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Abstract

While some teacher candidates may believe reading instruction is the responsibility of English teachers, providing teacher candidates across all content areas with opportunities to develop skills working with developing readers may impact this misconception. Since some teacher candidates have limited experience, confidence, and/or reading strategies to instruct developing readers, this study examines the individual experiences of reading mentors at a midwestern university and the effect of their experience on developing readers. This mentoring experience revealed an impact both for the teacher candidates and developing readers. This opportunity proved to be rewarding while providing a glimpse of the reality of working with developing readers in teacher candidates' future classrooms.

Keywords: adolescent literacy, mentors, mentoring, reading mentoring, teacher preparation, developing readers, reading strategies, reading motivation, high interest reading materials, reflection

Introduction

"The kid just can't read. I don't know what to do with him. When does the resource room open so he can come to you?" (Moreau, 2014, p. 1). For many resource teachers and intervention specialists, this may sound all too familiar. Working with developing readers is often overlooked by content teachers outside of the language arts classroom but is necessary for all teachers. Without an advocate, these students are left to fend for themselves, falling behind their peers. Therefore, educational mentoring and mentoring programs may provide teacher candidates with opportunities to learn and implement effective strategies for developing readers in all content areas.

One of the goals of a teacher education program is to give teacher candidates opportunities to work with students from diverse populations in their field experiences. However, one area often overlooked is working with developing readers, primarily because teacher candidates need particular knowledge and skills to be helpful to these students. Providing teachers with reading strategies that they can use in their classrooms helps build their instructional self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994; Massey & Lewis, 2011; Murnen et al., 2018; Ness, 2008; Plucker, 2010). In addition, strengthening the foundational reading skills of all students helps them to read and write more successfully in all content areas (Draper et al., 2005; Moje, 2008). Therefore, providing teacher candidates with opportunities to mentor adolescent developing readers can be integral to both the mentor and to developing reader's growth and development.

First and second year teacher candidates may have limited experience, confidence, and/or reading strategies to work with developing readers. One teacher candidate from our study said, "I haven't exactly mentored someone who is struggling before. This will be my first time, so I am not so confident…I don't know what strategies to use." This teacher candidate, along with other candidates, are transitioning from "students of teaching" to "teachers of students" (Dewey, 1986), and their first inclination is to focus on what they are doing as teachers. The mentoring experience encourages teacher candidates to shift their focus to their learners rather than on themselves (Paterson & Elliott, 2011).

Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to explore the individual experiences of six reading mentors at a Midwest university and the impact of their experiences after shifting their focus to their learners. More specifically, the researchers expanded on a prior study that examined how high-interest literacy plans, developed by the teacher mentors, influenced the engagement of developing readers at a nearby high school (Murnen et al., 2018). This study is significant to teacher education and literacy preparation for all teachers. It provides teacher candidates with a purposeful, hands-on learning experience with adolescent developing readers. To respond to the literacy issues articulated, this study asks the following research questions: How did the teacher candidates' mentoring experiences impact the candidates' understanding of the needs of adolescent developing readers? How did candidates interpret developing readers' engagement using high interest literacy materials?

Review of Literature

Some adolescent students struggle in reading across content areas in part because they may not have developed the reading skills necessary to successfully engage the complex reading tasks required of them (Lupo et al., 2018). This reading struggle may not solely be a matter of

skills but could be attributed to student engagement. Students may engage more frequently in reading when they find the material of strong interest and relevance to their lives (Clark & Teravainen, 2017; Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017). When teachers: (a) find more time to engage students' interests, (b) leverage this interest back into the content, and (c) devote time to the specific strategies to develop life-long literacy skills, students find success in reading (Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Lupo et al., 2018).

Faculty members are being strongly encouraged to incorporate reading strategies within their disciplines (Ness, 2009); therefore, teacher candidates would benefit from implementing and creating high interest literacy plans to evaluate their effectiveness with developing readers (Clark & Teravainen, 2017; Cockroft & Atkinson, 2017). Reaching all learners through reading instruction encompasses a greater number of instructional skills and strategies and may require additional professional development to promote reading instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In this review of literature, three areas are delineated that help support this research: students' reading motivation, students' interests, and students' selection of reading materials. This connection establishes their roles in student engagement with reading.

Students' Reading Motivation

Motivation is often used as an all-encompassing word to pay tribute to the complexities of the human aspects of reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) describe reading motivation as "the individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs, with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (p. 405). Although students are often labeled as motivated or not motivated, motivation is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. Reading motivation is both a multi-faceted and dynamic component of adolescent literacy achievement.

Maslow (1943), for example, argues that an action occurs from a culmination of multiple points of motivation. Before students can cultivate the need to know and understand, their physiological, safety, acceptance, and esteem needs must first be fulfilled. Students need to feel physically and emotionally safe before they are motivated to engage in higher-level thinking. Contrast this with the fact that in the school year of 2015-2016, 52.1% of public school students in the United States were eligible for free and reduced lunches, indicating food scarcity at home. Likewise, 2.6% of public school students were homeless that year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Whereas, in contrast to the national statistics, 23% of Ohio public school students were eligible for free lunches, and 5% were eligible for reduced lunches (Ohio Department of Education, 2019).

Atmosphere is another critical aspect guiding motivation. Some students need movement opportunities throughout the day, so a proper reading area would have space for movement

as well as time for personal writing. According to Hurst (2009), a room should be structured so that "everybody'd want to come" (p. 64). The structure should include socialization opportunities and acknowledgement of student strengths (Fraser, 1998; Mazlum et al., 2015; Pennington, 2017). In addition, opportunities for oral discussion are particularly integral to motivation in English Language Learners (Veruzzaa et al., 2014).

Teachers must maintain an expectation to physically see students reading and bringing books or other literature materials home (Stewart et al., 2018). Daily time devoted to personal preference, not academic reading, may also stimulate interest (Varuzza et al., 2014; Willingham, 2015; Pennington, 2017). These types of accommodations or others creatively developed by teachers may motivate developing readers.

The motivational level of developing students is highly situational. Developing learners often convince themselves that reading is not overly important (Varuzza et al., 2014; Willingham, 2015). If students enjoy the material or activity, they will reflect the behaviors of avid readers. Avid readers have high intrinsic motivation and low avoidance (Wigfield et al., 2012). In contrast, if students do not feel connected to the material or activity, they may demonstrate behaviors of adverse students (Wigfield et al., 2012). Reading expectancy values dictate what a reader believes he or she will gain from the reading experience (Guthrie et al., 2012). This discrepancy between avid and developing readers is integral when examining student motivation.

It is well established that as students enter their teenage years, they demonstrate less interest in reading (Varuzza et al., 2014). Within the adolescent age range of eight to eighteen years old, populations of students aged 14-16 are at greatest risk for lack of reading outside of school (Clark & Teravainen, 2017). Furthermore, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited in Willingham, 2015) reported that on average, students read only six minutes outside of school per day, but adults estimate that students read an hour and 15 minutes. Finally, Guthrie et al., (2012) assert that motivated students score higher than any other group on comprehension and fluency tests. Thus, it can be inferred that increasing student motivation may lead to an increase in achievement.

Educators believe that motivation leads to deeper learning. In fact, "literacy...promote(s) the depth of thought required for success in college, careers, and civic life" (Patterson et al., 2018, p. 524). Research has linked motivation with reading achievement (Bozack, 2011; Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013; Guthrie et al., 2012). Motivated students have higher comprehension and application of reading skills than non-motivated students (Wigfield et al., 2012). Lack of reading motivation and achievement fails to support a student's success in life; thus, these populations deserve both dynamic instruction and engaging materials that will cultivate their love of reading.

Students' Interests

According to Dewey (1934), "experience is rendered conscious by means of that fusion of old meanings and new situations…" (p. 275). An educator's charge is to look at the learner and consider previous experiences and current interests to create continuity and a curriculum that promotes growth and a restructuring of students' belief systems. The research emphasizes the importance of student engagement using high interest reading materials (Belzer, 2004; Murnen et al., 2018; Taylor, 2006). According to Gleason (2011), high-low books that are high interest books written at a low reading level may be motivating to adolescent readers.

One component of students' motivation is their interest in the reading material. Common novel or picture book themes that appear to attract students include love, teen suicide, drama, biographies, humorous events, and other cultural perspectives (Stewart et al., 2018). Moreover, Wright and Sherman (1999) argued that other students may find motivation and comprehension success in comics and graphic novels. Furthermore, Williams' (2008) asserts that comics can bridge the gap between the classes of art, philosophy, history, and literature. Of the various types of reading materials, a higher percentage of adolescents aged eight to 18 years spend more time on electronic reading than imprinted books (Clark & Teravainen, 2017). As of 2016, text messages, websites, song lyrics, and social networking sites all ranked above fiction reading (Clark & Teravainen, 2017; Varuzza et al., 2014) with respect to the medium of reading materials.

To illustrate the disparity in reading content between reading in school and reading outside of school, Guthrie et al., (2012) state that "only 5% of students say they read information texts out of school daily… but in school only 1% report never reading a textbook" (p.12). Alvermann et al., (2007) found that over half of the sixty 7th through 9th grade students read something from the public library every day. When students want to read for pleasure, many of them are discouraged because the books they are interested in are too difficult for them to read (Lupo et al., 2018). Willingham (2015) cautions, "Remember that your goal is that they enjoy reading, not that they enjoy reading as you do" (p.13).

The Study

The study extends the work discussed in Murnen et al., (2018) regarding teacher candidates' literacy training and mentoring program. In this study, the researchers examined teacher candidates' perceptions of developing readers' engagement using high interest literacy materials to guide instructional planning for mentoring sessions. In addition, the following two research questions were examined: (a) How did teacher candidates' mentoring experiences

impact their understanding of adolescent developing readers' needs? and (b) How did candidates interpret developing readers' engagement using high interest literacy materials?

Participants

Participants included six teacher candidates from a Midwest university serving as reading mentors to six-10th grade developing readers over two semesters at a local high school. Seven percent of this school's student population are eligible for free lunch, and three percent are eligible for reduced lunch. The 10th graders were selected for participation based on the results of a reading assessment administered by their school. The research team selected developing readers whose scores fell between two and four years below grade level. The developing readers invited to participate could choose whether to be involved.

At the time of the study, teacher candidates, serving as mentors, were education majors; three were freshmen (one ILA, one integrated social studies (ISS), and one math), two were sophomores (one ILA, one ISS), and one junior ILA (see Table 1). The mentors were enrolled in pre-methods courses and field experiences. In addition, one full-time graduate student in the Masters of Education in Reading served as the teacher candidates' mentor.

Table 1. *Participants and demographic information*

Mentor*	Content Area	Year	Developing Reader*
Jenny	Graduate Mentor	Graduate	All Mentors
Lani	ILA	Freshman	Sara
Aaliyah	ILA	Junior	Carlos
Lauren	ILA	Sophomore	Cameron
Johnston	ISS	Sophomore	Eric
Hannah	ISS	Freshman	Raven
Isaiah	Math	Freshman	Gia

* *Note:* Pseudonym

Methodology

To prepare for mentoring, teacher candidates spent approximately eight hours in training during the first two weeks of the semester. To ascertain their instructional knowledge, comfort levels, and understanding of the role of mentoring developing readers, a written pre-survey was distributed to teacher candidates at the beginning of the first workshop. These professional development workshops were led by two faculty researchers and their graduate assistant. Six teacher candidates who chose to mentor then attended an additional three-hour

Saturday session, where they practiced giving the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) to high school students.

The professional development workshops focused on administering and interpreting the IRI, using Fry readability assessment, implementing reading strategies, and building rapport. The structure of each two-hour workshop consisted of activating prior knowledge, introducing content, providing guided practice as well as independent practice, and assessing through self-reflection.

The initial activities in the workshop enabled candidates to define a skilled and developing reader followed by an in-depth explanation of the Scarborough (2001) Model of Skilled Reading. Presenters discussed how the strands can be broken into two categories and how the strands merge as readers become increasingly fluent. Also introduced was an assessment tool, the IRI, that teachers can use to measure students' reading strengths and areas of need. Time was allocated to identify a student's independent, instructional, or frustration level when analyzing and interpreting results from the word lists, reading passages, and comprehension questions. The second workshop focused on readability and matching text to students as well as practicing reading strategies. For those interested in mentoring, candidates remained after the second workshop for additional instruction related to their responsibilities as a mentor.

Following each mentoring session, 15-minute individual conferences were scheduled with a graduate student mentor. During the conferences, the pair reflected on mentoring plans and the session from the previous week. The data collected during these individualized debriefing sessions included teacher candidates' and graduate mentor's reflective notes that highlighted their developing readers' engagement, interest, growth, and perceived impact on reading growth.

To effectively gauge teacher candidates' perceptions of working with developing readers and utilizing reading assessment materials, data were collected over the course of two semesters using teacher candidate and developing reader pre-and post-written surveys. Two other data sources included the debriefing reflective notes of both the candidates and the graduate mentor.

The teacher candidate and developing reader surveys had both open-ended responses as well as Likert-type scale responses. Researchers analyzed the Likert-type scale responses using frequency counts. The open-ended survey questions and reflective notes were analyzed using Hatch's (2002) inductive analysis, and then Erickson's (1986) coding process to interpret survey responses. Team members read each question independently and assigned a code. They then met to discuss the individual codes and arrived at a consensus for the coding system. Miles and Huberman's (1994) content analysis was utilized to interpret and identify themes.

Findings

The findings are organized by the themes that emerged. These include: (a) teacher candidates' perceptions of mentoring developing readers, (b) reading instruction, responsibility, and beliefs, (c) teacher candidates' perceptions of developing readers' growth, and (d) teacher candidates' perceptions of mentoring experiences.

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Mentoring Developing Readers

The mentoring experience impacted all six teacher candidates and their developing readers. All of the candidates agreed that the meetings with Jenny were helpful because they helped guide their lesson planning. The discussions were effective when they were perplexed because Jenny provided them both with ideas for strategies to use and with additional materials. Teacher candidates were concerned about their efficiency as mentors and how well they engaged their developing readers. They revealed some uncertainty but were grateful for the experience because they learned new skills they could apply in the classroom.

Prior to the initial mentoring sessions, teacher candidates completed a written survey regarding administering reading-based assessments such as the IRI and Fry (1977) readability assessment. According to the interest survey of teacher candidates, they had limited experience working with developing readers. One common thread gathered from this study was the increased comfort levels and education of teacher candidates regarding the content of the developing readers' workshop. One of the questions on the written pre-survey asked respondents to rate their comfort levels utilizing assessment tools with developing readers. The results ranged from 1 (little to no comfort administering the informal assessment) to an 8 (a standard comfort administering the informal assessment) with a 38% comfort level.

The majority of teacher candidates had not heard of the assessments before the workshop, thus indicating low comfort levels upon administering it. Aaliyah had heard of the assessments before but had no experience administering the test. After receiving proper instruction, the average comfort level increased to 80% with ranges from 60-100%. Although teacher candidates indicated they had little to no experience administering an interest inventory, the results of 52% revealed they had higher comfort levels administering this formative assessment. On the post survey, teacher candidates noted comfort levels ranging from 80-97%. After implementing intervention, mentors appeared to have a greater comfort level in administering the formative reading assessments. Initially, Lauren, Isaiah, Hannah, Johnston, and Lani did not know how to use the assessment and were unsure of what it measured.

Reading Instruction, Responsibility, and Beliefs

Understanding teacher candidates' beliefs regarding reading instruction was vital in discovering their perceptions of working with developing readers. Lani responded: "It could help relate students' career interests to reading to help them learn." Additionally, Aaliyah indicated that the interest survey could "gauge reading interests." In the pre-survey, mentors were asked to indicate what content reading instruction should be implemented and who is responsible for its delivery. Isaiah expressed, "Everywhere because reading is a basic component of learning in any classroom, and students need to have good reading instruction to ultimately ensure their success in class." Likewise, Aaliyah mentioned, "Anywhere. Students should learn how to read properly in each subject or type of reading they experience." Three other teacher candidates noted that all teachers are responsible for teaching reading, not just English teachers. In agreement, Isaiah responded, "Each teacher is responsible for teaching reading strategies to their students that will be most beneficial to them in the class they are taking."

On the pre-survey, five mentors indicated that they had no experience utilizing reading strategies with developing readers and could not specify any reading strategies in general. One mentor shared she would use a read aloud reading strategy to help developing readers; however, she did not indicate specific read aloud strategies. The written post-survey responses demonstrated growth in all of the mentors' knowledge of reading strategies. All mentors identified specific reading strategies such as fluency pyramids and read alouds. Three of the six mentioned they developed and asked comprehension questions to ascertain developing readers' understanding of the text.

After analyzing teacher candidates' beliefs regarding the responsibility and implementation of reading instruction in the classroom, it was necessary to investigate their personal experiences of working with developing readers. Unlike many skilled readers, developing readers need additional support to ensure individual success. This support is often interwoven in the research-based pedagogy and strategies meant to aid developing readers, allowing them to receive effective instruction in a general education classroom. Based on the findings, two teacher candidates had previous experience mentoring developing readers. Lani worked with 5th grade developing readers during her high school years but had no experience during college. As mentioned before, Aaliyah also worked with developing readers in this program. However, the other teacher candidates did not have any experience implementing reading-based strategies in previous endeavors.

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Developing Readers' Growth

Prior to mentoring, teacher candidates' perception of developing readers' confidence levels was on average 65%. After intervention, the developing readers' confidence improved to 69%. Three students, Sara, Carlos, and Eric, increased their confidence levels, while Raven and Gia remained the same from the pre- to post-survey. Although the change in confidence appears to be seemingly small, all of the participating students did either improve or stay the same over the semesters. No students felt that they were less confident after the reading interventions.

On their reading interest surveys, the developing readers rated their reading proficiency levels at a 66%. Although these developing readers perceived reading as difficult, many of them still felt that they were proficient at reading. On the post-survey, they rated themselves at 73%. Of the participating students, no students felt that their reading proficiency decreased with intervention. Sara felt that her reading proficiency did not change prior to nor after intervention. However, the other students Carlos, Raven, and Gia indicated that their reading proficiency increased after intervention.

For most students, the reading interest scores increased or stayed the same from pre-survey to post-survey. Raven's interest in reading showed the most growth from the beginning to the end of the semester. Cameron's perception of her reading interest decreased over the semester. Although participating in the mentoring program provided an opportunity to participate in reading based on her interest, the mentor inferred that Cameron still sees reading as an academic activity verses reading for pleasure.

Following the mentoring sessions, teacher candidates administered the post-reading surveys to analyze growth the developing reader perceived throughout their experience. Below is a synthesis of the findings from each mentor's reflection notes interpreted from the debriefing sessions.

Mentor: Johnston

Johnston recognized Eric's interest in reading increased from 70 to 75%. In Johnston's early reflections, he noted that Eric was "worried he would mispronounce longer words." While Eric's overall interest in reading remained low, he expressed that military books increased his interest level. Johnston also mentioned that Eric "doesn't read very much," but his reading frequency outside of school increased substantially. In both pre- and post-surveys, Eric mentioned that he "wished he enjoyed reading more and that vocabulary instruction helps him the most." When asked what characteristics make up a 'good' reader, Eric said, "Knowing vocabulary."

Mentor: Hannah

Hannah noticed that her developing reader, Raven, had consistent responses about reading: "Reading is boring/I do not like it." However, Raven's interest in reading increased over the duration of the semesters. In both the pre- and post-surveys, Raven's desire to read was consistent and indicated she rarely read outside of school. However, Raven mentioned, "I wish I liked to read more." She said that she was "forced to read boring books." According to Hannah, Raven preferred reading out loud as a class because it helped to keep her interest. When reflecting on the overall mentoring experience, Raven felt that Hannah helped her with comprehension.

Mentor: Lauren

Lauren's developing reader, Cameron, showed a decrease in her interest in reading. She responded to the pre-survey prompt: "Tell me about yourself as a reader" indicating that she was "not much" of a reader. On the post-survey, she responded, "I'm a fast reader [who] doesn't mind reading at school but dislikes it at home." Cameron typically enjoyed books assigned in class such as *The Catcher in the Rye*. Usually, she chose books based on her personal interest. Although Cameron's interest in reading decreased, her confidence in reading increased. When asked if Cameron would change anything about herself as a reader, she mentioned, "I would like to slow down, so that I can understand the story." When reflecting on the semesters, Cameron noted: "Looking at context clues helped me the most with reading."

Mentor: Isaiah

Isaiah noted that Gia's interest in reading remained the same from the pre- to post-survey. Isaiah discovered that Gia continued to read outside of school one to two days per week. When given the prompt, "Tell me about yourself as a reader," she gave two different responses between the pre- and post-survey. On the pre-survey, she mentioned that she "likes to read aloud in a quiet room." On the post-survey, she expressed that she "only likes to read books in mystery and horror genres." In her response to "If you could change anything as a reader what would it be?" Gia responded, "To read more kinds of books and to read more." Then, when asked, "What advice would you give to someone who doesn't like to read?" she expressed, "The more you read, the more you like it." When reflecting on her experience throughout the semesters, Gia responded, "The mentor and reading a good book helped the most with reading."

Mentor: Aaliyah

Aaliyah discovered that Carlos' interest in reading increased over the course of the mentoring sessions. His interest typically guided what books he selected. When asked the question on the pre-survey, "What makes a 'good' reader?" Carlos responded, "Understanding." When asked, "If you could change anything as a reader, what would it be?" his response was, "Read more for fun." By the end of the sessions, Carlos' frequency of reading outside of school increased from "not a lot" as indicated in the pre-survey, to one to two days per week noted in the post-survey. Reflecting on his experience, Carlos felt that "looking at context clues was helpful."

Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Mentoring Experiences

Before the mentoring sessions began, the teacher candidates expressed conflicting feelings about the mentoring process. Aaliyah stated, "I expected my experience to be challenging, but definitely rewarding. I assumed that the developing reader and I would work together to find a strategy that would work the best. It might include a lot of trial and error." Similarly, Isaiah projected, "I expected the mentor to struggle with reading, but I was not sure to what extent. I expected the student to get frustrated at some point, but I hoped to keep them motivated." The mentors showed moderate levels of confidence. They entered the experience expecting it to be rewarding but with prickles of doubt.

Throughout the semester of mentoring, teacher candidates experienced working with developing readers first-hand. Mentors learned and implemented a variety of reading strategies and graphic organizers (e.g., verbal questioning, fluency phrases, graphic organizers, explicit vocabulary instruction, explicit teaching of affixes, and reader's theater scripts, t-charts, inference guides, and character studies).

The support system of weekly conferences with the graduate mentor proved necessary for the teacher candidates. Nearly every teacher candidate asked for assistance from the graduate mentor. This uncertainty typically occurred after the developing reader had shown progress in the reading skill that was being taught, and the reading mentor did not know how to take the skill to the next level. The graduate student directed the mentors to informally assess the developing reader's fluency or aspects of comprehension that were not specifically addressed at the grade level where they had been working. If they showed progress, mentors were asked to extend and challenge their reading.

Teacher candidates reflected upon their lesson plans and delivery during weekly conferences, looking to improve their performance. They mentioned that they would have liked to have used progress monitoring to track students' growth, and they seemed unsure if

their interventions were engaging and helpful. Johnston stated the following during his final conference,

> I hope it was useful for him. Just to be able to like… if there is a word he comes across, to use context clues or look up the definition or both. If I were to do it differently, I would make it more interactive between us. I gave him a worksheet, which was good, but we didn't interact until after he came up with the sentences. *(November debriefing conference, 2017)*

Teacher candidates perceived the mentoring of Jenny, the graduate intern, beneficial to their instructional practice. Lani, a teacher candidate, described her experience collaborating with Jenny that happened to reflect the opinions of the entire group of mentors. The following was described on her post survey:

> I met with Jenny on Mondays and Fridays for 10 minutes each. She asked what my lesson was and how the student was engaged and responded to it. Then, she gave some suggestions of what I would've done differently and what were the next steps. Toward the beginning, she gave me poems, and I used graphic organizers, and they worked well. My Thursday student loved poetry, and it was amazing. For a developing reader—she hadn't been exposed to poetry, amazing to see how she was engaged for the ½ hour and how she improved. Poetry is short. She grasped poetry terms and improved in fluency. I know when I first started, she was choppy when she read. It was mostly confidence. She didn't have confidence. The more we got to know each other, she was more comfortable, so her fluency improved and wasn't so choppy. She's also improved with comprehending words and vocabulary. I've had experience doing this when I mentored 3rd graders who had to pass the state test to go onto 4th grade, but it wasn't as eye-opening, and I saw how much they were developing and saw the improvement over the course and realized that I actually did something. As a teacher, some things I guess I gained from this experience were the reading strategies that Jenny has helped me with and patience as a teacher when working with students with learning disabilities. You don't know what you are walking into. Actually sitting down with developing readers and seeing them developing to comprehend a simple word and taking baby steps to help them be successful in the end was eye-opening...I have to meet them where they are. *(Lani, post-survey)*

Discussion

When answering the first research question: How did teacher candidates' experiences mentoring developing readers impact the candidates' understanding of the needs of adolescent developing readers? Teacher candidates were affected by the hands-on mentoring experience.

Lani noted that it was an "eye-opening" experience as she worked with developing readers. She realized that she needs to "meet them where they are." She was alluding to the fact that it was important to provide materials that match students' reading levels and interests.

Equipping teacher candidates with the skills to know their learners, and using the debriefing sessions to help plan lessons, strengthened teacher candidates' skills as future professionals (Hammond, 2006). The debriefing sessions with the graduate mentor also answered the first question.

Focusing on the second research question: How did candidates interpret developing readers' engagement using high interest literacy materials? Three themes emerged from the mentee's responses: *confidence, choice,* and *engagement*. Similarities emerged across the mentees' confidence, interest, and reading proficiency. For example, there was a slight increase in comfort level, and it was evident that the developing readers *wanted* to enjoy reading. They preferred having choice in reading books that they were interested in rather than being required to read material selected by their teachers or other adults.

In addition, the findings from this study revealed that teacher candidates benefited from the mentoring experience by using high interest mentoring plans, paralleling the results from both Clark and Teravainen (2017) and Cockroft and Atkinson (2017). Through this mentoring experience, teacher candidates' comfort levels were impacted as they considered working with developing readers. An awareness of strategies and assessments will only continue to enhance the skill set of teacher candidates. Building the network of teacher candidates who participated in the reading program is projected to have positive results that help provide additional credibility and reliability to this study.

Implications and Conclusion

While most mentors had limited experience mentoring developing readers, this opportunity appeared to be rewarding for teacher candidates because of the reflective feedback and one-on-one debriefing. Although this is a small sample size, the research team developed a framework for teacher candidate professional development (PD) workshops that emphasize instructional strategies and formative assessments. This PD will be available to all teacher candidates across grade bands and content areas. A larger sample size for future studies is anticipated due to the introduction and implementation of this opportunity for all undergraduate students in the teacher education programs at our institution. Furthermore, the social motivation relationship could be examined that may influence the developing readers' desire to read by including questions regarding social motivation on the written survey and adding it to the reflective form.

This experience allowed candidates to put the reading strategies and assessments directly to use when mentoring developing readers with high-interest reading materials. Providing teacher candidates across all content areas with opportunities to work with developing readers is essential to their growth and professional skill-set as they pursue their goals of teaching.

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