teacher” because of the added responsibilities she had in the school community. She used these personal feelings to support and prepare Mary, telling her “this weekend . . . make sure you get some rest because . . . starting next week, you are going to be tired.” Again, in preparing Mary for the reality of a teacher’s life, Kendra did so to prepare Mary personally for what was to come. She did not want Mary to be surprised by the reality of the work once she was teaching independently. Kendra also made sure to encourage Mary and ease her concerns. If Mary was stressed because she could not find a parking spot at school, or was nervous about an upcoming observation, Kendra would calm her down or encourage her to take her time. Kendra never seemed to be a catalyst for Mary’s concerns; she was instead an inhibitor of them to the

point that when Mary had her final observation by her university professor, she told Kendra who asked if she wanted to go over anything, “No, I got this.” Mary also explained “Kendra really tries to get me and my home life.” This not only made Mary feel that Kendra had realistic expectations for Mary’s ability to get work done but also cared about Mary’s whole self, not just the self she brought to student teaching every day. In her final interview, Kendra described their relationship “like a friendship” in which both could talk about their lives. Kendra would complain about her kids when they worked together and text Mary to check in on her high-school student teaching placement. They would also text each other some mornings, just to check in and say hi. Kendra indicated “they [the students] miss her a lot and so do I.” Their relationship took on a friendship and they felt comfortable sharing personal aspects of their lives with each other during and even after their working relationship. Similar to Kendra and Mary’s relationship, Joanna said “we became really close friends.” Again, their working relationship turned personal as they continued through the practicum.

Drawing on her own experiences but in a different way, Danielle also made an effort to check in with Mary personally. When Danielle was a student teacher, her cooperating teacher took a back seat, rarely checking in with her and instead giving her complete freedom to teach. She wanted more help and guidance, so she made an effort to provide it for her student teachers. She would often ask questions like “How are you feeling? Are you feeling overwhelmed? Are you stressed? Do you feel good about this?” She explained she did not want Mary or any of her student teachers to feel that she was there as a formality but instead to “let them [student teachers] know you’re here to help them.” Danielle’s consistent checking in with Mary personally was a reaction to the excessive independence she received as a student teacher which made her feel a bit isolated and overlooked. She cared about Mary’s emotional experience,

hoping she would leave her student teaching practicum feeling looked after and considered instead of only tolerated or present. Danielle also provided Mary time and space to work on her edTPA and would ask about her coursework and part-time job saying, “I try to take into consideration what she’s going through.” Mary confirmed this, sharing, “She [Danielle] would make sure not all the class weight was on me” because Danielle knew how much Mary had going out in addition to student teaching. Similar to Danielle’s choice in preparing Mary for the professional components of this work, she was thoughtful about the personal hurdles student teachers encounter during their practicum. In this case, it was the priorities on which Mary focused in addition to student teaching.

For Charlotte, it seemed Lauren was very open with her in general—definitely more open than Charlotte was. Lauren and Charlotte both mentioned Lauren’s openness, expressing, she had no problem sharing whatever was on her mind. Charlotte described her as “super-reflective” and “very open.” Lauren would share her personal experiences both about their work but also about her personal life. Lauren made a point to share that Charlotte “just listens, which is great. Sometimes that’s about all I want, somebody to listen to me.” Lauren valued Charlotte’s warmth and felt immediately comfortable sharing any issues she had—both during student teaching but also personally (e.g., difficulty getting along with a family member). However, Charlotte also said they discussed “how it is important to take care of yourself because if you don’t take care of yourself, then you’re not going to be the person that the kids need in front of the classroom.” Charlotte further explained how she reminded Lauren to eat but followed it with “Maybe I’m not even the too good of a model because there have been plenty of times that I don’t even get time to eat lunch until the very end of the day.” Again, drawing on her own experiences, Charlotte looked after Lauren to ensure she took care of herself, even when she was not personally doing

the same. Within this dynamic, Charlotte was almost warning Lauren to develop good habits early on and not mirror Charlotte's own mistakes in not addressing her own needs during the school day. Again, there was the understanding that the work Lauren would be taking on would be draining and difficult and Charlotte felt it was important to warn Lauren of this early on and help her develop healthy habits to take with her into the future.

Joanna not only focused on Samantha's general personal needs but also on her well-being in the scope of her personal and emotional experiences at home. Joanna knew both of Samantha's parents were experiencing medical difficulties during her practicum. In discussing this, Joanna said:

So, we had a lot of talks about how to take care of yourself, and break whatever you had to do for school down into small pieces, to lean on your colleagues too. And things like that, because I think . . . Teaching, they say, is like being in your own silo . . . it can become an isolating thing. And I think that sometimes they lose sight of themselves and it just becomes this job, and then they sort of lose interest in it because it's not fulfilling them and they're not seeing its connection to their lives. And it can be. And if you develop relationships with other teachers, the students, the administrators, it helps. It gives you a sense of a school community.

Joanna drew on her own experiences relying on others in her school community to encourage Samantha to do the same, especially when she was struggling with personal issues at home. She explained she did this "because I care about her and because I always had somebody do that for me . . . I knew if she wasn't feeling comfortable, she wasn't going to be a good teacher." Like Kendra and Danielle, Joanna also provided Samantha time to work on her edTPA. Again, the cooperating teacher wanted to make the practicum worthwhile without it adding to the stress the

student teachers already experienced just because they were student teaching. A noteworthy implication of this finding is the need for self-care as teachers. Joanna drew on her own experiences, indicating the need to collaboration and support in her own work as a teacher, and tried to reiterate just how important it was and would be for Samantha to seek the same as a teacher. According to Taylor and Klein (2018), “We understand that our own self care is part of the work of caring for others” (p. 102). As teachers, we care for our students, but must also practice self-care in order to be helpful. As cooperating teachers, we care for our student teachers. In this case, Joanna was making the case for self-care as a cooperating teacher for her student teacher (and, as an extension, her current and future students).

As Kennedy (2016) suggested in the challenge of accommodating personal needs, the stress involved in teaching is one that the cooperating teachers were attempting to address and manage for their student teachers. Again, each of the cooperating teachers wanted to portray an accurate picture of the work their student teachers would face in the future but did so in a way that took their student teachers’ personal needs into account. They sought a balance between the honesty and reality of the work and the individual needs of the student teachers. They are attempting to help their student teachers anticipate these stresses in order to make it more likely they will be effective in the profession and remain in it.

Noddings, in suggesting that the one-caring is, first, one who cares and, second, a teacher, highlights just how important it is for cooperating teachers to provide professional support for their student teachers. According to Noddings (2013), “She [the teacher] is present to the other and places her motive power in his service” (p. 176). All of the cooperating teachers focused on providing personal support for the student teachers because they felt the student teachers *needed* this type of support to be successful teachers, both during the student teaching practicum and in

the future as they teach on their own. However, I do not believe data confirms that the cooperating teacher is definitively “first and foremost *one-caring*.” It is not clear the cooperating teacher saw caring as *more* important; however, they all recognized its importance in the work of preparing teachers. What is worth noting is the caring was not only personal; it was professional. They cared about the student teachers’ whole selves—not just the parts of selves that applied to learning to teach.

Providing Professional Support to Student Teachers

While teacher education programs prepare students for the act of teaching, the field experience allows for student teachers to begin understanding what Singh (2017) coined “the realities of the school” (p. 187). Like any other profession, teaching in a school comes with professional and social norms that need to be understood and to which teachers need to acclimate. This includes, but is not limited to, working with other teachers and school staff, union information, health benefits, making copies, acquiring supplies, and even developing professional identities (Peralta & Burns, 2012). While I was initially skeptical about the role cooperating teachers played in this component of learning to teach, or how student teachers would experience and verbalize it because it was not a requirement by the teacher preparation programs and might have seemed far removed from the student teachers’ immediate needs, data analysis demonstrated it was a significant component of the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic. Additionally, it was evident in both Kennedy (2016) and Noddings’s (2013) work. With Kennedy (2016), she suggested teachers need to be prepared to address personal needs while doing this work, and the professional aspects of teaching has personal implications. Noddings (2013) addressed the role of the one-caring, in this case the cooperating teacher, in preparing the cared-for, the student teacher, and suggests part of that work is preparing the

student teacher for the *entire* experience of the work or what she calls the “effective world” (p. 176).

Kendra made a point to include Mary in a lot of these conversations because “no one ever prepared me for some of the stuff we go through as teachers, especially from a political aspect, the various laws.” To address this, Kendra introduced her to everyone in the building and had her observe other teachers “because it’s very important that you support the organization you are a part of.” She also brought Mary with her to every meeting and workshop she attended. Mary became so comfortable that she began speaking up at these meetings. She also had Mary work on a resumé and cover letter and set up a mock interview with her vice principal because “I wanted her to be prepared. I don’t want her to be afraid when she leaves student teaching. I want her to get a job, because we need great teachers like her.” Kendra also brought Mary to her professional learning community (PLC) meeting during which Mary presented a best practice she created for a student who, for personal reasons, was having a difficult time focusing. Mary created a treasure map for him, to help ease his anxiety of not knowing what was coming next as he was going through some difficulties at home. Since then, he had improved tremendously in her class. Also notable was that so many other teachers asked for copies of the treasure map to use in their own classrooms. The opportunity Mary had to present at the PLC is one some teachers might never have, and Mary did it as a student teacher, preparing her for an important component of the profession. Mary received special praise from the vice principal and other teachers at this meeting, too, which not only gave her a boost of confidence but demonstrated the possibilities of her work in the future.

Danielle, who also worked with Mary, prepared her for the realities of education bureaucracy. She talked to Mary about working with a frozen contract, the implications of a new

superintendent, and the difficulties of finding jobs because of nepotism or personal favors. While Danielle was worried that these conversations might “scare her [Mary] off,” she also felt Mary needed “to know that this is a reality.” Additionally, she made sure to introduce Mary to the basic foundations of the union, the function of a union representative, and the availability and purpose of union lawyers. In Danielle’s case, she wanted to prepare Mary for the negative aspects of the job that could hinder her teaching career if she was not prepared for them. Danielle reflected on her own experience:

a lot of times when people go into teaching, they have this ideal image of there is summer vacation, and you’re going to teach, and make this great impact, and change the world . . . and all of a sudden you’re there loin enough, you start to feel, like, all the negativity of the bureaucracy of it all.

For Danielle, she looked at preparing Mary for the professional components of teaching as a way to prevent her from being blindsided by the inevitable difficulties that often come with navigating bureaucracy, politics, and protocols so she would be prepared enough to handle them and continue her work as a teacher. Danielle concluded this point saying, “she needs to know that this is a reality.” Danielle was especially interested in ensuring Mary was not scared off by what could come once she began teaching full time.

Charlotte encouraged Lauren to observe other teachers, especially to see the range of students in the school. Charlotte had three honors classes and Lauren indicated “realistically, I’m not gonna get that my first year.” Both participants felt it was important for Lauren to observe classes with students of different levels, temperaments, and classroom cultures. Charlotte also brought Lauren to afterschool department and staff meetings when Lauren did not have class and included her in meetings with her administration. Finally, Charlotte always made a point to keep

Lauren updated on the various responsibilities they had to address, like progress reports that needed comments. Charlotte said, “anytime anything of that nature came up, I would explain to her . . . why that was important, why they needed to be done, how it was done at our school.”

The reason Charlotte did this was “to open her eyes to . . . some of the things that she might expect to be doing when she’s on her own as well.” Charlotte wanted Lauren to be prepared for whatever she might encounter, drawing on her own experiences of learning the various facets of teaching in addition to classroom instruction.

Samantha explained that Joanna took initiative to help her with her resumé, recommend her for substitute teaching, set up an interview with the principal, and even encouraged her to work on her edTPA when she was struggling to finish it on time. Samantha indicated that these were things Joanna “just did” without Samantha asking or prompting her. She also mentioned Joanna’s strong presence in the school with colleagues, from other teachers to the janitorial staff, which Samantha felt extends to her, too. Joanna indicated that teaching can often be isolating, and she told Samantha “you can’t just stay in your silo.” She wanted to ensure Samantha understood the importance of school community and professional relationships. She further explained “I think it’s necessary to be a good teacher, to be part of the community.” Joanna also made sure to take Samantha on little “field trips” around the building with her to help Samantha become acclimated (e.g., to make copies). Joanna also shared contract and salary information with Samantha who said these things were “something[s] I was not really aware of going into teaching, and it’s not something that anyone really told me. I really had no clue.” Like Kendra with Mary, Joanna encouraged Kirsten to observe teachers or other subjects, citing her own previous successes when collaborating with a colleague who taught English.

All participants revealed at length the importance of professional support throughout the student teaching placement. It seemed, most often, the cooperating teachers brought it up because they wanted the student teachers to be prepared for the reality of the job, in addition to the actual classroom instruction. The cooperating teachers wanted to prepare their student teachers for the aspects of the profession that are rarely, if ever, discussed in teacher education courses. These issues are also, to a degree, specific to schools and their cultures. It functions as a form of tacit knowledge, what Gascoigne and Thornton (2013) define as “context-dependent but conceptually structured practical or personal knowledge” (p. 167). It seemed to be brought up in situations where the cooperating teachers thought back to their own experiences, especially unpleasant or stressful ones, and wanted their student teachers to be prepared for them. However, even in including the student teachers in these school-specific situations, they were preparing the student teachers for future responsibilities or issues that *could* arise, even if not exactly the same. Lastly, these professional supports reminded teachers of the difficult aspects of the profession that they might have avoided, especially when reveling in the small successes that many student teachers experience. The cooperating teachers did not want to scare the student teachers but realistically prepare them for the *whole* job.

Both Kennedy (2016) and Noddings (2013) address this component of the student teaching practicum by stressing the importance of self-care and preservation and focusing on preparing student teachers for the context and potential difficulties of this work outside of the practical components specific to teaching students. Again, Kennedy (2016) proposed addressing teaching practices by focusing on “persistent challenges” teachers encounter. Here I think about how the framework can address something that was so clearly significant in the learning experiences of the participants. Kennedy (2016) stated:

We need to help novices understand that the behaviors they see are simply one possible solution to a broad teaching challenge, and that other solutions are also possible. By focusing on challenges, rather than on solutions, we help novices learn to think strategically about how their actions address a larger purpose, rather than focusing on how to mimic a set of actions that they observe. (p. 10)

Even though Kennedy did not indicate professional support as a challenge teachers need to address, it is nonetheless a challenge that cooperating teachers approached with a variety of solutions and strategies. In the cases of the professional support the cooperating teachers provided, the student teachers began to realize there was a component of being a teacher that they would likely face and have to “think strategically about.” However, Kennedy’s framework did not specifically address this challenge which will likely, either directly or indirectly, affect the teacher’s work in the classroom. This practice might be inhabited in her final challenge, “accommodating personal needs.” According to Kennedy (2016):

One way we could help novices better adapt to their chosen profession is by being more clear about the full set of challenges that are intrinsic to it, but also more clear about the variety of ways these challenges can be met and the importance of finding strategies that are consistent with their own personal needs. (p. 13)

While Kennedy (2016) was referring to her proposed set of challenges (portraying the curriculum, enlisting student participation, exposing student thinking, containing student behaviors, and accommodating personal needs) that teachers must learn to navigate in preparing to teach, the professional practices of teaching are undoubtedly another challenge prospective teachers need to learn to navigate.

Noddings (2013), in her framework about caring and moral education, stressed the importance of the teacher as *one-caring*, which combined with Kennedy's (2016) "accommodating personal needs" might be another way we might view this notion of preparing student teachers for the "realities" of teaching. She explained:

The *one-caring* as teacher, then, has two major tasks: to stretch the student's world by presenting an effective selection of that world with which she is in contact, and to work cooperatively with the student in his struggle toward competence in that world. (p. 178)

This responsibility, as the one-caring educator, is evident in how the cooperating teachers took it upon themselves to expose the student teachers to the realities of school workplaces in an effort to prevent them from being surprised or unprepared for the realities of the bureaucracy of working in education. They were able to foresee aspects of their work that the student teachers would likely not experience had the cooperating teachers not made a concerted effort to address it and then justify why they felt it was important. In this case, it was to prepare student teachers for all components of teaching—even those that might take away from the joy and excitement of working directly with students. Thus, while both frameworks managed to speak to this theme, I would argue that we needed a fuller framework to embody the full range of experiences for teachers. In the cooperating teachers providing professional support, they were providing information that coursework likely does not, partly because of context of working in specific schools. In that way, they were bridging theory with practice. But this core practice also provided an honest portrayal of teaching, preparing the student teachers for the professional hurdles and requirements they will need to understand for which they should be prepared.

Noddings (2013) also suggested "The teacher's power is, thus, awesome. It is she who presents the 'effective world' to the student. In doing this, she realizes that the student, as ethical

agent, will make his own selection from the presented possibilities” (p. 176). Noddings draws here on the work of Martin Buber (1965) who coined the term “effective world” to mean “education, conscious and willed” (p. 106). The cooperating teachers in this study took what they knew about the realities of teaching and shared it with their student teachers who could then rectify it within their future work. It is important to note here that while both frameworks partially address this finding, there existed the need for a fuller framework that embodies the wide range of experiences for prospective teachers—*both* the instructionally *and* emotionally.

Providing Feedback to Student Teachers

That the cooperating teachers provided feedback to their student teachers was not surprising; all of the student teachers’ teacher education programs required formal written observations. However, the day-to-day informal feedback seemed to be much more helpful to the student teachers as they progressed through their placements. When discussing the ways cooperating teachers provide feedback to their student teachers, what is most notable is that the feedback is honest, continuous (Izadinia, 2015), and timely (Nguyen, 2009). Won et al. (2019) found “Attending to the emotional response of the student teachers, asking how they felt about the lesson and what changes they would make in teaching could help student teachers develop the self-regulation and self-assessment practices necessary” which stresses the relational nature of feedback (pp. 13-14). All of the cooperating teachers indicated they provided feedback as soon as they could. They would try to provide it at the end of the lesson, but if they could not, they would have a conversation before leaving school for the day. They all felt this was important for the student teachers but also an efficient way to make sure feedback was detailed and relevant to them.

One of the four components of Noddings's (2013) framework is confirmation which is how she refers to the one-caring evaluating the cared-for. To confirm is to "reveal to him [cared-for] an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts" (p. 193). She went on to say, "In education, what we reveal to a student about himself as an ethical and intellectual being has the power to nurture the ethical ideal or to destroy it" (p. 193). Noddings (2013) viewed grading as potentially problematic because it can be "an intrusion upon the relationship between the *one-caring* and *cared-for*" (p. 193). Ultimately, any teacher's goal is to "help the student toward the prescribed mastery" (p. 193). But Noddings (2013) also suggested caring teachers are not opposed to grading students; they just feel "no need, and no right, to sum it up with a report to the world" (p. 195). This is similar to the way the cooperating teacher and student teacher viewed evaluation as an ongoing, informal process that occurred in the moment. The final written-up evaluations went to the teacher education programs, but the feedback that was most helpful and noteworthy was provided for the student teachers in the everyday confines of their work. The only participant (Danielle) who strayed from Noddings's beliefs about evaluation seemed to do so intentionally—as an attempt to separate the professional from the personal.

Mary's feedback from Kendra was more specific at the start of her placement. As time progressed, and Mary took on more of Kendra's classes (at the beginning of the placement, Mary only taught one or two), the feedback conversations began to change. At first, Kendra would ask Mary questions after each lesson like "How do you feel about it? What would you change? What did you like?" and she would give Mary "glows and grows" which were things that went well in the lesson and components that could be improved. Mary referred to this as "warm and cool feedback." However, once Mary took on more responsibility, the feedback also became more

general. Kendra no longer had to ask specific questions. Instead, she would offer a general “how do you feel about today” at the end of the school day. This might have been an indication that Mary had begun to internalize the kinds of reflective talk necessary to discuss their work. However, Kendra did not share her formal written observations with Mary. They were submitted to Mary’s teacher education program and Mary would eventually have access to them, but not in real-time—there was often a lag. Kendra shared that even though she would write and submit Mary’s formal observations, she always had a post-observation conference with her immediately to share “what I saw and what I thought that she should change and stuff.” In their case, the formal evaluations were a technicality and the majority of the helpful feedback occurred in person after the lesson or at the end of the school day.

Danielle, on the other hand, would share her formal evaluations of Mary with her as she wrote them. Mary indicated that this enhanced the trust between them because even though Danielle would score her with fours and fives (the two highest scores), Danielle was comfortable explaining why Mary earned a four instead of a five for certain components. Mary said, “She would explain and go over with me, so it helped me change what I did.” Danielle found the formal evaluations time consuming so she would not always submit them immediately after Mary’s formal observation, needing extra time to write them up. But she would always have a conversation with Mary right away, indicating why she gave Mary the scores that she did. Interestingly, Danielle did not feel the conversations about Mary’s feedback had any negative effects on their relationship. She said, “I think we had, like, a good relationship anyway before the first evaluation even started. Then the first evaluation went well so I don’t feel like it changed anything.” For this pair, Danielle worried that a negative evaluation would have a negative effect on their working relationship, and she was almost relieved Mary did so well. However, Danielle

was the only participant to mention that the evaluative component of their work ensured there was not “a possibility of getting too comfortable with being on a personal level or becoming friends.” Where some of the pairs found describing their relationship as friendlike and positive, Danielle wanted to avoid it because it “kept the professionalism.” This might suggest there is a common belief that it is difficult to maintain both professionalism and friendship. As Taylor and Klein (2018) address in their work on feminism and friendship in academia, “We [the writers who are also close friends] acknowledge each other as full human beings. We do not separate out the work and the person—both in our conversations and in the enactment of that work” (p. 109). Danielle’s concern, while understandable, *does* highlight this idea that in professional setting where one person holds power over the other (in this case the cooperating teacher), even if they do not purposefully enact it, there is a belief that friendship cannot or should not exist. However, of all of the participants in my study, Danielle was the only participant who brought this up as a concern, and therefore might be an area for further research. Regarding friendship, Noddings (2013) believed that “Two friends, may, indeed, assume the functions of teacher and student interchangeably” (p. 71). She is referencing inclusion, or seeing things from both points of view, as both teacher and student. I elaborate more on this in a later section, but the role of friendship in this work should not be discounted or avoided. There is space for friendship in professional and academic dynamics.

In working with Lauren, Charlotte would share the digital evaluations with her as soon as she submitted them to Lauren’s teacher education program. Through them, Lauren learned a lot about how she needed to work on pacing or avoid working with every student individually during a lesson. For example, Charlotte suggested she encourage students to work with their partners when they were struggling during class. Charlotte said they would discuss the feedback

immediately though. With this pair, it seemed there was an understanding that any suggestions from Charlotte came from a “good place,” by which I mean Lauren did not report ever being offended by Charlotte’s suggestions or feedback because they were intended to help Lauren improve. Charlotte said “the things I wanted to address for her were solely to make her a better teacher, not anything personal. I think we had that relationship where she understood that.”

Charlotte and Lauren had an understanding that any constructive criticism was not meant to insult Lauren but help her improve. This might be a result of Charlotte providing Lauren with feedback so regularly, even when it was not for a formal observation. Charlotte said her formal observations were “very typical of daily conversations that we had from reflections of after a lesson anyway. I don’t think it was any different, unusual, or difficult to have.” For this pair, the ongoing feedback Charlotte provided made formal feedback after observations a helpful, everyday occurrence and nothing Lauren found stressful or upsetting. The role of formal evaluations was minimized because the cooperating teachers were just writing up the informal feedback they consistently provided.

Samantha and Joanna’s situation followed a similar pattern as the other participants. Joanna would submit all of her formal evaluations of Samantha and they both knew Samantha had access to them as soon as Joanna submitted them. Interestingly, Samantha told me she had an unopened evaluation from Joanna sitting in her inbox she had not opened. When asked why, she said:

It’s not that I don’t care. Not that I assume that she said good things, but I’m not worried she’s going to say something horrible because if she had something constructive to say to me, she has already said it to me personally. So, in my evaluation, I expect everything that she’d said to me already, I guess.

Samantha felt these formal evaluations were redundant because Joanna provided consistent and honest feedback throughout their work together, again demonstrating a sense of trust between the two. Joanna confirmed this feeling because when I asked how sharing formal observations with Samantha affected their relationship, she said it did not, indicating “She knew how I felt about her.” Joanna and Samantha’s relationship seemed to be based heavily in mutual understanding. Joanna, like Kendra, would make sure to provide positive and negative feedback to Samantha. Joanna called it the “compliment sandwich.” You start with a compliment, then you get the constructive criticism, then you end with a compliment.” Joanna’s intentions were never to discourage Samantha, and she felt this method would help avoid that. It is worth mentioning that the formal evaluation seems almost redundant in a student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic that is rich with ongoing in the moment feedback.

Noddings (2013) believed confirmation, or evaluation, should be carried out cooperatively. She furthered that any evaluation is one of the student *and* the teacher. All of the participants in this study had open, honest conversations about the student teachers’ strengths and weaknesses to the point that, often, the student teachers were not particularly worried about the feedback they would receive. Particularly with Lauren and Samantha, they almost expected the feedback because they had gotten so used to ongoing conversations they shared with their cooperating teachers. Of the four pairs, it seems that Danielle and Mary’s method for completing formal observations was most cooperative as Danielle would go through the evaluation with Mary, carefully explaining why she chose the score she did for each category. According to Noddings (2013), though, *every* pair should complete the evaluation together. She believed:

To confirm, I must see and receive the other—see clearly what he has actually done, and receive the feelings with which it was done. Out of what may be a mixture of feelings and

motives, I choose the best to attribute to him. Thus, we are realistic; we do not hide from what-is-there. But we are also idealistic, in the important sense that our attention and educational efforts are always focused on the ethical ideal, on its nurturance and enhancement. (p. 196)

It would have been beneficial for all of the participants to complete the evaluations cooperatively, as Noddings (2013) valued the student's input and explanation of his intentions behind his choices. Otherwise, teachers are just engaging in "product control" (p. 196). It is important for evaluation to take context into account when the one-caring is conducting it. The cared-for's feelings and intentions matter when the one caring is making a judgment. In this study, it seems that, while the student teachers described the evaluative component of the practicum favorably, Noddings believes it should be more openly collaborative:

But, surely, we should cease coercing teachers to adopt particular philosophical, psychological, or pedagogical positions and should, instead, talk with each other about the methods we have chosen, the ends we seek, and the pleasure we experience in knowing each other. (p. 197)

Based on the participants' responses, there did not seem to be a large amount of conversation around the student teachers' choices and decisions. The feedback was much more technical, focused on the pacing of the lesson, or the student teacher's decisions in the moment when working with students. Noddings (2013) asserted that intentions should be part of the evaluative conversation. However, what is important to note is time. All of the cooperating teachers provided feedback promptly, which was likely difficult considering the amount of responsibilities of the average teacher. Participating in a longer conversation centered around the student's choices and intentions, while helpful, would require a substantial designated amount of

time teachers and student teachers might not have. However, finding ways to incorporate conversations around student teachers' intentions would be helpful in a framework incorporating Noddings's (2013) component of caring and confirmation. This might suggest that the role of formative feedback be restructured so that it is completed collaboratively. However, what is most notable from this finding is that the formal evaluation played a minor role in the student teachers' perceived growth. They felt feedback that occurred informally and in the moment was most valuable. As a result, in my proposed framework, I indicate that one of the core relational practices cooperating teachers enact is immediate, ongoing, and cooperative feedback. As every student teacher in this study shared, the most helpful feedback they received was always in the moment and abundant. The formal evaluations served to reiterate what they had already discussed with their cooperating teachers. And taking it one step further, addressing Noddings's (2013) beliefs about confirmation, when cooperating teachers are evaluating student teachers, they should do so in conversation with the student teacher, focusing less on the product and more on the student teacher's intentions and feelings around the work.

Disrupting Power Imbalances

There is an inherent power imbalance in the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The cooperating teacher is considered the expert, and she evaluates the student teacher. Even within the classroom, it can be difficult for students to see the student teacher as a full teacher and not an assistant teacher—at first anyway (Frick et al., 2010; Guise et al., 2017). However, power and the way it is given and shared, was an important factor in the practical and relational work the participants did. Traditionally, the cooperating teachers have the power and authority in the relationship. The participants in this study disrupted that tradition by sharing

power, the cooperating teacher empowering the student teacher, and engaging in reciprocal dialogue.

The relational aspect of the student teaching experience requires the participants to navigate the tensions innate to this work, specifically, and any work that involves a component in which the learner (in this case the student teacher) is, to a degree, being taught by someone considered an expert (in this case, the cooperating teacher). As I stated previously, there is an inherent power imbalance in the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship, but when the traditional imbalance was challenged and the traditional relationship dynamic shifted, navigating these tensions provided rich opportunities for analysis, understanding, and learning.

The relational analysis is driven by two components of the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship. The first is that it is subjective and contextual. Drawing from Lave and Wenger (1991), “learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and . . . the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community” (p. 29). Any analysis of relationships without taking the context into account would be incomplete. We cannot discuss the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship in a manner that is binary—it is not this or that, perfect or imperfect, good or bad. It is dependent upon the district, the school community, the students, the teacher education program, the cooperating teacher, the student teacher, the social context of the time, and many other factors. Noddings (2013) explained:

In recognition of the feminine approach to meeting the other morally—our insistence on caring for the other—I shall want to preserve the uniqueness of human encounters. Since so much depends on the subjective experience of those involved in ethical encounters,

conditions are rarely “sufficiently familiar” for me to declare that you must do what I must do. There is, however, a fundamental universality in our ethic . . . (p. 5)

Each pair of participants had different experiences throughout their student teaching practicum, and there is value in examining them individually. However, that individual examination also gives rise to what Noddings (2013) called “fundamental universality” (p. 5). What she means is we all share memories of caring and being cared-for that are “universally accessible” (p. 5).

While memories drive our understanding of what caring is, Noddings (2013) is careful to clarify that this is not a cause-and-effect scenario in which “under condition X you are required to do A” (p. 5). In the following section, I seek to better understand the common features of this very contextual and subjective experience, seeking to concretize the universal aspects of the personal and contextual—not to prescribe what cooperating teachers must do to demonstrate caring, but what they *have* done and *can* do to demonstrate caring. Noddings’s (2013) work suggested to “establish a convincing and comprehensive picture of caring at the outset” (p. 6). What caring looks like in this context is valuable in better understanding how to approach the student-teaching practicum in the future.

The second consideration in examining the effects of the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship is that it is often fraught with tension. At times, the work seems contradictory. The cooperating teacher, the one who has knowledge to impart, also can become the learner, or co-learner. She evaluates the student teacher, but also may see her as a peer, colleague, friend, or daughter. She provides space for her student teacher to take risks while feeling overwhelming protection for the students they both teach. However, according to Noddings (2013):

When I [as the teacher and one-caring] spend time in dialogue with my students, I am rewarded not only with appreciation but also with all sorts of information and insights. I would as easily, and properly, say, “I am receiving” as, “I am giving.” Thus, many of the “demands” of caring are not felt as demands. They are, rather, the occasions that offer most of what makes life worth living. (p. 52)

These tensions provide rich opportunity for growth for both the one-caring, the cooperating teacher, and the cared-for, the student teacher. Traditionally, the cooperating teacher is seen as one who gives (time, knowledge, patience, her classroom and office space), but Noddings (2013) also suggested the one-caring, in this case the cooperating teacher, is also potentially receiving during the rich experience of working with a student teacher. In examining these tensions and how the participants navigated them, we can better decipher how they provide opportunities for learning, joy, understanding, and reflection. Next, I further elaborate on the three ways the cooperating teachers disrupted power imbalances: sharing power, the cooperating teacher empowering the student teacher, and engaging in reciprocal dialogue.

Sharing Power. Despite the inherent power imbalance between a full time, often tenured, cooperating teacher familiar with the school, students, and district, and a student teacher who sometimes does not even have a bathroom key, there were instances of that imbalance being blurred while the cooperating teachers and student teachers worked collaboratively. In a study by Guise et al. (2017), a more collaborative student teaching practicum that included co-teaching diminished the “expert/novice dynamic” (p. 379). Additionally, Scantlebury et al. (2008) found that when both teachers “viewed each other as peers” they learned from each other (p. 975). In a similar fashion, Fairbanks et al. (2000) found that cooperating teachers began to realize working with a student teacher provided learning opportunities for the cooperating teachers. Therefore, by

sharing power and minimizing the hierarchical dynamic, one component to focus on is diminishing the power imbalance between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher and instead presenting them as co-learners who both have opportunities to learn and grow through the student teaching practicum. This finding provides rich examples of a portion of my proposed framework—the cooperating teachers functioning as co-learners and not just mentors or teachers.

To begin, as I discussed in an earlier finding, all pairs of participants in this study co-taught during the student teaching practicum. However, two of the pairs demonstrated this collaborative teaching was an unintentional way to disrupt the power dynamic of cooperating teacher and student teacher. The dynamic between Charlotte and Lauren became one that, Lauren said, “. . . when we’re teaching, when she helps or she supports me in class, it doesn’t feel like, I don’t think the kids even notice that sometimes I just get caught up, she jumps right in.” Even among their students, their dynamic had a natural give-and-take and collaborative essence where Charlotte could participate in a lesson while Lauren was teaching without it affecting the students or classroom dynamic. Similarly, Joanna indicated that co-teaching with Samantha:

gave Samantha cred, because she was teaching me, and on the other side of it was that they [the students] saw vulnerability in me, which gave them hope that ‘Oh, if she [Joanna] can’t do it [either], maybe I can learn it [too].’

Joanna also explained that co-teaching with Samantha helped lend her authority in the classroom because it gave the two of them equal status and authority according to the students. Joanna said “they [the students] were able to see that every teacher has strengths and weaknesses.” For both pairs, co-teaching helped the students see the student teacher as an equal authority instead of the other teacher, second teacher, or assistant. This allowed Samantha to experience a fuller, more

authentic teaching experience in which she had authority and respect in the classroom, the way she would once she is a fulltime teacher.

Cooperating teachers seeing student teachers as sources of knowledge also helped disrupt the hierarchical relationship inherent in their work. Joanna found that working with Samantha was a wonderful opportunity to learn. “it [working with a student teacher] gives me so many ideas. It allows me to see what I’m falling down on the job with. It allows me to see what’s going on right now in the field.” Joanna also learned about the importance of presenting lessons and projects clearly, using PowerPoint presentations to convey the students’ tasks the way Samantha did to avoid students losing track of the task and its steps and repeatedly asking the same questions. Kendra also saw Mary as a source of knowledge. Mary said “she [Kendra] really encourages me to do stuff differently from her, ‘cause she wants to see more.” For example, Mary did a lesson on yoga and used a children’s book called *Zoo Zen: A Yoga Story for Kids* and she said Kendra loved it and planned to incorporate it into her own teaching in the future. Danielle also indicated their relationship was “professional and yet comfortable. I think that we learned from each other.” Not only did the cooperating teachers acknowledge there was more they could learn, they were grateful for the knowledge they gained from their student teachers.

Reciprocal Dialogue. Being comfortable engaging in dialogue that was honest and open was an important factor in disrupting the power imbalance that existed in their relationship between cooperating and student teachers. According to Noddings (2013), reciprocal dialogue is dialogue in which the one-caring, in this case the cooperating teaching, both talks *and* listens. She (2013) elaborated, by saying “The purpose of dialogue is to come into contact with ideas and to understand, to meet the other and to care” (p. 186). Izadinia (2015) indicated a non-hierarchical relationship led to student teachers being more comfortable sharing their own views

and ideas. Instances in which the student teachers felt comfortable asking questions or making suggestions to the cooperating teachers served as rich examples of reciprocal dialogue existing in their working relationship. The examples below that support this finding convey the ways reciprocal dialogue weakened the traditional hierarchical structure of the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship.

Kendra immediately attempted to weaken the hierarchical dynamic of their relationship by telling Mary, “I’m not here to be your supervisor. I’m here to be a resource to you.” When Kendra gave Mary feedback, advice, or criticism, Mary would “try it out.” However, the reciprocity is most evidence when Kendra shared that Mary, in the middle of Kendra leading the class, would approach her and say, “Miss G., maybe we can try this? Can we try this out?” Kendra seemed to have no problem attempting Mary’s suggestions. That Mary felt comfortable approaching Kendra in the middle of a lesson with an idea and Kendra was open to enacting it immediately demonstrates a weakening of the power imbalance that could and often does exist in the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship. Furthermore, Mary indicated she had “no problem going up to her [Kendra] and asking her any kind of question. Kendra was a trusted source Mary felt comfortable approaching with any question or concern. There was no evidence of intimidation within their dynamic. Instead, the relationship was comfortable with Mary being able to make suggestions without fear of an adverse reaction or Kendra being offended which led to Mary taking chances and exploring ideas with the safety of Kendra’s support.

Mary described her conversations with Danielle as reciprocal and open. She said, “if I talked about something, we would have a whole conversation and [lose] track of time, but it was always, like, back and forth.” Also, Danielle would discuss things that were occurring with her colleagues with Mary which made Mary feel more like an equal and less like a student teacher.

In discussing her colleagues with Mary, she was also demonstrating that she trusted her with that information. Mary felt comfortable approaching Danielle with concerns of areas in which she was struggling, and Danielle would consistently provide honest, helpful suggestions and solutions.

Charlotte explained that the relational dynamic with her and Lauren was reciprocal: “I took the time to listen to her and I think she also took the time to listen to the things I had to say.” She followed this up saying Lauren would always enact the suggestions Charlotte made, confirming she was listening. Charlotte added that Lauren “felt comfortable enough to tell me [personal] things.” Lauren further explained that she never felt Charlotte talked down to her the way her first cooperating teacher did. She felt her first clinical experience was more of a mother/child relationship whereas with Charlotte, she said “I don’t feel like there’s any power. And even when she does support me in class, I don’t even think the kids realize that she’s, like, the real teacher.” Instead of perpetuating the perceived understanding that the “real” teacher has all of the power, the way Lauren and Charlotte worked together minimized that, so the students felt they had two “real” teachers. Lauren felt like Charlotte’s equal, both in the way they conversed, and the way Charlotte treated her in general. Lauren said Charlotte was “really open to mine [ideas], and I’m super open to hers.” They worked well and both felt comfortable contributing to the classroom they shared.

Finally, Samantha and Joanna also engaged in reciprocal dialogue regularly. Samantha felt “I can ask her [Joanna] anything, and she’ll answer.” Joanna said they would be clear with each other about the ways they learn from one another. She went on to describe their relationship as “honest and warm.” Joanna also indicated there were times Samantha was nervous about teaching content that might be inappropriate (e.g., a video about Salvador Dali that mentions sex)

or if she was struggling with how to address a student who said something inappropriate to her. Joanna was always willing to ease Samantha's concerns with issues like this and walk her through them if necessary, too.

Empowering Student Teachers. Despite the inherent power imbalance, cooperating teachers need to find an appropriate balance between providing the support the student teachers need and the independence they crave. Patrick's (2013) study found student teachers were dismayed by their inability to experiment in their student teaching placements. They did not have, or were not given, the power to take chances in their cooperating teachers' space. Gore (1992) explored empowerment and pedagogy and identified the problems with empowerment: first, "to em-power denotes to give authority," and "suggests that power can be given, controlled, held, conferred, taken away" (pp. 56–57). That is, having the ability to empower another is to have power *over* another. Gore (1992) went on to propose her own definition of empowerment: "the exercise of power in an attempt (that might not be successful) to help others exercise power" (p. 59). She also suggested empowerment must occur in sites of practice. The cooperating teachers in this study did—at times—enact Gore's definition of empowerment. They exercised the power they had as cooperating teachers to empower the student teachers which provided them a sense of authority and allowed them to explore their work in a space that was supported and safe. The examples to support this finding serve to address the portion of my framework in which student teachers need a practicum that allows space for them to take risks and build trust.

Mary felt empowered through her work with Kendra because "she [Kendra] just wants me to try whatever I want to try, so she's really made me find more love for teaching phys. ed, and being that teacher, that sole teacher inside the classroom." In this case, Kendra was able to exercise the power she had as a cooperating teacher and trusted teacher within her school

community to provide a safe space for Mary to experiment and take chances, with Kendra there as a guide and expert if necessary. Mary said Kendra was much more communicative and in their working relationship, there was “a lot more encouragement, a lot more dialogue about content and how to teach.” Mary also stressed the immense amount of trust she felt from Kendra which served as encouragement to take chances and try new things. For example, the treasure map Mary created to help the overwhelmed student, that Mary then presented at the school’s PLC, was an idea Mary felt comfortable bringing up to Kendra who encouraged her to move forward with it. That Mary felt comfortable enough to propose the idea, enact it, and then present it (based on Kendra’s encouragement) to a room of seasoned teachers demonstrated trust and faith in Mary’s ability to be successful which also encouraged Mary to continue these practices in the future.

Lauren felt empowered when Charlotte complimented her “from the professional perspective.” When Charlotte said something like, “Oh my God, you did this so good. I have never even done that” Lauren felt empowered to continue because she was receiving confirmation from someone she respected as an educator. Lauren felt this helped her become “a better professional.” In a somewhat related fashion, Charlotte encouraged Lauren to ask questions about anything she was struggling with, instructionally *and* professionally. To Charlotte, telling Lauren “you should say something, speak up, stand up for the things that you need or information you need. Don’t be afraid to ask. If you don’t, people are just not going to take you that seriously or kind of run over you” was a way to empower her.

Joanna supported Samantha to, in a somewhat literal sense, find her voice. Samantha struggled getting the students’ attention at first and Joanna told her to “speak up.” She reminded Samantha the student teaching experience was a chance to “figure out your teaching style, how

you are going to do things.” Samantha further explained that Joanna encouraged her to set the tone of the classroom, saying “your house, your rules.” Joanna used what power she had to encourage Samantha to assert herself and set a tone for the classroom which was similar to the advice Charlotte gave Lauren.

While the instructional practices student teachers learn during the student teaching practicum are undoubtedly important, there is also evidence that the relational practices by cooperating teachers enact also play a role in the student teachers’ development as confident, thoughtful, empowered individuals who feel comfortable taking chances in the spaces their cooperating teachers provide for them. Next, I elaborate on the effects the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

The Relational Influence on Practice

In the previous section, I identified cooperating teachers’ core instructional and relational practices when working with student teachers. Next, I elaborate on the how the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher influenced the student teaching experience. This section functions as an explanation of the final portion of my proposed framework. The core relational practices cooperating teacher enacted had three positive effects on the student teaching practicum: positioning both the cooperating teacher and student teacher as learners, challenging the traditional mentor/mentee relationship so it functions as one of trust and friendship, and creating a safe space for risk-taking.

Maintaining Equity and Disrupting the Traditional Hierarchy: Learning Works Both Ways

The participants did not always perpetuate the traditional hierarchical relationship inherent in work focused on mentoring. There were times the relationship followed the traditional pattern—the student teachers had questions and the cooperating teachers had answers.

However, there were times the cooperating teachers became the learners and it was often not intentional. In working with their student teachers, co-planning and discussing pedagogy and content, the cooperating teachers learned new teaching practices. Additionally, this disruption led to cooperating teachers often considering their student teachers peers or colleagues—not just mentees or apprentices. However, what is most important to note regarding this transition from mentee to colleague is that it did not function as a final destination for the participants.

Throughout the student teaching practicum, there were times the cooperating teacher saw the student teacher as a colleague and others where they saw the student teacher as a mentee who needed guidance and support. They did not help their student teacher arrive at the metaphorical destination of colleague. They found their relationship functioned on a continuum ranging from student teacher/cooperating teacher to colleague and friend.

Joanna indicated “There were many times I would say, ‘Look, this is what I’ve learned from you [Samantha], thanks’ . . . it was a very honest, warm relationship. And that was possible because she was good.” Samantha said “I feel valued and respected in her classroom” when we discussed how she knows Joanna cares about her. In this case, Samantha felt her presence had value which is confirmed by Joanna indicating she learned from Samantha and the students missed her when she was gone. Samantha’s role was one that others in the classroom came to rely on. Joanna further shared that she learned a lot when she co-taught with Samantha because Samantha “knew some things that I didn’t.” Joanna would even ask Samantha for advice during their lessons if she felt Samantha was better equipped to address a question or issue. Danielle said she and Mary had a “professional yet comfortable” relationship and “we learned from each other.” Similarly, Kendra said of her work with Mary, “she taught me a lot of stuff. Some of the assessments she came up with, I’m like, I’m going to continue to use that when you’re gone.”

For Kendra, some of what Mary brought to their shared classroom remained after Mary moved on to her second placement.

Charlotte's growth as an educator was a bit different from the other cooperating teachers but she still found herself learning during the student teaching practicum. She said, when she acts as a cooperating teacher:

I'm also very thoughtful and look at the things that I'm doing. Kind of think about the justification behind a lot of the practices in my classroom and why I'm doing what I'm doing. How I'm doing it and for what purpose because I have to justify it and explain it to the student teacher. Being thoughtful of all of that just makes me think about my own practice and how I can also improve it. As opposed to when I don't have someone to explain it to. It's kind of like I'm in my own little world [when I don't have a student teacher].

For Charlotte, talking through teaching practices with Lauren helped her learn more about teaching mathematics herself. She was able to be more reflective about her own practice, even as a veteran teacher, and continue to grow and improve. The insights Charlotte had might not have occurred had it not been for her work with Lauren. This may indicate that one draw for volunteering to be a cooperating teacher is the learning that comes along with it. There are benefits for the cooperating teacher in addition to the student teacher and teacher education programs would benefit from that framing.

All of the cooperating teachers mentioned they were, at times, learners when working with their student teachers. Teaching is often isolating work; just having a full-time partner is rare for most teachers. In working together, there were times the cooperating teachers provided structured assistance—like when they provided their lesson plans for the student teachers to alter

and build upon themselves. In this case, the student teacher was the learner. There were other times they worked collaboratively, such as when they co-taught. In this case, they were acting as co-learners and co-leaders. Their students often looked at and addressed them equally. Finally, there were instances when the cooperating teachers became the learners with the student teachers providing new ideas or ways of presenting content. They both came to the process as knowers and learners.

The role of caring in this component of the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship begins to convey how dynamic the relationship is. While like most working relationships, it is guided by some norms and rules, with the cooperating teacher being more of a guide for the student teacher, the roles of both the one-caring and the cared-for were not stagnant. According to Noddings (2013), “the actions of the one-caring will be varied rather than rule-bound; that is, her actions, while predictable in a global sense, will be unpredictable in detail” (p. 24). She went on to say, “the one-caring displays a characteristic variability in her actions—she acts in a nonrulebound fashion in behalf of the cared-for” (p. 25). While cooperating teachers might not go into this role assuming they will at times become the learner themselves, each inevitably did.

According to Noddings (2013), one quality of a caring relationship is *inclusion* or seeing things from both points-of-view—as one-caring *and* cared-for. She clarified that usually, it is the one-caring who has the ability to do this:

The teacher, because she is a teacher, must see things through the eyes of her student in order to teach him. She looks at and speaks about the subject matter, of course, but she looks at it and speaks about it from two poles. (p. 70)

However, when the cooperating teacher became the learner, and in a sense, the one cared-for, the student teacher experienced inclusion. Relatedly, Noddings (2013) clarified, this “inclusion is necessarily incomplete, however, because it is induced by the student’s needs and not by engrossment in the teacher-as-subject” (p. 70). The cases when the cooperating teacher became a learner were not intentionally designed; they were a result of the student teacher taking on responsibility and fulfilling her role as a student teacher. A type of reciprocity was occurring, though. The cooperating teacher was providing space and opportunity for the student teacher to learn, but this also provided space for the cooperating teacher to learn as well. That the cooperating teachers also learned during the practicum demonstrates the fluidity and authenticity of their relationship and roles.

This aspect of the cooperating teachers’ and student teachers’ relational work demonstrates the importance of being open to disrupting the traditional hierarchy of the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic. Doing so was not only beneficial for the cooperating teachers by providing rich opportunities for learning and growth; it was important to the student teachers who began to see themselves as full teachers whose ideas and work were valued and respected by the very people who were guiding them through their practicum. It enhanced a sense of equality and helped build the student teachers’ confidence as they were able to see themselves, at times, as valued colleagues with valuable ideas and contributions to their work.

Fostering Trusting Relationships That Challenge the Traditional Teacher/Learner Dynamic

All of the participants described their relationship in ways that were personal, breaking from the traditional understanding of the student teacher/cooperating teacher mentor/mentee relationship. Some of the participants’ professional relationships developed into friendships that helped foster trust within their working dynamic, even in ways that may seem only mildly

significant. Kendra described her relationship with Mary “like a friendship . . . we talk about [our] lives, I complain about my kids . . .”. It is important to note that Mary did not describe their relationship this way, but she did describe it as trusting and spoke about it fondly. This may be the first indication of the tension within this dynamic. It might be difficult for some student teachers to see their cooperating teachers the same way the cooperating teachers see them because the cooperating teachers are technically the authorities. Joanna said she and Samantha “became really close friends. I mean, it’s funny, because she still calls her elementary school cooperating teacher Ms. So-and-So [but calls me Joanna].” The way Samantha viewed her relationship with Joanna was different from the way she viewed her relationship with her previous cooperating teacher. They never got to the point that Samantha felt comfortable calling her by her first name and when speaking of and to Joanna, she only used her first name. Additionally, Samantha mentioned to me that Joanna had a pair of boots that she wore often in the winter and they were great for teaching because they were both comfortable and dress-appropriate for school. She eventually tried on the boots and bought the same ones, which also conveys a quality of friendship within their working-relationship. This also serves as a reminder that they are both adult women (as opposed to adult/child), which is something that may play a role in their friendship and relationship growth. While this may seem trivial, the amount of comfort both participants developed took on qualities of a friendship. In a short amount of time, they went from complete strangers, to colleagues, to friends. However, Joanna also described their relationship as a “mother/daughter” one. Similarly, Samantha said about their relationship, “I don’t want to say she’s motherly, but in a way, she is. She’s very supportive.” However, this maternal designation does not take away from the ease they seemed to develop in each other’s

presence. In a matter of months, they both felt comfortable enough calling each other friend and considering their relationship to be similar to that of one of a trusting parent and child.

Similarly, Danielle indicated that she bought a small gift for Mary at the end of her time in her high school placement and was surprised when Mary also had a gift for her. Danielle said she felt the gift (a small trinket to put on her desk once she finds a job) was appropriate because “I felt a close bond with her.” Mary also indicated she felt Danielle trusted her which “let me feel like I was a good teacher.” Danielle also indicated that she trusted Mary to take feedback and grow. She said, “I would tell her something, [and] she would totally take that in and come back the next day and apply it and do exactly what we had said.” Similarly, Kendra said about Mary, “I love the fact that she is super responsible and always professional. It was never a time when she would try to cut corners and get out of doing something.” With Mary, both cooperating teachers emphasized they trusted her and were impressed by and grateful for her responsible nature. Furthermore, both indicated that they had student teachers in the past with whom they did not “mesh” as well as they did with Mary.

The relationships the participants built during the student teaching practicum, while still professional, took on a much more personal air in a short amount of time. As I previously explained, Noddings’s (2013) focus on inclusion, or seeing “with two pairs of eyes” is something that can occur in a caring relationship (p. 70). However, she furthered that it is usually, but not always, the teacher or one-caring who achieves inclusion. Additionally:

In the event that inclusion becomes actual, the relation is converted, as we have noted, from that of teacher-student to one of friendship. This may, of course, happen, but even if it does, when the teacher assumes her function as teacher, the relation becomes again,

temporarily unequal. Two friends, may, indeed, assume the functions of teacher and student interchangeably. (Noddings, 2013, p. 71)

The previous finding indicated that often, the cooperating teacher was also a learner in this relationship dynamic, even though the primary intention of acting as a cooperating teacher is to provide mentorship and guidance to the student teacher. This finding regarding fostering trusting relationships built upon that, indicating that their professional relationship became one not only of co-learners, but also took on qualities of friendship. Noddings (2013) believed “there is, necessarily, a form of reciprocity in caring” and the participants in this study demonstrated that (p. 71). To that end, according to Noddings, it is important for the cared-for to contribute to caring relationship by sharing his “aspirations, appraisals, and accomplishments” with the one-caring. “With a fuller knowledge of what he [the one cared-for] is striving for, of what pleases and delights him, she [the one-caring] can readily contribute her support to his efforts” (p. 72). This is what Noddings referred to as reciprocity. That most of the participants found is so easy and natural to label their relationship a friendship demonstrates an open and trusting relationship.

It is in this aspect of a caring relationship that student teachers can capitalize on the opportunities they have working with someone with whom they have developed a trusting relationship and friendship. The trust allowed the student teachers to openly and honestly advocate for their needs with their cooperating teachers which also led to a reciprocally caring relationship. The student teachers felt they had freedom to try new things with the support of a trusted friend in a safe classroom space. They also felt they could be honest when they were struggling or needed more assistance, without fear of being penalized or judged. Student teachers shared that they felt comfortable asking cooperating teachers for advice about how to teach certain topics, how to approach student behavioral concerns, or how to grade student work.

These examples demonstrate the importance of disrupting the traditional mentor/mentee, evaluator/learner dynamic. With the comfort of friendship came the comfort of honesty and vulnerability.

Creating Space for Risk-Taking for Professional Growth

There were instances in the student teaching practicum that helped the student teachers build confidence as educators, specifically, and professionals, generally. In this professional and relational dynamic, both participants demonstrated and shared their vulnerabilities. However, each also trusted the other for support, even in moments of doubt and struggle. The cooperating teachers provided the space the student teachers needed to explore, take chances, and try new things without the student teachers feeling concerned they might make mistakes or fail. The cooperating teachers created a space in which student teachers were comfortable to learn and develop their own teacher identities.

For example, when Mary created the treasure map for the student who was struggling behaviorally due to personal issues at home, Kendra encouraged her to present it at her school's PLC. Any teacher presenting a best practice in front of their colleagues is an important and potentially intimidating task and Mary did so as a student teacher. Mary enjoyed when Kendra taught with her, allowing Mary to be the main teacher but allowing for Kendra to "jump in and help me" which Mary felt helped build her confidence. Finally, Mary felt that Kendra helped her feel empowered and confident because "she [Kendra] really just wants me to try whatever I want to try." This encouraged Mary to find joy and confidence in her work as a teacher of physical education.

With Danielle, she entered her high-school placement halfway through the semester concerned and nervous because she arrived mid-semester and she had minimal experience with

high school-age students. Danielle helped her build confidence and adjust to the differences of teaching health and physical education at the high-school level. Danielle provided Mary her slides for teaching health but let Mary be as creative as she wanted and allowed to use as much or as little of the slides that she wanted to.

Lauren indicated, somewhat similarly, that even though Charlotte provided guidance for Lauren's planning, she was comfortable with Lauren "put[ting] my input [and] make[ing] it my own." And much how Mary and Kendra worked, Lauren indicated she was "very comfortable with her [Charlotte] just jumping in." Lauren and Charlotte had a trusting relationship in which Lauren could easily make suggestions or edits and Charlotte was happy to provide the space for her to do it. Neither participant ever conveyed any anxiety over the student teacher taking the lead and making choices for the class.

This final relational effect of the student teacher/cooperating teacher practicum is one in which the participants found a comfortable space in which vulnerability and risk-taking were not only tolerated but celebrated and encouraged. The cooperating teachers had no apprehension providing the student teachers opportunities to take chances, try new things, and in the case with Mary presenting at the staff PLC, encourage them to occupy space typically reserved for teachers in the building. In this respect, the one-caring is providing a space for the cared-for to grow and evolve. Noddings (2013) said, "the one-caring is motivated in the direction of the cared-for and she must, therefore, respect his freedom" (p. 72). The cooperating teachers, as difficult as this might seem, especially early on in the practicum when the student teacher is little more than a stranger, provide opportunities for the student teachers to take risks and exercise professional freedom to help prepare them for the work they will encounter when they have their first full-time teaching position. The freedom allows the student teacher to begin to tap into their own

beliefs, knowledge, and ideas to plan and deliver instruction, which is one of the most important skills a novice teacher needs to build. Teaching is often an isolating profession (Ostovar-Namaghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). It is important for teachers to go into this work with a skillset from which to draw. Cooperating teachers providing space for student teachers to develop this skillset will benefit them as they continue in this work.

Furthermore, Noddings (2013) explained that “the cared-for is free to be more fully himself in the caring relation” and she views this as a “tribute” to the one-caring. She goes on to say, “a teacher is captivated by the student who thinks aloud and uses what his teacher has presented in his own way and for his own purposes” (p. 73). In this way, the student teacher exercising her risk-taking and authority in the relationship acts as a homage to her teacher—the person who cared enough to provide the space for her to enact these practices. This is possible because the cooperating teacher made the effort to *allow* it to be possible. These practices also have a positive effect on the one-caring:

What the cared-for gives to the relation either in direct response to the one-caring or in personal delight or in happy growth before her eyes is genuine reciprocity. It contributes to the maintenance of the relation and serves to prevent the caring from turning back on the one-caring in the form of anguish and concern for self. (Noddings, 2013, p. 74)

This relationship becomes a shared practice with benefits for both the one-caring and the cared for. The student teacher is provided a safe space to grow and demonstrate vulnerability as she navigates preparing to teach and the cooperating teacher, aside from learning and growing herself, also witnesses the results of this labor with joy and pride, making the act of being the one-caring a worthy endeavor, even if it is difficult and time-consuming.

In this chapter, I began by highlighting the core instructional *and* relational practices cooperating teachers enact with their student teachers during the student teaching practicum. I then elaborated on the relational practices, focusing specifically on how they affected the student teachers' experiences during their practicum. In analyzing the effects of the relational practices, I drew from Noddings's (2013) philosophy of caring in education, stressing how dependent it was upon context and tension within the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic. In the following chapter, I present a framework that combines these findings to provide a more complete view of how we can prepare *both* cooperating teachers and student teachers for the multifaceted and complex student teaching practicum. I then discuss the implications of the study for teacher education programs.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Discussion

In this chapter, I synthesize the findings of my study, Kennedy's (2016) framework on parsing teacher practice, and Noddings's (2013) philosophical work on caring in education to construct a framework that addresses the core instructional and relational practices cooperating teachers can enact when working with student teachers around instruction during the student teaching practicum. While there has been a fairly large amount of work on how cooperating teachers support and work with their student teachers and some about the relational components of cooperating teachers and student teachers working together, in this study, I sought to understand how, in these contexts, both worked together in preparing student teachers for the work on which they were about to embark. I argue that we cannot separate the instructional from the relational, and both are inextricably connected and highly contextually dependent.

When I analyzed my data as it relates to cooperating teachers' core instructional practices, the data revealed those practices included: modeling instructional practices and managing student behavior; co-teaching with their student teachers; providing professional providing pedagogical support; and helping with assessing student learning. For the relational practices, findings indicated there were four: (a) providing personal support; (b) providing professional support (b) providing feedback; and (c) disrupting power imbalances within the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. However, I broke the third theme into three sub-findings: (a) sharing power; (b) reciprocal dialogue; and (c) cooperating teachers empowering student teachers. Finally, I examined the influence of the relationship the cooperating teachers and student teachers had on the student teaching practicum. Here, I found three themes: (a) maintaining equity and disrupting the traditional hierarchy; (b) fostering trusting relationships; and (c) creating space for risk-taking.

I analyzed my findings through the lenses of two frameworks from Kennedy's (2016) *Parsing the Practice of Teaching* and Nodding's (2013) *Moral Education and Caring*. Regarding Kennedy's (2016) framework, which she frames as a problem-posing one that does not prescribe teachers' actions but instead stresses the problems teachers face, she posited, "By focusing on challenges, rather than on solutions, we help novices learn to think strategically about how their actions address a larger purpose, rather than focusing on how to mimic a set of actions that they observe" (p. 10). While I did not focus specifically on the challenges the student teachers faced in their student teaching practicums, I did set out to understand what and how cooperating teachers prepared the student teachers to begin to address these challenges in each of their placements.

At one point in an interview with Joanna, about her work with Samantha, she thought back to her prior work with a student teacher years ago. This student teacher, when thanking Joanna for the work she did in acting as her cooperating teacher, said, "You didn't teach me how to teach; you taught me how to *be* a teacher.", which Joanna carried with her through her work with other student teachers since. This statement resonated with me as I analyzed these findings. While the student teachers undoubtedly left their placement with a solid grasp of how to teach (e.g., tools, strategies, tricks, methods), they also left with a budding teacher identity they could continue to hone and develop. By teaching identity, I pull from Schutz et al., (2007) who defined teaching identity as the way teachers portray and perceive themselves. The focus was not only on providing tools for the student teachers to use in their work as teachers, but also in providing the safe space and support to begin to grow and develop on their own.

The second framework from which I drew to analyze my data, Noddings's (2013) work on caring and its role in education, focused on the relational aspects of teaching. I was interested

in how the development of a relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher affected the student teaching practicum. As I previously stated, teaching is always relational and cooperating teachers working with student teachers is a form of teaching. According to Noddings (2013):

How good *I* [the one-caring, in this case the cooperating teacher] can be is partly a function of how *you* [the cared-for, or student teacher]—the other—receive and respond to me. Whatever virtue I exercise is completed, fulfilled, in you. The primary aim of all education [and here, specifically the student teaching practicum] must be nurturance of the ethical ideal [meeting the other morally]. (p. 6)

The cooperating teacher, in functioning in that role, was reciprocally caring for the student teacher. However, Noddings (2013) further explained, “As we examine what it means to care and be cared for, we shall see that both parties contribute to the relation; my caring must be somehow completed in the other if the relation is to be described as caring.” (p. 4). The cooperating teacher was not only caring for the student teacher. Both were building a professional relationship that also took on the qualities of friendship and even family in some instances.

However, in this study, I was most interested in how both the instructional *and* relational support, in the context of the student teaching practicum, played a role in the student teachers’ experiences. There does not exist a framework for how cooperating teachers work with and prepare student teachers instructionally *and* relationally despite the fact that teaching is inherently both practical *and* relationship based. The framework I presented in the previous chapter, based on my data analysis, is one I constructed to examine what the student teaching practicum should look like if it were framed as both an instructionally *and* relationally focused

component of preservice teacher education. In the framework (see Figure 1), I focused on how the cooperating teachers enacted both instructional *and* relational practices to prepare the student teachers and the effects of these practices on the student teachers' practicum experience.

My proposed framework takes the most significant components of the student teaching practicum interpreted through the lenses of preparing teachers to address five common challenges (Kennedy, 2016) and focusing on the role caring plays in their learning experience (Noddings, 2013), resulting in a synthesis of my findings and the two frameworks to examine what the student teaching practicum could look like if teacher education programs wanted prospective teachers to have a truly full practical *and* emotional practicum experience. The framework is a combination of the three, with my findings adding to Kennedy's framework by offering more specific strategies prospective teachers can use to address her five challenges: (a) portraying the curriculum; (b) enlisting student participation; (c) exposing student thinking; (d) containing student behavior; and (e) accommodating personal needs. While Kennedy (2016) makes clear her framework is purposely non-prescriptive, this findings from this study provide tools cooperating teachers can and should use to prepare student teachers for addressing the challenges. Specifically, findings suggest the inclusion of cooperating teachers co-teaching, modeling instructional practices, and providing explicit professional support when working with student teachers.

Regarding Nodding's (2013) work on caring, ethics, and moral education (dialogue, practice, and confirmation), her framework stresses the importance of caring in all relational work with some focus on pedagogy. I wanted to further explore how her framework functions within the dynamic of teacher education specifically. Drawing from her framework, my findings indicated cooperating teachers provide personal support, specifically focusing on the student

teacher's personal needs around family, coursework, and general well-being, provide timely, regular feedback, and disrupt power imbalances by sharing power, enacting reciprocal dialogue, and empowering (Gore 1992) student teachers so they tap into their own sense of power. Here, again, my findings provide concrete examples of ways teacher educators, specifically cooperating teachers, can and should address caring.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

The findings of this study illuminate various implications for the student teachers and cooperating teachers, both in terms of the importance of practicum, what it provides for both, and how teacher education programs select and potentially prepare cooperating teachers for the role. In the following section, I apply the findings of this study to the work teacher educators do in their teacher preparation programs. I begin by elaborating on the importance of the student teaching practicum for prospective teachers, focusing on its role in their development as *full* teachers and how teacher education programs can more effectively prepare them for the practicum. I then shift the focus to cooperating teachers, expounding on the roles and responsibilities of the cooperating teachers and suggest steps teacher education programs can take to select and prepare them for the work of being a cooperating teacher.

The Centrality and Importance of the Student Teaching Practicum

To begin, the findings of this study reiterate the important role the student teaching practicum plays in any student's teacher education program. Building on findings by previous researchers, the student teaching practicum played a pivotal role in the student teachers moving *from* student *to* teacher (e.g., Clark, 2006; Izadinia, 2015). Specifically, the student teaching practicum provided student teachers the opportunity to bridge theory and practice (although to what extent that is realized, varies from pair to pair). They began to take the work they were

doing in their teacher education coursework and apply it to their work with their students during practicum. However, their cooperating teachers assisted in their attempts to do this. The student teaching practicum provided the space to experiment and take risks, but with the guidance of an experienced teacher who could help the student teachers think about their intentions and enact these practices in ways that were educationally sound. Even when the pairs enacted the same practices, they did so in different ways and for different reasons. My goal in this study was to unearth *why* that happened. By better understanding the intentions and rationale behind the participants' choices, we can more efficiently construct and revise the practicum to be as useful and thoughtful as possible.

What is important to keep in mind about the student teaching practicum (as it is currently facilitated) is, while for the student teachers it is an opportunity to practically apply what they are learning in their coursework, for the cooperating teacher and the students in her class, this is just school. And in school, there are benchmarks, and standardized tests, and multiple students of differing abilities with various needs. Therefore, while the student teacher is *learning to teach*, the students themselves need to keep learning in *general*. The student teachers having a space to learn how to plan and deliver instruction, for example, with the help of an experienced teacher, is important for the student teachers themselves, but their current and future students, too.

This speaks to the paramount importance of traditional teacher education programs. Alternate route programs, while inspired by valid needs communities faced (and continue to), especially for difficult-to-staff content areas or schools, disregard the important role the student teaching practicum plays in preparing teachers. The significance of collaboratively learning to teach in a school with students *and* the support of a cooperating teacher and, in some cases, entire school community before embarking on the work independently cannot be discounted. The

student teachers in this study craved support, guidance, caring, and feedback. An alternate route program cannot realistically provide any of these components when a [prospective] teacher with no experience is given a full program of classes to teach and is prepared with, in most cases, a few weeks of summer preparation that lacks the context of a traditional school day and everything that comes with it. In conducting this study, I was inspired by the wonderful experience I had as a student teacher and I sought to examine what that really looks like in context, from a researcher's perspective. My own success as a teacher begins with that experience. While my teacher education courses were valuable, the synthesis of coursework along with the contextual experience of student teaching is undoubtedly the pinnacle of my own teacher preparation.

Finally, it is important that, in the semesters leading up to the student teaching practicum, possibly during the semester in which the student teacher is more of an observer prior to officially being a student teacher, teacher education programs do work around developing a teacher identity. According to Schutz et al., (2007), teacher identities are composed of both the ways teachers perceive themselves and portray themselves to students. The student teachers were able to develop their teacher identity during their student teaching practicum. Having the ability to put into practice what they have been learning in an authentic setting provided the context they needed to really develop themselves as educators. Perhaps incorporating more work around what a teaching identity is and how it looks would be helpful in preparing student teachers to begin this work before stepping foot into their student teaching practicum. If student teachers go into the work with a better understanding of the teacher they hope to be, they can both set their intentions ahead of time and possibly be better matched with a cooperating teacher who can aid in their development of those intentions. Despite years of research about the importance of the

student teaching experience, and examples of programs that have created more thoughtful pairings, we continue to find thoughtful pairings with significant coaching for mentors rarities rather than the norm which is why bringing this kind of work to scale is so challenging and an area for further research beyond the scope of this study. None of the student teachers in my study had particularly negative student teaching experiences. However, if teacher preparation programs are going to invest the time, effort, and even money in the student teaching practicum, every effort should be made to ensure it is structured in a way that authentically allows the student teacher to begin to develop into an independent teacher.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs and Partnering Cooperating Teachers

The findings of this study provide a multitude of implications for teacher education programs in their work with preservice teachers and the cooperating teachers with whom they eventually work. Procuring strong cooperating teachers can be difficult as many teachers are reluctant to either take on the additional work or give up control of their classrooms. However, teacher education programs should look for candidates who can and will enact these core practices. Perhaps a workshop or professional development opportunity that conveys the teacher preparation program's student teaching practicum philosophy and requirements should be necessary before any teacher takes on the cooperating teacher role. Additionally, a strong vetting process would be helpful in ensuring cooperating teachers have the proper demeanor and skillset to serve in the role, which an interactive professional development session could help assess.

Specifically, with the emphasis the student teachers put on modeling during the student teaching practicum, it is important to make every effort to ensure that any teacher who serves as cooperating teacher has a record of being an effective teacher themselves, which can be assessed through observation, interviews, and speaking with school administrators. So much of what the

student teachers learned came from watching their cooperating teachers in action. Teacher education programs need to carefully vet cooperating teachers to ensure they hold the same values the teacher education program does. This might include speaking with administrators at the school or keeping in touch graduates from the teacher education program who have built on the work they did as preservice teachers themselves. Another possibility could be to recruit potential cooperating teachers who are working toward graduate degrees at the college or university.

In an effort to bridge the disconnect between teacher education coursework and fieldwork, teacher educators at Montclair State University, for example, created an Urban Teacher Residency (UTR)—what they referred to as a “third space,” as originally introduced in education by Zeichner (2010, p. 89). The UTR leaders required interested cooperating teachers (who they call “mentors”) apply for the program, be recommended by their principals, submit teaching artifacts, and sit for an interview to potentially work with a student teacher (who they call “residents”). According to the researchers (Klein et al., 2013), “we wanted to provide a space for the residents to explore, apply, and critique their prior knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning, and knowledge in their disciplines” (pp. 35–38). In constructing this space, they felt all stakeholders should play a role in choosing the mentors who would be most effective in facilitating this opportunity for the residents.

Additionally, McGee (2019) wrote about a three-part training program teacher education faculty designed and implemented at a small college in northwest Florida. The series of trainings, an online module familiarizing cooperating teachers with the “internship processes and procedures, co-teaching strategies, and the department developed Framework for Extended Oral and Written Feedback,” an in-person session to practice co-teaching, and a final session (which

is the student teacher's first observation of eight) in which the university supervisor and the mentor teacher observe the student teacher and score them using the school's evaluation tool. This process helped prepare the cooperating teachers and ensure that student teachers were receiving a more uniform experience regardless of their student teacher placement.

While I am not suggesting that every school construct an identical selection process, the findings of this work suggest more effort should go into deciding who serves in the role of cooperating teacher. However, this will always be easier in theory than practice. There will often, on a larger scale, be a shortage of high-quality cooperating teachers, especially in larger teacher preparation programs. Also, while programs may come to rely on specific teachers to service as cooperating teachers repeatedly, even the cooperating teachers may need a break from the work some semesters.

Cooperating teachers also need to be flexible. This can be difficult as teachers are often extremely protective of their students, and for good reason. When all is said and done, it is the teacher of record who has to answer to parents, administrators, and for standardized test scores and student progress. However, serving as a cooperating teacher requires relinquishing and sharing power. The cooperating teachers in this study trusted that their student teachers could meet the demands of the work and allowed them to develop into their teaching identities in the process, even if it meant allowing the student teachers to introduce new concepts and strategies into the classroom (and even when the cooperating teachers were sure the new strategies would not work). Cooperating teachers cannot and should not work prescriptively. They should allow the student teacher the agency she needs to work within the cooperating teachers' space.

One way to incentivize service as a cooperating teacher is to convey the potential for the cooperating teacher to grow and learn as an educator. It is also imperative that teacher education

programs set clear standards and expectations regarding the role of the student teacher *and* cooperating teacher during the practicum. It may be necessary for teacher education programs to clearly delineate the responsibilities of the cooperating teachers and stress that the role is neither completely hands-off nor one of micromanagement. Again, the goal should not be to prescribe exactly how a cooperating teacher should act, but there is space for discussing these practices and behaviors, so they go into the practicum with a fuller idea of the requirements and goals of it. Consistent meetings debriefing with the cooperating teachers may be beneficial in assessing their progress and practice. However, this, again, is more time the cooperating teacher must set aside in taking on this work.

Another important quality for cooperating teachers is being collaborative. Often, the idea is that the cooperating teacher passes her class off to the student teacher who then “takes over.” The participants in this study demonstrated how active a cooperating teacher’s role is during the student teaching practicum. The cooperating teachers often co-taught and assisted with the student teachers’ lessons. In short, we should think of it less as being a cooperating teacher; it is more cooperative teaching. Serving as a cooperating teacher is likely just as or more arduous as a semester in which a teacher works without one. While the cooperating teacher has assistance working with the students, she also has an additional layer of oversight in working with the student teacher, in a sense, shifting some of her typical responsibilities but not diminishing them. Recognizing the need for collaboration and being willing to share the work is an important component of being a cooperating teacher. Perhaps teacher education programs should offer workshops on co-teaching models and practices and encourage or even require some level of co-teaching throughout the practicum. For example, at Montclair State University, co-teaching and co-planning are encouraged throughout the entire practicum, which they believe is beneficial to

the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and students in the class. In a study by Murley et al. (2014) on various co-teaching models in the student teaching practicum, researched found “Adopting the co-teaching model will require significant changes within teacher preparation programs” (p. 17). Preservice teachers will need specific training in co-teaching and teacher educators may need to incorporate these specific strategies in their coursework.

Next, while teacher education programs may not spend much or any time on the professional aspects of teaching, *all* of the participants in this study stressed the importance of this preparation. It is noteworthy that this particular practice is highly, and possibly even solely, contextual. All of the cooperating teachers in this study had strong ties to the school community and stressed the importance of their student teachers developing similar ties themselves, both during their placement, and in their future school communities. Ensuring the prospective cooperating teachers not only are aware of the professional components of the work but also have strong ties to the school’s community and relationships with the administration is one possible way to ensure student teachers benefit from this core practice. This could be part of the vetting process teacher education programs use to match student and cooperating teachers. Again, communicating that the cooperating teacher’s role is to support the *whole* student teacher is also important. If it is relevant to the work, it should be incorporated in the student teacher’s experiences during the practicum, even if it not directly associated with the classroom, students, and content.

Finally, any work such as this, in which there is a mentor and mentee or expert and apprentice, is relational. But it is unclear how often the relational component is discussed and stressed when we think about learning “on the job.” Often, instead, the focus is on the learning and the experience. Teaching is no different and may even be *more* reliant on relationship

building than some other professions. Teaching is a profession that inherently demands emotional labor (Schutz & Lee, 2014). According to Schutz and Lee (2014), “emotional labor is the work or effort teachers use to present various roles or identities during school related transactions” (p. 172). Additionally, Noddings (2013) suggested, “Sometimes, indeed, emotion supplies us with the special motive power we need: increased physical strength, cunning, or patience” (p. 143). This emotional labor is true both of the work teachers do with their students but also work cooperating teachers do with their student teachers. Working with cooperating teachers to prepare them for how to work with student teachers and how to enact caring the way Noddings (2008, 2013) believed would better prepare them for working with their student teachers, and in extension, their own students, thus also stressing the opportunity for further learning when acting as a cooperating teacher.

The findings of this study included providing personal support, providing feedback, and disrupting power imbalances for cooperating teachers’ core relational practices. Again, workshops or meetings around what these look like would be beneficial to potential cooperating teachers. In general, it is important to keep the relational aspect of the practicum at the forefront of it. While, undoubtedly, cooperating teachers should be strong educators themselves, if they cannot relate to their student teachers in ways that are thoughtful, egalitarian, and honest, they will not fully address the complexity of the practicum. Student teachers deserve as full an experience as they can possibly have and teacher education programs have a duty to ensure, as much as possible, that cooperating teachers are aware of student teachers’ emotional and professional needs.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study was not without limitations that are worth noting in examining the work between cooperating teachers and student teachers and the way they function, both professionally and relationally. In the following section, I identify the limitations of this study and suggest areas for further research in examining the professional and relational components of the student teaching practicum.

Worth noting is the small sample size of this study. With seven participants, I had to rely on cooperating teacher and student teacher pairs willing to spend more of their already limited time sitting for multiple interviews that lasted about an hour each. It was difficult to obtain more than three pairs of participants and with the case of Mary, Kendra, and Danielle, luckily both of Mary's cooperating teachers were willing to participate. However, I was only able to recruit three student teachers and four cooperating teachers total and a larger sample size would have provided more data to analyze. Case study research often focuses on smaller numbers of participants and deeper analysis of their experiences (Yin, 2018). However, the seven participants and four pairs did serve as a limitation, even though I conducted qualitative research informed by case study methods. Furthermore, perhaps a similar study, following traditional case study methodology with an even deeper analysis of all facets of the student teaching practicum could present an even richer understanding of the experience.

Additionally, all seven participants identified as female. It would have been interesting and informative to examine the role of ethical caring, Noddings's (2013) feminist philosophy, with participants who were not female-identifying. The findings of this study suggest additional areas for research to add to this body of knowledge. To begin, it would be interesting to conduct this or a similar study with male-identifying participants to better gauge the role gender plays in

the student/teacher cooperating dynamic. As Noddings (2013) suggested, her work *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* “is an essay in practical ethics from the feminine view” (p. 3). She elaborated, “it [this approach of caring] is feminine in the deep classical sense—rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness” (p. 2). However, she clarified that men can and should embrace it, too. Therefore, further study would be warranted to better understand how men embrace and enact caring in their work as cooperating teachers. Furthermore, all of the pairs in this study were women, so a cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic that is not would be a rich source for further study. With Noddings’s philosophy of caring being focused on typically feminine ideals but not solely applicable to women, it would be valuable to understand how gender functions within this dynamic. Future research of pairs of cooperating teachers and student teachers that are mixed gender (or even with male-identifying cooperating teachers and student teachers) would provide valuable additional insight into the relational component of caring.

Because of participants’ school policies, I was not able to observe the student teachers and cooperating teachers in person. I could only interview them to better understand their experiences during the student teaching practicum. I was unable to triangulate data outside of speaking with both participants about their shared experiences. I was able to conduct multiple interviews (two per participant) with participants with varying perspectives (cooperating teachers and student teachers) at different times (one early on in the practicum and one when it ended), but having the ability to observe the participants would have been a helpful additional layer of triangulation (Merriam, 2009). It would also have provided a more contextual, authentic picture of their work in the moment. Therefore, as I stated previously, a similar study with more data

sources (e.g., observation, artifact collection) would offer an even more thorough analyses and understanding of the practicum.

Finally, the role of caring in education is foundational to teachers' work. If we are to expect cooperating teachers to enact care in their work with student teachers, then education researchers need to address the role of caring in preparing teachers. Further study of how we prepare teachers to care and how they enact that in their work would help navigate the role of caring in the cooperating teacher/student teacher dynamic. Again, I could only analyze data based on what the participants said and how they interpreted their experiences. The additional opportunity to observe the teachers working together and communicating would have helped triangulate the data and add a layer of analysis and insight into the relational and professional components of the student teaching practicum to better understand how they did or did not enact Noddings's (2008, 2013) *Moral Education and Caring*. Relying on participants' explanations and interpretation, while valuable, may have resulted in missed opportunities for further understanding and clarification.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Email

My name is Candice Chiavola. I am a high school English teacher and a doctoral student at Montclair State University. I am in the Teacher Education and Teacher Development program and am going to begin collecting data for my dissertation in the fall of 2018. The goal of my study is to better understand the student teacher/cooperating teacher dynamic during the clinical field experience and am currently looking for students (and their cooperating teachers) to participate in my study. Choosing to participate would entail the following:

- Three one-hour interviews (late summer, midway through your clinical experience, and one once it ends)
- Your cooperating teacher/student teacher and you audio recording a co-planning and debriefing session for me to transcribe.
- Any fieldwork log or journal that you may keep for your Clinical II coursework.

The purpose of my study is to better understand the critical practices of the student teaching practicum. We know that during this process, the main goal is to feel prepared to teach on our own. I am also interested, though, in the relational aspect of this experience. I am curious as to how student teachers and cooperating teachers get along, work together, and communicate. My goal is to be as minimally invasive as possible as I am truly interested in the dynamic between your cooperating teacher and you. Any interviews will take place at the time and place of your choosing, outside of your student teaching placement school, and if necessary, you can withdraw from participation at any time.

Please email me at chiavolac@montclair.edu if you are interested in participating or have any questions. I would be happy to clarify anything for you. I hope to hear from you soon.

Kindly,

Candice Chiavola

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form for Cooperating Teachers

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

Study's Title: Understanding the core practices of the clinical experience within the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship.

Why is this study being done? The purpose of this study is to examine and better understand both the practical/instructional and relational components of the clinical experience (student teaching). This is a pivotal and important component of teacher education and I hope to better understand what makes it helpful and valuable as well as how the relationship between the student and cooperating teachers enhances the experience for the student teacher.

What will happen while you are in the study?

- If a student teacher is interested in participating in the study, she will give me the email of his/her cooperating teacher and I will send an informational email to you about the study.
- I will interview you three times (approximately 45-60 minutes long) in the location and at the time of your choosing or via Skype/Facetime. These will occur as soon as you agree to participate, at the midway point from the first interview and the end of the student teaching placement, and once the placement has ended.
- You and your student teacher will audio record a co-planning or debriefing session of your choice and send me the recording.
- Audio and digital files will be kept in a secure Dropbox that can be accessed by password only by me. Audio recordings will be transcribed and deleted once transcription has been verified for accuracy. Observation notes will also be kept in a secure Dropbox.

Time: This study will take about three hours in addition to your normal work as a cooperating teacher. Any other participation will take place during your normal work hours with no additional responsibilities with the exception of audio recording a co-planning/debriefing session and sending it to me.

Risks: There is a potential risk that you will be embarrassed about some aspect of your practice revealed in the interviews or classroom observation, however you will have the opportunity to withdraw any reflection from the data. There is the potential risk that teachers could be concerned that their administrators could learn about something from the observation or interview that was embarrassing or put their job at risk. Reflections will never be shared with administrators. No administrators will have access to the Dropbox folder.

Although I will keep your identity confidential as it relates to this research project, if I learn of any suspected child abuse, I am required by NJ state law to report that to the proper authorities immediately.

Benefits: You may benefit from this study because reflecting on your learning and instruction has been shown in research to help you become a better teacher and cooperating teacher/mentor.

Others may benefit from this study because we don't know a lot about what kind of relationships and practices enhance the clinical experience. This study will add to this body of knowledge and may improve professional development as well as pre-service teacher education.

Compensation: To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, I will donate \$10 to a donorschoose.org project of your choice as a thank you for your participation. You will not receive this if you withdraw from the study prior to its completion.

Who will know that you are in this study? Your administration may know you participated should you choose to share that information with them. You will not be linked to any presentations. I will keep who you are confidential. I will use pseudonyms for all people, schools, and districts.

Although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of observations and interviews prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. Please do not share anything in the interviews you are not comfortable sharing.

Do you have to be in the study? You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you.

Do you have any questions about this study? Phone or Email the Principal Investigator, Candice Chiavola, (201) 341-6993 or chiavolac@montclair.edu, or Phone or email the faculty sponsor: Emily J. Klein, 1 E. Normal Avenue, University Hall, 2123, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ 07043, kleine@mail.montclair.edu

Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant? Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu.

Study Summary

I would like to get a summary of this study:

Please initial: Yes _____ No _____

As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape me:

Please initial: Yes _____ No _____

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

Print your name here

Sign your name here

Date

Name of Principal Investigator

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form for Student Teachers

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

Study's Title: Understanding the core practices of the clinical experience within the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship: Constructing a Framework for the Student Teaching Practicum Using an Ethic of Care.

Why is this study being done? The purpose of this study is to examine and better understand both the practical/instructional and relational components of the clinical experience (student teaching). This is a pivotal and important component of teacher education and I hope to better understand what makes it helpful and valuable as well as how the relationship between the student and cooperating teachers enhances the experience for the student teacher.

What will happen while you are in the study?

- I will interview you three times (approximately 45-60 minutes long) in the location and at the time of your choosing or via Skype/facetime. These will occur as soon as you agree to participate, at the midway point from the first interview and the end of the student teaching placement, and once the placement has ended.
- You and your cooperating teacher will audio record a co-planning or debriefing session of your choice and send me the recording.
- You will share any journals or reflections for your coursework with me after submitting it to your professor.
- Audio and digital files will be kept in a secure Dropbox that can be accessed by password only by me. Audio recordings will be transcribed and deleted once transcription has been verified for accuracy. Observation notes will also be kept in a secure Dropbox.

Time: This study will take about three hours in addition to your normal work as a cooperating teacher. Any other participation will take place during your normal work hours with no additional responsibilities with the exception of audio recording a co-planning/debriefing session and sending it to me.

Risks: There is a potential risk that you will be embarrassed about some aspect of your practice revealed in the interviews or classroom observation, however you will have the opportunity to withdraw any reflection from the data. 2. There is the potential risk that teachers could be concerned that their administrators could learn about something from the observation or interview that was embarrassing or put their job at risk. Reflections will never be shared with administrators. No administrators will have access to the Dropbox folder.

Although I will keep your identity confidential as it relates to this research project, if I learn of any suspected child abuse, I am required by NJ state law to report that to the proper authorities immediately.

Benefits: You may benefit from this study because reflecting on your learning and instruction has been shown in research to help you become a better teacher. Others may benefit from this

study because we don't know a lot about what kind of relationships and practices enhance the clinical experience. This study will add to this body of knowledge and may improve professional development as well as pre-service teacher education.

Compensation: To compensate you for the time you spend in this study, I will donate \$10 to a donorschoose.org project of your choice as a thank you for your participation. You will not receive this if you withdraw from the study prior to its completion.

Who will know that you are in this study? Your mentor teacher and any administrators at your student teaching placement school may know you participated if you choose to share that information with them. You will not be linked to any presentations. I will keep who you are confidential. I will use pseudonyms for all people, schools, and districts. Although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of observations and interviews prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. Please do not share anything in the interviews you are not comfortable sharing.

Do you have to be in the study? You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Your course grades will not be impacted if you participate in the study. Nothing will happen to you.

Do you have any questions about this study? Phone or Email the Principal Investigator, Candice Chiavola, (201) 341-6993 or chiavolac@montclair.edu, or Phone or email the faculty sponsor: Emily J. Klein, 1 E. Normal Avenue, University Hall, 2123, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ 07043, kleine@mail.montclair.edu

Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant? Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley, at 973-655-5189 or reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu.

Study Summary

I would like to get a summary of this study:

Please initial: Yes _____ No _____

As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape me:

Please initial: Yes _____ No _____

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

Print your name here

Sign your name here

Date

Name of Principal Investigator

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions for First Interview, Cooperating Teachers

- In the work you have done so far during Clinical I, how have you demonstrated for your student teacher how you convey content and plan instruction for your students?
- How do you demonstrate for your student teacher how you ensure all students participate or at least do not distract other students from participating?
- How do you know what students understand, or don't understand, during lessons and instruction?
- How do you model managing the classroom and containing student behavior during instruction for your student teacher?
- Do you ever share how you accommodate your own personal needs while fulfilling the requirements of teaching? If so, what does this look like?
- Do you ever demonstrate that you care about your students? (ask about their personal lives/backgrounds?) What does this look like?
- Do you ever ask your student teacher about his/her personal/professional needs? What kinds of questions do you ask?
- What kinds of conversations do you and your student teacher have?
- Do you feel the dialogue between the two of you is reciprocal? How do you know?
- Does your student teacher seem comfortable bringing up ideas or concerns with you?
- Do you ever make an effort to understand how your student teacher is feeling? Why?
- Was there an evaluation component of this first clinical experience? If so, did you feel comfortable sharing it with your student teacher?
- How would you describe your student teacher's role or presence in the classroom?

- What would this upcoming semester look like with your student teacher if it were ideal?

Explain.

- What is the best way to support your student teacher?

Appendix E: Interview Questions for First Interview, Student Teachers

- In the work you have done so far during Clinical I, how has your cooperating teacher demonstrated how s/he conveys content and plans instruction for his/her students?
- How does your cooperating teacher ensure all students participate or at least do not distract other students from participating?
- How does your cooperating teacher attempt to know what his/her students understand, or don't understand, during lessons and instruction?
- How does your cooperating teacher maintain classroom management and contain student behavior during instruction?
- Does your cooperating teacher ever share how s/he accommodates his/her own personal needs while fulfilling the requirements of teaching? If so, how does s/he do this?
- Does your cooperating teacher ever demonstrate that s/he cares about his/her students? (ask about their personal lives/backgrounds?) Explain what that looks like.
- Does your cooperating teacher ever ask about your own likes or personal/professional needs? Explain what these conversations are like.
- What kinds of conversations do you and your cooperating teacher have?
- Do you feel the dialogue between the two of you is reciprocal? How do you know?
- Do you feel comfortable bringing ideas or concerns up with your cooperating teacher?
- Does your cooperating teacher make an effort to understand how you're feeling? How do you know?
- Was there an evaluation component of your first clinical experience? If so, did your cooperating teacher share that evaluation with you?
- Did you feel comfortable in your cooperating teacher's classroom?

- How would you describe your role or presence in the classroom?
- What do you need from your cooperating teacher this semester to be successful?

Appendix F: Interview Questions for Second and Final Interview, Cooperating Teachers

- How well do you think you helped your student teacher convey content and plan instruction for the students?
- Did you plan together? If so, how was this helpful. If not, why?
- Did you ever teach together? If so, how was this helpful. If not, why?
- How did you help your student teacher ensure all students participate or at least do not distract other students from participating?
- How did you help your student teacher know what the students understand, or don't understand, during lessons and instruction?
- How did you help your student teacher maintain classroom management and contain student behavior during instruction?
- Did you encourage your student teacher to address your own personal needs while you worked together this semester? Why? How did you do this?
- Did you ever make an effort to learn about your student teacher's personal or professional needs? Explain.
- How did you prepare your student teacher for the professional aspects of the job? Did you introduce him/her to other teachers or involve him/her in PLCs and other professional duties? Anything else? Why?
- What kinds of conversations did you have with your student teacher? Explain.
- Did you feel the dialogue between the two of you was reciprocal? How do you know?
- Did your student teacher feel comfortable making suggestions or addressing concerns with you? What kinds of concerns did s/he bring up? How did you address them?
- Did you make an effort to understand how your student teacher was feeling? How? Why?

- Did you share any of your student teacher's evaluations with him/her? Why or why not?
How did the evaluative component of this experience affect your work or relationship?
- Did you feel comfortable sharing your classroom with your student teacher? Explain.
- How would you describe the way you and your student teacher worked together?
- Did you provide feedback on the lessons your student teacher created or the instructions/he delivered? How would you describe that feedback? When would you provide it?
Immediately after the lesson? Later? And through what mode? Did you feel comfortable being honest?
- Do you feel you helped your student teacher exercise or tap into his/her own sense of power as a professional in this work? Explain.
- How would you describe your overall working relationship? Why?

Appendix G: Interview Questions for Second and Final Interview, Student Teachers

- Was your cooperating teacher helpful in demonstrating how to convey content and plan instruction for the students?
- Did you plan together? If so, how was this helpful. If not, why? How did you do it?
- Did you ever teach together? If so, how was this helpful. If not, why?
- Was your cooperating teacher helpful in demonstrating how to ensure all students participate or at least do not distract other students from participating?
- Was your cooperating teacher helpful in helping you know what the students understand, or don't understand, during lessons and instruction?
- Was your cooperating teacher helpful in helping you maintain classroom management and contain student behavior during instruction?
- Did your cooperating teacher encourage you to address your own personal needs while you worked together this semester? Explain.
- Did your cooperating teacher make an effort to ask you about your own personal or professional needs? Explain.
- How did your cooperating teacher help prepare you for the professional aspects of this field? Do you feel prepared?
- What kinds of conversations did you and your cooperating teacher have? Were these conversations satisfactory? How, if at all, did they help you as a teacher, professional, or person?
- Did you feel the dialogue between the two of you is reciprocal? How do you know?
- Did you feel comfortable bringing ideas or concerns up with your cooperating teacher?

- Did your cooperating teacher make an effort to understand how you're feeling? How do you know?
- Did your cooperating teacher share any of his/her evaluations with you so far? How did the evaluative component of this experience affect your work or relationship?
- Did you feel comfortable in the classroom you share with your cooperating teacher? Explain.
- How would you describe your role or presence in the classroom?
- How would you describe the way you and your cooperating teacher work together?
- Did your cooperating teacher provide feedback on the lessons you create or the instruction you deliver? How would you describe that feedback? How long did it take for s/he to provide the feedback? In what way(s) did s/he communicate the feedback to you?
- What would you have liked more or less of from your cooperating teacher? Why?
- Do you feel your cooperating teacher helped you exercise or tap into your own sense of power as a professional in this work? Explain.
- What were the most important/helpful aspects of the student teaching experience? Why were those especially helpful?