

Eastern Michigan University

DigitalCommons@EMU

Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations

Master's Theses, and Doctoral Dissertations,
and Graduate Capstone Projects

2023

Exploration of the reflective supervision relationship: Meaning making, communication, and transformative learning in educational environments

Elizabeth Betsy Stoelt

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.emich.edu/theses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Exploration of the Reflective Supervision Relationship: Meaning Making, Communication, and
Transformative Learning in Educational Environments

by

Elizabeth Betsy Stoelt

Dissertation

Submitted to the College of Education

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Educational Studies

Dissertation Committee:

Wendy Burke, PhD, Chair

Iman Grewal, PhD

Jennifer Kellman-Fritz, PhD, LMSW

Lynn Malinoff, Ed.D

February 16, 2023

Ypsilanti, Michigan

I dedicate this dissertation to my spouse, my boys,
and my tribe, who afforded me the space to continue
this important work.

Abstract

Reflective supervision is ongoing professional development, often utilized by the social work field that originates from infant mental health supervisory practices. Reflective supervision increases one's capacity to become aware and manage the strong emotions that are inherent in direct service work and understand relational dynamics within families and between professionals and family members. Using the 3 central tenets of collaboration, reflection and regularity, the goal of reflective supervision is to develop and maintain effective service delivery by understanding the practitioner's positionality. This study utilized the practice of reflective supervision with five educators over a 10-week period of time. The goal of the study was to explore and understand the reflective relationship and the impact of the reflective practice on educators, and to illuminate the parallel process to the students and learning environment. Five tenets of reflective supervision in education environments emerged from this qualitative study: (a) historical meaning making; (b) perspective taking; (c) finding voice and choice; (d) inviting a different perspective; and (e) reconnecting, revisiting and re-reflecting. The positive impact on the educator's reflective capacity, reduction of secondary stress responses, and professional growth, along with the reinforcement of the parallel process, illustrate the powerful role that reflective supervision can play in educational environments. The findings call for increased opportunities for intentional reflective practice in the field of education and the overall view of education to be viewed through a human service lens.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Critical Need for Education.....	3
Chapter Two: Reflection and Reflective Practices.....	19
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	53
Chapter Four: Findings and Reflective Journeys.....	70
Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion.....	118
References.....	155
Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer.....	175
Appendix B: Informed Consent.....	177

Introduction

As I signed my full name on the withdrawal form, officially ending my high school career in my sophomore year, I heard the school counselor say, “We all knew this day was coming.” After an intentionally audible sigh, she said, “Well, good luck. You’re going to need it” in a sharp and exaggerated tone. The only explanation I could come up with for why an adult would ever say that to a student was, “I’m not smart enough to be successful in school.” My teachers had presumably been trained to recognize intelligence and potential, and they certainly didn’t see either of those things in me.

I developed this core belief—that I wasn’t smart—to explain why I always felt lost when the teacher was talking, or why the books that were laid on my desk for reading time were filled with words I could in no way understand. My belief was confirmed by the teachers and administrators in my classrooms, who would tell me I was “too far behind to catch up,” or sometimes not even acknowledge my presence. Most would have a pack of assignments I had missed, which they would aggressively slap onto my desk. I was not excited about any type of learning; I wasn’t really excited about anything. I was quiet, socially withdrawn, and not taken care of—and I looked as such. I quickly learned that I was not worth most teachers’ time.

This statement—“I am not smart enough to be successful in school”—was further reinforced by my family. I had watched four of my five siblings drop out of high school. Not only were school and learning viewed as unimportant, but they were the last thing on anyone’s mind in my household. Other life events made my school experience look different than that of other children: By the time I was in the eighth grade, I had been enrolled in 12 schools. My family moved every 6 to 8 months—primarily due to domestic violence. We ran from city to city, state to state, only to repeat the cycle again in the middle of a school year. I would miss

months of school at a time, and my household environment was not conducive to doing homework. Each time I entered a new school and classroom, I felt more lost, and teachers viewed my poor attendance as an indication of low intelligence. I came to accept their assessment; in fact, it became my core belief and fundamentally changed the way I interacted with classrooms, teachers, community systems, and even the learning experience itself.

Chapter One: The Critical Need in Education

If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's students, we rob them of tomorrow.

—John Dewey

The Critical Need in Education

As human beings, we create beliefs and meanings from our experiences. These begin forming from the moment we are born. We create understandings from everything, from the noises we hear and the things we see to more internal thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This meaning-making process then moves into the creation of values and core beliefs about ourselves and our position in the world. In the profession of social work, the process of identifying, understanding, and challenging our meanings of human experience is woven throughout the preservice curriculum. This continues into one's professional career with facilitated reflective practices. Social work practice is emotionally challenging work; it is therefore important to know how to continually assess and understand one's meanings and emotional responses. And yet, other emotionally challenging professions, such as education, have not systematically incorporated reflection into their training. With the increasing number of students entering the classroom with trauma-laden experiences and increased mental health challenges, the need for educators to engage in meaningful reflection is critical.

Core Beliefs and Trauma

All individuals develop core beliefs about themselves, their experiences, and their relationships to people and things. Simply defined, core beliefs are fundamental assumptions about human behavior, the unfolding of events, and one's own abilities (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). Janoff-Bulman's (1992) theory of shattered assumptions proposed that posttraumatic difficulties

result when a traumatic event violates the basic assumptions that the world is benevolent and meaningful and the self is worthy. This often results in a fundamental change to, or even shattering of, a person's core beliefs (Kaufman et al., 2018). In the wake of a traumatic event, an individual will typically develop a core belief to explain why the trauma occurred. The two most common psychiatric classifications of trauma—from the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Diseases* and the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*—both define a traumatic event as exposure to actual or threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, and/or actual or threatened sexual violence. Examples include war, domestic violence, a sudden loss, natural disasters, homelessness, serious illness, or even a car accident. Trauma can also occur from two different entry points: It can be experienced directly by the individual or vicariously, when an overwhelming or disturbing event happens to someone we care for or love.

According to Kaufman et al. (2018), the two types of trauma with the greatest impact on core beliefs are interpersonal violence (IPV), when someone experiences a sexual or physical attack by another person, and violent loss (VL), when a person experiences a sudden or unexpected death or loss of a relationship. Both of these types of trauma lead to core beliefs that the world is unsafe and that the individual is powerless and/or lacks control in the face of random acts of violence or loss. In the aftermath of IPV and VL, individuals may modify their assumptions regarding the self, other people, and the world (Kaufman et al., 2018). Typically, humans make sense of relationships through core beliefs or working models of the self, others, and the world (Bowlby, 1988). Experiences such as trauma, however, alter these beliefs and can affect one's ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with others (Pearlman & Courtois, 2005).

If an individual is in a car accident, for example, they may try to make sense of the accident by searching for its underlying causes, even if it was a purely random event. If the accident took place at night or on an expressway, the person might begin to question their core beliefs about driving under particular circumstances, becoming excessively fearful of those circumstances. This shift in beliefs about driving safety may in turn change the way they interact with the world. They may become avoidant, not driving at night or planning a longer commute that avoids expressways in order to stay safe. This may impact their employment or even their relationships with others, as logic will be powerless to stop the behavior or alter the new core belief about driving.

Why do some people recover from traumatic events more easily than others? Research has shown that the greatest determinants of one's ability to recover from trauma are solid protective relationships with individuals, families, and community systems and having one's basic physical and safety needs met—what in social work we understand to be protective factors. According to youth.gov, a U.S. government website that helps create and maintain effective youth programs, a protective factor is defined as “a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, or community (including peers and culture) level that is associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduces the negative impact of a risk factor on problem outcomes” (Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, n.d). Protective factors provide an individual with the support needed to productively interrogate the world around them and their own beliefs. The capacity to critically think and reflect on why we interact with the world the way that we do is a privilege for those who are able to establish safety, consistency, and valuable relationships with others and with community organizations, such as schools. For

many children, these connections are dependent on adults providing the opportunity for relationships to form.

Human Needs

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is often discussed and taught in human development courses in the fields of both social work and education. According to this theory, there are five areas or stepping stones of human needs, which build on one another. The foundational level comprises physical or biological needs for human survival, such as shelter, sleep, food, water, and even the air we breathe. Maslow considered these basic needs to be the most important, since if these needs are not met, the human body cannot function properly (McLeod, 2018). Next are safety needs: protection from the elements, security, order, law, stability, and freedom from fear (McLeod, 2018). Once physiological and safety needs have been consistently satisfied and reinforced, the third level addresses social needs, or the need for belongingness. These needs are often satisfied through affiliation with a particular group, friendships, relationships, intimacy, trust, and acceptance, and through giving and receiving affection and love. According to Maslow, this need for interpersonal relationships motivates our behavior (McLeod, 2018).

The fourth level is esteem needs: how people view themselves and how they believe themselves to be perceived by others. Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories: esteem for oneself, meaning the need for self-perceived dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence; and esteem from others, meaning the desire for a reputation, respect, status, and prestige (McLeod, 2018). When Maslow first presented the theory, he topped the hierarchy of human needs with what he called self-actualization needs. Through seeking out and engaging in personal growth and experiences, a person achieves self-fulfillment and can realize their full

potential (McLeod, 2018). In other words, the need for self-actualization is the desire “to become everything one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1987, p. 64). In later revisions, Maslow added three additional levels to his original five: cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and transcendence needs. Cognitive needs involve the search for meaning, predictability, knowledge, and understanding through curiosity and exploration, while aesthetic needs are an appreciation and search for beauty, balance, and form (McLeod, 2018). These two come before the need for self-actualization. In the updated hierarchy from 1987, Maslow added one final level at the top called transcendence needs, in which motivation is driven by values that transcend the personal self, including mystical and aesthetic experiences, connections with nature, service to others, the pursuit of science, and religious faith (McLeod, 2018).

As children progress through this hierarchy, a large part of their development, both physical and emotional, takes place in the school community. Many schools and teachers expect that their students will already have the first two levels of needs (physiological and safety needs) consistently met prior to entering the classroom. Yet this is often not the case. As a result, education must be viewed as a broader human service in order to help each student gain what they need to build their place in the world. Moreover, Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity (McLeod, 2018). This means that educators must respect the child’s position within the hierarchy of needs and meet them where they are.

Building off of Maslow’s work on human needs, Saul McLeod (2018) introduced the notion of deficiency needs and growth needs. Deficiency needs arise due to deprivation and are said to motivate people when they are unmet; the motivation to fulfill such needs will become stronger the longer the needs are denied (McLeod, 2018). These needs can be material or

emotional, including food, shelter, safety, relationships, love, companionship, and a sense of belonging. Growth needs, meanwhile, come from a desire to grow as a person. Once these growth needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level of self-actualization (McLeod, 2018). Distinguishing human needs according to these two categories gives us insight into how children's needs can best be met in the context of education.

Maslow (1971) often spoke about education's link to human needs, arguing that a humanistic educational approach would lead to people who are "stronger, healthier, and [who] would take their own lives into their hands to a greater extent. With increased personal responsibility for one's personal life, and with a rational set of values to guide one's choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they lived" (p. 195). And indeed, Maslow's (1962) hierarchy of needs theory has made a major contribution to teaching and classroom management. Rather than reducing behavior to an immediate response to one's environment, Maslow (1970a) understood that behavior is influenced by a range of needs; he therefore called for the adoption of a holistic approach to education and learning, where students are shown that they are valued and respected in the classroom. This reinforced the need for educators to develop and maintain an understanding of how children's core beliefs about themselves are impacted by the educator showing respect and value for the student in the classroom. Maslow felt that a teacher should create a supportive environment, arguing that in order for students to progress through the classroom curriculum, their self-esteem must be strengthened. This also means that when a student is coming to the learning environment without their needs for shelter, food, and safety being met at home, they need that foundational support before we can begin to strengthen their self-esteem and relationships and create a space for meaningful learning to take place.

The Children We Serve

Mental Health of Children

The mental health needs of students in the United States have been increasing over the past 20 years. According to a Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2022) report on mental health statistics, 17.4% of children between the ages of 2 and 8 have been diagnosed with a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Those rates only increase with age. Among children aged 3–17, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most common diagnosis, affecting 9.8% of students with either a medical or educational diagnosis. The next two largest groups of mental health challenges for students are anxiety (9.4%) and behavioral problems (8.9%). These are often found and diagnosed together; for example, of the children diagnosed with depression, 73.8% also had an anxiety diagnosis, and close to half (47.2%) also experienced behavioral challenges. Depression remains low until the age of 12, but for individuals aged 12–17, 15.1% reported having a major depressive episode in the last year.

These rates represent an increase over the last two decades. The number of children aged 6–17 that have been diagnosed with either depression or anxiety jumped from 5.4% in 2003 to 8.4% in 2011–2012, and that percentage has continued to rise in recent years. Poverty and other environmental challenges, such as domestic violence and homelessness, impact the percentage of students facing mental health diagnoses. Among children living below 100% of the federal poverty level, more than 1 in 5 (22%) have a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Given the previous discussion of trauma and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is clear that there is a connection between the trauma of poverty and mental health and developmental challenges in our students.

Trauma in Children --- ACE Statistics

There are three different types of trauma that students face today. The first is acute trauma, which is when a student is exposed to a single traumatic event, such as a death, car accident, or natural disaster (Plumb et al., 2016). The recent COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated the incidence of acute trauma, creating maladaptive attachment for nearly every student in our classrooms. The second type of trauma that students may face is chronic trauma, which is repeated exposure to assaults on the mind and body, such as repeated sexual assaults or acts of domestic violence (Plumb et al., 2016). The final and most severe type of trauma that a student can face is complex trauma, which is exposure to chronic trauma that is generally enacted by the student's primary caregiver over a developmental time period (Plumb et al., 2016). Put another way, complex trauma describes the complicated, pervasive, and long-term developmental consequences of interpersonal victimization that is extended in duration and includes multiple events (O'Neill et al., 2010).

The Adverse Childhood Experiences survey was first introduced in 1995 by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, a private health insurance company, and was distributed to 17,000 individuals in order to better understand how adverse childhood experiences impact physical health. The experiences listed on the survey ranged from exposure to abuse, including substance abuse, to absence of a caregiver, homelessness, and hunger. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 2021; citing the aforementioned CDC report), nearly two-thirds of the participants surveyed reported at least one adverse childhood experience, and more than 1 in 5 participants report having three or more of these experiences. The researchers identified a link between adverse childhood experience (ACE) exposure and a higher likelihood of negative health and behavioral outcomes later in life,

such as heart disease, diabetes, and premature death. It is also important to note that the study participants were White middle-class individuals with access to private health insurance. Given what we know about the effects of poverty, race, and generational trauma on health and behavior (Chappelle et al., 2020), this suggests that both the quantity and impact of adverse childhood experiences would be higher for students and families suffering from hunger, racial discrimination, housing insecurity, and a history of trauma in their families and communities.

The latest National Survey of Children's Health data from 2017–18 showed that, excluding economic hardship, approximately 30% of children had experienced one ACE, and about 14% had experienced two or more (NCSL, 2021). According to the 2018 Child Trends Brief, which included economic hardship, about 45% of children have experienced at least one ACE (NCSL, 2021). Parental separation and economic hardship are the most common ACEs regardless of race and ethnicity, although the data suggests that children of different races and ethnicities do not experience ACEs equally. According to a 2019 CDC report on ACE statistics, the children who reported at least one adverse childhood experience were 61% non-Hispanic Black, 51% Hispanic, 40% non-Hispanic White, and 23% non-Hispanic Asian (NCSL, 2021). This suggests that schools in communities predominately of color are more likely to have students with traumatic experiences, which negatively impacts classroom learning.

The impacts of trauma on brain development have been studied from both a physiological and a behavioral lens. In childhood and adolescence, neural connections are still being pruned, wiring is still in progress, and the prefrontal cortex—which involves impulse control and decision making—is just entering its maturation phase (National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment [NCASE], 2019). The brain is still under construction, meaning that if a student's brain development is interrupted or impacted by trauma, this directly affects their

learning capacity. Coping with and/or surviving trauma or other unsettling, frightening experiences with a brain not yet capable of interpreting, processing, and understanding these experiences can result in poor decisions, short attention span, and a lack of communication (NCASE, 2019). These impacts inevitably spill over into classrooms and educators' interactions with youth.

The impacts of trauma on student learning have been clearly defined by many mental health and educational researchers. During infancy, before a child even enters the classroom, trauma, neglect, and even lack of appropriate attachment can alter the child's adaptation to their environment (O'Neill et al., 2010). The impacts of trauma, neglect, and abuse are varied, but may include: neurological difficulties, affect dysregulation, relationship difficulties, attachment difficulties, shame, mood and attention problems, behavioral problems, hyper-arousal, and/or dissociation (Morgan et al., 1992, p. 1039). It is important to note, however, that each traumatic event or situation is different, and each student will process this trauma differently, so not all impacts will be present for each student. When a student has been exposed to severe, prolonged traumatic events, their bodies are primarily concerned with survival and self-preservation instead of learning, academic performance, and appropriate behavior (Plumb et al., 2016).

Implications for Educators

Educators today are not immune from experiencing trauma in their daily lives. In a 2019 study, CDC scientists analyzed data from more than 144,000 adults in 25 states and found that 61% of them had experienced at least one ACE before the age of 18 (NCSL, 2021). Nearly 16% of adults have experienced four or more ACEs, and women and racial and ethnic minority groups are at a greater risk for experiencing a higher number of ACEs. Thus, it is highly likely that many of our educators have core beliefs and personal understandings that have been shaped by

traumatic events—some of which may be ongoing. Compounding this, because symptoms of trauma can also emerge when we are exposed to the trauma of someone we care about, teachers who are invested in students who have experienced trauma may in turn be impacted by their interactions with these students in the classroom.

As educators, we care deeply for our students, taking the time to get to know them well enough to be able to witness and experience a range of emotions with them. Educator preparation programs in higher education emphasize that this daily emotional connection is founded on care and compassion. Thus, when our students experience trauma, we experience trauma. When educators learn about primary victims' traumatic experiences, they are at risk for vicarious trauma, which may result in secondary traumatic stress (STS), the official diagnostic category for adverse effects that stem from teaching and serving children with trauma (Borntrager et al., 2012; Lawson et al., 2019). STS symptoms in educators may begin with disengagement and withdrawal in the workplace and spill over into personal and family lives; common symptoms include depression, sleep disorders, substance abuse, and relationship problems such as divorce (Lawson et al., 2019, p. 426).

A study from Borntrager et al. (2012) looked for indicators of STS among public school educators, paraprofessionals, school-based social workers, counselors, and administrators. In this study, 77% of the participants' students were moderately, severely, or very severely traumatized, and 75% of adult respondents reported STS symptoms. In qualitative interviews with this same group of educators, 75% of the participants were considering a career change, actively planning to retire, or moving to a new school district due to struggles with STS (Lawson et al., 2019). In fact, STS is the main reason for educator turnover (Lawson et al., 2019, p. 426). High levels of turnover due to STS disrupt consistency and make it difficult for students to form meaningful

relationships with adults at school, both of which are key forms of support for students experiencing trauma.

Acceleration of Mental Health Needs ---COVID-19

The statistics in the previous sections outlined the mental health needs and challenges that were present prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Surveys conducted before the pandemic found teaching to be one of the most stressful jobs in the United States (Gallup, 2014). Before the pandemic, an average of 16% of teachers left their job within any given school year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kena, 2015). The number of educators leaving their teaching position has only grown since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a survey conducted in January 2021, 23% of teachers reported that they were likely to leave their current teaching job by the end of the 2020–21 school year (Steiner & Woo, 2021). The challenges of teaching virtually while also caring for one's own children created more stress for educators during the pandemic. Among teachers with children living in their household (regardless of the age of the child or that child's need for care or learning support), 32% reported that they were the main person responsible for the care and/or learning support of those children while they were teaching (Steiner & Woo, 2021). When the researchers looked only at teachers with children in their home who needed care or learning support, this number rose to 41% (Steiner & Woo, 2021).

As previously discussed, acute trauma occurs when an individual is exposed to a single traumatic event, such as a death, car accident, or natural disaster (Plumb et al., 2016). For a child who has lost a loved one or caretaker to COVID-19, the pandemic fits this definition of acute trauma. Moreover, because of the length of the pandemic and the ongoing exposure to death and disruption, one could argue that it has now moved into the realm of chronic trauma, especially

since the pandemic also increased food insecurity, homelessness, and/or loss of safety for many individuals. In short, the COVID-19 pandemic has created trauma and maladaptive attachment for nearly every student in our classrooms. Students today are dealing with complex grief: In addition to the losses mentioned above, such as the death of a loved one, they may also be grieving the loss of friendships with peers or relationships with their teachers and other supportive adult community members, such as coaches or family friends. This often leads to changes in the perception of self. Students who once identified as being a “good student” or a “good friend” may have had those identities shaken simply by dint of not being in the classroom and school community.

Educators today are in the difficult position of having to deal with both their own personal traumas and the secondary traumas they are experiencing as a response to their students’ trauma. This can lead to emotional reactions while teaching and throughout interactions with students. Talking about the pandemic and enforcing safety protocols while simultaneously experiencing sometimes polarizing emotional reactions can lead to conflict and feelings of invalidation, which fuel emotional disconnection.

Research suggests that people who have experienced a largely irreversible change in society and lifestyle due to the pandemic may end up reconsidering what is most important to them (Noda, 2020; Yamaguchi et al., 2020). Such reconsiderations are referred to as a “disruption of core beliefs” (Cann et al., 2020; Janoff-Bulman, 1989; Ramos & Leal, 2013). Children may express these disruptions through disruptive behavior, especially if they are not taught to talk through and process difficult emotions. These behaviors can in turn be triggering for educators.

This situation is further complicated by the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has removed many coping habits involving human connection. The combination of increased trauma, social and community isolation due to mandatory stay-at-home orders, and a lack of healthy coping habits has created elevated trauma-related stress for all, including students and families, educators, and administrators. Relationships have changed in homes, with increased time spent with our families and forced changes in relationship roles. Parents became teachers and daycare providers, spouses became co-workers, all while managing the fear and anxiety of the pandemic itself. Given these changes and the loss of relationships with other people, systems, and organizations, increased stress and disruptive behavioral expressions of this stress are evident in our daily lives.

This widespread trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. For example, there is an increased discrepancy in access to resources for families living in poverty; as their ability to satisfy physiological and safety needs has waned, other higher needs have gone unmet. Single parents with school-aged children were forced to stay home to provide childcare and educational support; if those parents did not have the ability to work remotely or afford childcare, their ability to work outside the home was erased entirely. In short, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a mental health crisis, with an increased need for mental health services among individuals of all ages. It is a critical moment in our educational system: We must address the social emotional needs of both students and educators, validate the trauma of the pandemic, and use this awareness and evidence-based practices to heal our learning communities.

An Urgent Need for Healing and a Call for Reflective Practice

We know that the children and families we serve are experiencing high levels of trauma, and we will inevitably see that in our learning environments. Many children have developed negative or maladaptive core beliefs about themselves and the world they live in. Knowing that educators are experiencing higher levels of secondary trauma by serving these students and families, we can also conclude that educators' core beliefs about themselves and the world they live in may also be more negative than before the pandemic. The last 36 months of fear for both our personal safety and the health and safety of individuals whom we love and care about has created an undeniable situation of trauma that we must now develop tools to respond to.

School social workers, guidance counselors, administrators, and community partners are identified as resources that can help lower the emotional toll of student trauma on teachers. Collaboration with these resources is pivotal to ensure that students get the necessary support and advocacy to attend to their needs (Lelli, 2014), but it also gives teachers the time and space to talk with their colleagues about various manifestations of trauma and to brainstorm ideas that can help students learn in classroom environments (Sitler, 2009). Recognizing one's own triggers and emotions increases one's effectiveness with students. To this end, reflective practice allows adults to consider how their emotional responses and past experiences may affect their reactions to children's behavior (Brinamen & Page, 2012). As Brinamen and Page (2012) have explained, "Children's use of challenging behaviors (e.g., crying, withdrawing, hitting, spitting) motivated by emotional needs can easily trigger unresolved or overwhelming memories and emotions for adults" (p. 42). Setting up a system of reflective practice can reduce the impact of past trauma on educators when working with students who have experienced trauma.

Given that reflective practices have already been identified as effective at creating opportunities for transformative learning, this will be discussed in Chapter Two, it is critical that we continue to engage in and produce more systems that support reflective practice. There is an urgent call for professional reflective practices and opportunities for educational players. When a relationship is built in a reflective space with another adult, the educator can then transfer those same types of relationships to their students. High-quality relationships with children have healing effects, and if relationships are primary, then each adult's contributions, experiences, and availability are valuable (Brinamen & Page, 2012, p. 43). Focusing on the relationship can also encourage the development of broader reflective cultures in education.

While admitting that it is not easy to develop reflective cultures, Garmston (2007) has articulated an urgent need for collaborative spaces for educators, deeming them necessary and worthwhile. Teachers need to meet regularly to engage in collaborative adult learning experiences that center on dialogue and reflection on instructional practices (Drago-Severson, 2009). The need for professional development supports is increasingly acknowledged in both the literature and in practice; for example, reflective supervision and consultation are rapidly expanding across diverse early childhood fields, including home visiting, child care, early childhood education, special education, and early intervention and allied health professions (Frosch et al., 2018; Harrison, 2016; Virmani & Ontai, 2010; Watson & Gatti, 2012). As reflective supervision practices continue to expand, and as K-12 schools call for increased reflective practices and social and emotional learning initiatives, transferring reflective ideas and practices from social work to education could support future growth for education professionals.

Chapter Two: Reflection and Reflective Practices

We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.

—John Dewey

Foundations and Understandings of Reflection

This chapter outlines the history of reflective practice, providing the context within which this study operated. It begins by discussing the development of pragmatism at the Chicago School and identifies key individuals and theoretical milestones within the history of reflective practice, tracing the historical links between distinguished theorists from the fields of education and social work. This critical literature review also provides a foundational understanding of the practice of reflective supervision as initiated within the field of social work and as utilized in infant mental health and early childhood education. Using this discussion and analysis of literature, I have provided a rationale for why reflective supervision was selected as the most promising approach for a study exploring how reflection and the reflective relationship can impact educators and their learning environments.

Historical Connection Between Reflection, Education, and Social Work

The practice of reflection within the fields of both social work and education can be traced back to the turn-of-the-century Chicago School, led by John Dewey, which emphasized simple, practical, and positive philosophy and theories. Thinkers associated with the Chicago School were committed to social reform and were inspired by the philosophy of pragmatism, which can be defined as the creation of meanings, values, and beliefs based upon their utility and practical application (Turner, 1998). In the 1910s and 1920s, important social workers and symbolic interactionists—most notably, John Dewey, Jane Addams, and George Herbert Mead—encouraged each other to promote social activism and democratization (Forte, 2004). For

example, in 1917, Mead, Dewey, and Addams marched down Chicago's Michigan Avenue in unified support of women's suffrage (Deegan & Burger, 1978). Dewey has been referred to as the "father of reflection," while Addams has been informally named the "mother of social work."

The Chicago School social workers, including Addams, were involved in the settlement movement, whose main goal was to connect different populations in geographic proximity to each other, providing them with equal knowledge, opportunities, and culture in the hopes of alleviating poverty. They are best known for creating the Hull House settlement (Rudnick, 1991), whose purpose, as recorded in its charter, was "to provide a center for a higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises; and to investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago" (Addams, 1910/1981, p. 89). It has been suggested in much of the literature that Addams was the practical applicator of the theories coming from the Chicago School, and that Hull House was central to this action research. In other words, male philosophers such as Dewey, Mead, and William James were regarded as providing original progressive thought, while Addams was seen as brilliantly administering their theories (Hammington, 2019). Moreover, many of Mead's observations, studies, and writings came from data collection at Hull House. For example, careful observation of immigrants eager for success in their new country provided Mead with the theoretical understanding for many of his sociological topics (Lane, 1984). The collaborative, reflective relationship between Addams, Dewey, and Mead (among others) united applied and intellectual pragmatism into "a blending of what today we would call interactionism and social work" (Maines, 1997, p. 3), laying the foundation for the pragmatic reflective practice that this study utilized as a framework. By working together and using Hull House as a place where real people

engaged in community making, meaning making, and actionable change, they laid the groundwork for reflective thinking in action.

Knowledge and Understandings of Reflection

To understand the current state of reflection, it is important to know its history and foundations. Dewey, who embraced the roles of emotion, passion, and intuition in reflection (Zeichner & Liston, 1996), explained that reflection can lead to learning, and the act of learning can in turn facilitate and contribute to the production of knowledge. Dewey (1933) described reflection as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge” (p. 6). Reflection leads to new understandings of our actions, new consequences, and new conclusions, but concrete experiences are needed in order to situate learning (Dewey, 1933). These first ideas on reflection led many scholars and practitioners to investigate how the practice of reflection could be used in fields such as education and social work.

Dewey published two influential books introducing key theories about reflection. In *How We Think* (1910), he made the important distinction between passive, standardized actions and active reflection/critical thinking (Dewey, 1910; Williams & Grudnoff, 2011). During his initial exploration of reflection, Dewey introduced the three traits deemed necessary for reflective thinking: open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness (Dewey, 1933; Tannebaum et al., 2013; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Tannebaum et al. (2013) have described open-mindedness as an active desire to listen to and analyze the perspectives of others in an attempt to adjust one’s practice and find alternative possibilities and solutions to problematic situations. Dewey saw responsibility as the acknowledgement that actions have repercussions, which should be strongly considered prior to acting. Finally, Dewey defined whole-heartedness as pausing to reflect on

successes and failures, a means of improving one's practice (Tannebaum et al., 2013). The ideas introduced by Dewey still appear in educational and human service research on reflection.

Building upon Dewey's work, particularly in the field of education, Max van Manen (1977) placed an emphasis on teacher empowerment by proposing three levels of reflection in the classroom: technical, practical, and critical (Grimmett et al., 1987, p. 10). The technical stage (the lowest form of reflection) occurs when an educator considers the effectiveness of the means used to achieve certain goals (van Manen, 1977). Practical reflection involves an analysis of the assumptions that are made in the problem-solving process as well as the outcomes of various strategies. Critical reflection in education builds upon practical and technical reflection by adding a consideration of moral and ethical decisions (Pedro, 2001). Critical reflection, van Manen (1977) noted, is "the highest level of deliberative rationality" and the form of thinking practitioners should strive to achieve (p. 227). However, the effectiveness of this gradient of levels of reflection is dependent on the educator having the ability and willingness to find value in continued reflective practice.

Following Dewey and van Manen, Donald Schön contributed two books in the 1980s that expanded educators' theoretical perspective on reflective practice at both the K-12 and university level (Larrivee & Cooper, 2006). In *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), Schön reinforced the belief that the most effective practitioners are those who use improvisation to solve problems instead of relying solely on the knowledge acquired while attaining a degree. He thus emphasized the value of experience and continued reflective practice. Schön's *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987) focused on the development of reflective practitioners, expressing the importance of framing problems, contemplating and reflecting on experiences, and continuously working with experts to improve one's reflective practice. Schön argued that the

typical “one size fits all” model of professional development and problem-solving is not effective because situations and conflicts are often interpreted and processed differently by each individual. Likewise, both Schön and van Manen were dissatisfied with the way certain professions—including teaching—are consistently micromanaged and limited to a generalizable form of practice (Tannebaum et al., 2013, p. 248).

For individuals engaged in reflective practice in education, there are four types of reflection that offer different insights and entry points. Schön introduced the first two—reflecting in action and reflecting on action—in the 1980s. Reflecting in action is the capacity to walk around the problem while you are right in the middle of it, to think about what you are doing even as you are improvising those actions (Schön, 1983). Reflecting on action is reflection after the fact, once the practice has finished (Schön, 1987). Both types of reflection are described as necessary to achieve the level of reflection that can create change in one’s practice and, ultimately, transformative learning.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) went further and described a third kind of reflection: reflection about action, or “reflection about things in their environment that distract them from what is important, that get them so immersed in busy activity there is no time to think” (p. 99). They explained that reflection about action drives you to change the context and conditions of what you practice so that your practice can improve (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Hewson and Carroll (2016) added a fourth type of reflection, reflection for action, defined as “planning on how to put the new knowledge or learning into practice” (p. 45).

Reflection can also bring on the creation of meaning and, in certain circumstances, new knowledge. Kathpalia and Heah (2008), for example, have defined the practice of reflection as combining experience and knowledge to “create new knowledge” (p. 301). This idea of

reflective learning suggests that new perspectives and understandings can be discovered by learning from ourselves on a deeper level. As defined by Boyd and Fayles (1983), “reflective learning is the internal process of exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in a changed conceptual perspective” (p. 19). Collectively, all of these scholars have helped to formulate and refine our understanding of reflective thought and practice.

History of Supervision Practices

Supervision has been a part of the mental health professions since the turn of the twentieth century. Although it did not formally appear in the literature until the 1930s, the need for the mental health provider to acknowledge their positionality during treatment has long been discussed. The first publications on supervision appeared in the 1930s, with a focus on teaching and strictly formatted supervision sessions. Robinson (1936) instructed new supervisors to carefully plan each supervision hour, establish firm boundaries, assert authority, and request written process notes ahead of each meeting. This structure was thought to prepare the professional for their career and helped to assure that the supervisor would stay in control of the supervision sessions, with the assumption that the supervisor knew what was best for the student. Fleming and Benedek (1966) offered similar didactic advice for analytic and psychotherapeutic training. A decade later, Kadushin (1976) offered direction to social work supervisors with lists of techniques that were similar to the early guidelines. This structured and planned supervisory approach reinforced the power differential between supervisor and supervisee by framing the supervisor as the disseminator of knowledge. It did not encourage a relationship-based approach.

It was not until the 1970s that the focus of supervision began to look inward. Kohut (1971) contributed to this development through his work on self-psychology, or the idea of

knowing one's own psychological processes. This led to the introduction of Hoffman's (1992) theories of intersubjectivity into the therapeutic process, which encouraged supervisors and supervisees to explore their roles and experiences together in the intimacy of the supervisory relationship. By the end of the 1990s, supervision had undergone a total shift in how the practitioner viewed their work with clients, particular with infants and young children and their families. The relationship became key. Two terms contributed to the formulation of reflective supervision as we know it today: mentalization and reflective functioning. Mentalization refers to the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and intentions that a person has. Reflective functioning refers to the ability to have thoughts about another person's mental state (Tomlin et al., 2014, p. 70). Both reinforce an equal balance of power and emphasize learning from the relationship.

By the late 1990s, most professionals working with infants and families were engaging in supervision that included reflective practice. Supervisors and supervisees were encouraged to enter into reflective dialogues, both personal and professional, thus influencing what was possible in terms of personal and professional growth through supervision (Tomlin et al., 2014, p. 71). Current guidelines about this type of supervision are outlined by social work associations and state professional licensing agencies, often as a requirement to serve families with young children. There is continued research about reflective supervision in social work, especially in the infant mental health field and in early childhood education programs. Daniel Siegel (2007) is one notable figure who brought mindfulness into the parent-infant community, emphasizing the importance of staying fully present, available, and attuned in order to promote well-being and emotional balance. Even as enthusiasm for reflective practice and reflective supervision escalates within the fields of infant mental health and early childhood education, there is a growing need

for research on how this practice can impact educators working with school-aged children and youth. That is what this study set out to do.

Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision began in a clinical context, primarily among mental health professionals such as social workers and psychologists. The practice gained more traction in infant mental health and early childhood education, helping the professional reflect on the relationship between the child and adult caretakers. Reflective supervision/consultation is ongoing professional development that increases professionals' capacity to manage the strong emotions inherent in direct service work and understand relational dynamics within families and between professionals and family members, with the goal of developing and maintaining effective service delivery (Watson & Gatti, 2012; Weatherston et al., 2010).

Heffron and Murch (2010) defined the three central components of reflective supervision as regularity, collaboration, and reflection. Regular, meaningful contact is critical for developing productive relationships. Collaboration involves asking questions together in the context of trusting relationships focused on professional growth. Reflection involves creating a shared space away from day-to-day experiences to consider thoughts, feelings, and actions (Costello et al., 2018). Hewson and Carroll (2016) detailed the three stances of reflective supervision as the mindful stance (noticing what's happening), the consideration stance (analyzing what's happening and unpacking the assumptions that underpin it), and the consolidation stance (putting this learning into practice so that it becomes routine).

Infant Mental Health

Although reflection has been used for some time as a strategy to improve practice in fields such as education, social work, and medicine (Grant & Kinman, 2012; Mamede &

Schmidt, 2004; Watson et al., 2014), a more specific approach to reflection and reflective supervision/consultation arose within the interdisciplinary field of infant mental health (IMH).

The IMH model of reflective supervision is defined as

the shared exploration [by supervisee and supervisor] of the emotional content of work with infants/toddlers and parents. This exploration occurs within the context of a trusting supervisory relationship that highlights the [supervisee's] strengths and vulnerabilities and invites attention to the awakening of thoughts and feelings that occur in the presence of infants/toddlers and parents. The discussion leads [the supervisee] to introspection and deeper understanding of herself and of the work she performs with families. (Weatherston & Tableman, 2015, p. 370)

Reflection in this context is consistently led by the supervisee—from the initiation of topics, to the direction of the dialogue in supervision sessions, to the sharing and emotional processing of experiences. The reflective supervisory relationship in IMH is a collaborative one in which the supervisor follows the supervisee's lead, remains largely non-directive, and explores the supervisee's emotional responses to the work (Tomlin et al., 2014; Watson et al., 2014; Weatherston & Barron, 2009; Weatherston et al., 2009, 2010). Though the direction of the reflection is based on the supervisee's needs, it is still important for the supervisor to engage in reflection about their own emotional responses to the supervisory experience and the case content, at times making connections between the parallel processes that can be experienced when the supervisor, supervisee, and family share similar emotional responses (Shea et al., 2016; Weatherston & Barron, 2009; Weatherston et al., 2009). When the supervisor incorporates their own reflective practice and meaning-making awareness, the supervisor-supervisee relationship becomes a source of growth and change for both parties.

IMH practitioners in the field of social work typically receive reflective supervision. Shahmoon-Shanok (2009) has explained this specific professional practice as a specialized approach to supervision that involves “a partnership formed for learning and for developing a deeper awareness about all aspects of a clinical ‘case,’ especially the social, emotional, and overall interrelated complexity of developmental domains” (p. 344). The IMH competencies for reflection have been identified as “contemplation, self-awareness, professional/personal development, curiosity, emotional response, and parallel process” (Weatherston et al., 2009, p. 653). Pawl and St. John (1998) identified an additional guiding principle: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto others,” meaning that the parent’s experience of a supportive, consistent, compassionate, and regulating relationship with the practitioner allows them to offer the same relationship experience to their infant or toddler.

There are an increasing number of studies examining the effectiveness of reflective supervision in IMH. A recent study conducted by Frosch et al. (2018), for example, examined the reflective supervision experiences of 40 early childhood interventionists. Participants in the study reported that reflective supervision had increased their competencies in five areas of professional growth: (a) the ability to “effectively cope with job related stress,” (b) the ability to “manage their own emotional responses to infant and family conflict,” (c) “overall professional development,” (d) “overall job satisfaction,” and (e) “overall job performance” (p. 391).

The Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health and the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (n.d.) have provided a comprehensive definition of the components of reflective supervision, which include (a) forming a trusting relationship between supervisor and practitioner, (b) establishing consistent and predictable meetings and times, (c) remaining emotionally present, and (d) teaching/guiding. The association has stated that reflective

supervision supports professional and personal development “by attending to the emotional content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work” (p. 2). This dynamic and detailed definition of reflective supervision formed the foundation of this study and served as a guidepost on the journey toward the discovery of new knowledge.

Relationship-Based Work

Reflective supervision is “a relationship based supervisory approach” that sets out to understand and uncover the power of the reflective relationship (Heffron & Murch, 2010). Relationship-based work involves reflection, collaboration, and reliability, which create a trusting relationship where vulnerability and meaningful growth can occur. Heffron and Murch (2010) have explained that during reflective supervision, a supervisor creates a safe and welcoming space for staff members to reflect on and learn from their own work with a trusted mentor at their side (p. 42). Fenichel (1992) defined reflective supervision as a “relationship for learning,” claiming that the relationship itself (between the supervisor and the clinician) is the mechanism for change. In contexts where relationships with children are a priority, engaging in reflective supervision has been shown to elicit more understanding of those relationships for clinicians and educators.

When relationships are understood and reinforced as a source of growth, learning, and mutual respect, this can transfer to other relationships outside of the reflective supervision sessions. According to Shahmoon-Shanok (2009), the impact of supervisory relationships on other relationships is called the parallel process. The parallel process suggests that “as we are nurtured, so we are enabled to nurture” (p. 11). Brinamen and Page (2012) have explained that “successful reflective practice focuses on creating a mutually respectful and safe relationship in which the facilitator cares about and understands the staff” (p. 42). When a practitioner or

educator experiences a relationship where transformational learning takes place, that experience can be transferred to the classroom and students.

Roles in Reflective Supervision

There are two roles within the reflective supervision relationship: the supervisor and the practitioner. In the social work model of supervision, the supervisor is a fully licensed practitioner in the field. For the first two years of practice for social workers new to the field, reflective supervision creates consistent opportunities for personal reflection about the practitioner's positionality within relationships with clients and organizations, with reflective guidance from a licensed and experienced clinician. The practitioner is provided a completely confidential space to talk through particular interactions with clients and explore their feelings about the circumstances of those interactions and their relationships with clients. It also provides a place to reflect on their personal perspectives, their identity as a practitioner, and their beliefs about the communities in which they serve. The practitioner receives opportunities to discuss and reflect on how our beliefs about culture, race, socioeconomic status, gender, and many other societal constructs are developed and how those beliefs impact our interactions with clients. Although only interns and new clinicians are required to receive clinical supervision, many organizations make reflective supervision available as an ongoing resource because of the value it provides clinicians.

The absence of power within the reflective relationship is exemplified within the professional field of social work and licensing. In the state of Michigan, once a student has graduated with a bachelor's and/or Master of Social Work degree, it is required that the new "limited license" practitioner receive weekly practice supervision sessions with a fully licensed practitioner for the first two years, which includes 4,000 hours of practice. In order to provide

reflective supervision to a colleague, a practitioner must have logged 4,000 hours of practice experience, attended weekly supervision for two years, and passed the state of Michigan licensing exam. This creates consistent supervision opportunities and responsibilities for professionals in the social work field. Once a clinician becomes fully licensed, they begin to engage in the reflective supervisory process, creating reflective relationships with students and colleagues who are new to the field.

Reflective supervision has also been researched and reinforced in infant and early childhood clinical and educational programming, where it has been shown to create a higher level of positive impacts and outcomes for children and families. This relationship-based approach to professional development, which utilizes the parallel process explained above, creates growth opportunities for both the supervisee and the supervisor. For the purposes of this study, the historical connection between social work and education inspired me to explore how the reflective supervision practice used in social work can become a useful tool for educators working with all levels of students.

Selection of Reflective Supervision Approach for This Study

The Power of the Reflective Relationship

This study set out to identify, explore, and understand new perspectives and ideas about the relationship that is created in a reflective supervisory relational space in an educational context. It aimed to provide insight on how that relationship is formed, developed, and reinforced and how the process of reflection interacts with that relationship. The study emphasized the importance of the reflective relationship and the development of trust and vulnerability, which are not always present in a typical research interview format. The reflective relationship between practitioner and supervisor provides a thoughtful and respectful space where authentic feelings,

observations, and ideas can be explored on a regular basis (O'Rourke, 2011). Using the practice of reflective supervision and holding to the central components of regularity, collaboration, and reflection (Heffron & Murch, 2010) allowed me to gain insight and understanding about the formation of the relationship. It also helped me develop a grounded theoretical perspective of how this relationship interacts with meaning making and transformational learning.

An important tenet within the social work profession, both with clients and with colleagues, is building and maintaining strong rapport. Gaining access to an individual's meaning-making process and building rapport with them takes time. This rapport is rooted in trust, consistency, and respect. Seidman (2019) has explained that rapport implies getting along with or being in harmony with each other—a conformity to and affinity for one another (p. 102). Such a relationship creates an opportunity for both the researcher and the participant to contribute to the formulation of knowledge through communication of the meaning-making process and collaborative transformative learning. The relationship and rapport that were created, reinforced, and maintained in this study provided data that could not be accessed by seeing reflection through only one party's perspective or lens.

A critical data collection method that helped illuminate the different perspectives on the reflective relationship was the field journal. It was used to document the discovery of relational understandings, using comparison of written expression after each particular reflective supervision session. Observation offered another useful point of entry into the relationship building and maintaining process. Observation was used in this study as an opportunity to create meaningful awareness and prompt thoughtful questioning of the participants inside the trusted relationship. Both methods helped to reframe and refocus the educator and the researcher in order to broaden our mutual meaning making within the relational context.

Regularity

The first central component of reflective supervision is regularity, which supported this project in two ways. First, regularity impacted the strength of the reflective relationship, inviting vulnerability and trust in the relationship-building process. When individuals begin to experience safety and consistency within the regularity of a meeting, that routine lowers anxiety. This regularity allows the educator to experience a trusting and professional relationship, with appropriate boundaries, formed through communication and self-reflection. The experience of building a relationship then encourages educators to create those same relationships with students and families through reflection. The study set out to understand more about the formulation of a reflective relationship and how it ultimately impacts meaning making for both the reflector and the supervisor.

Regularity also complemented the study's method of research: grounded theory method. The format of reflective supervision allowed me to simultaneously collect and analyze data from the initial onset of the reflective relationship through the early discussions, which provided me with the opportunity to make discoveries during the open coding stage. Bryant (2017) has described open coding as the first step in data analysis, wherein codes begin to emerge as the researcher labels their data. Engaging with data collection and analysis simultaneously—which was only possible through regular meetings—allowed the reflective meaning-making process to be explored in a deeper way.

Collaboration

The second central component of reflective supervision, as articulated by Heffron and Murch (2010), is collaboration. This aspect of reflective supervision was also complementary to the study because of its intent to understand the experiences of both members of the

collaborative relationship. Collaboration involves asking questions together in the context of trusting relationships focused on professional growth. When the researcher creates a space where vulnerability is promoted through honest and thoughtful communication, and when they can view multiple perspectives on the impact of that collaboration, they are provided with opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the parallel process. Reflective supervision thus has the potential to promote growth and understanding for both partners through careful listening and engagement in the parallel process (Emde, 2009; Neilsen et al., 2011; Tomlin et al., 2014). Investigating the process of professional collaboration in reflective supervision provided new knowledge and insights on the dynamics of this type of a relationship.

Reflection

The final central component of reflective supervision—reflection—was essential to this study, as the goal was to examine the effects of reflection on educators' identities and practices. This chapter has given historical context to the progression of our understanding of reflective practice, including the different requirements and components of reflective thinking, the different levels of awareness and ways of knowing that are necessary to engage in transformative learning through reflective practice, and the different outcomes of reflective practice for professionals. Grounded theory method emphasizes that the theoretical perspective or new understanding that is expected to emerge from the study should be useful. In other words, the anticipated outcome of a grounded theory method-oriented research project ought to be a substantive grounded theory—one that is of use in the context from which it has been drawn and within which it has been grounded (Bryant, 2020).

This study had several goals: (a) gain a greater understanding of and personal perspective on the relationship between reflective practice and one's identity as an educator, (b) develop

reflective tools for the participants that operate on a micro scale within the field of education, and (c) provide a theoretical lens capable of informing and improving the professional field of education on a macro scale. The study set out to observe the parallel processes of micro and macro levels of reflection and the impacts and interactions of these on the meaning-making process for each educator. When an educator begins to understand how their individual and personal meanings have been formed and how those meanings impact their thoughts and behaviors, they begin to challenge meanings that have negative impacts on themselves or their relationships with co-workers, families, and students. By collecting consistent, collaborative, and reflective data, the study gained more insight into the reflective process—namely, how that process is perceived and how it creates meaning.

Thus far, this chapter has outlined (a) the history and key principles of reflection and reflective supervision, (b) the rationale for utilizing the practice for this study, and (c) the three central components of reflective supervision: regularity, collaboration, and reflection. The reflective supervisory approach has been shown to improve practice and outcomes for infant mental health professionals and early childhood educators and their families. This study sought to expand upon those findings and generate new perspectives and knowledge by investigating what impacts reflection might have outside of the infant mental health/early childhood areas—in particular, the impacts on established educators working with youth in high-needs districts. By viewing the development of the reflective relationship from the perspectives of both contributing members of that reciprocal relationship, as well as observing and understanding that relational space, this study hoped to provide a fresh theoretical perspective.

Reflective Practices in Education and Social Work

When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education.

–Donald Shöen

Adult learning in a professional context is pivotal to helping practitioners understand their roles and positionalities, especially in the fields of health and human services and education. Contextualizing adult learning opportunities requires the practitioner to understand their meaning-making process through critical thinking and reflection. In an educational context, reflective thinking is defined as “making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions” (Taggart & Wilson, 2005, p. 1). Critical reflection has also emerged as a core component and concern of social work education and practice, thus serving as a bridge between the two disciplines (Jones, 2009). The following literature review discusses the academic relationship between adult learning and the practice of reflection in the fields of education and social work.

Reflective Practices in Education

Both reflection and reflective practice research are gaining momentum in the professional field of education. This is especially true with regard to adult learning and professional development within K-12 and higher education environments. According to Brookfield (1995) and Kegan and Lahey (2009), educators’ engagement in reflective practices is important in that it stimulates them to think more carefully and deeply about their own beliefs and the issues under discussion, grow from exploring alternative possibilities and perspectives, and understand the consequences of their actions. Reflective practices in the professional field of education include formal reflective programs such as collegial inquiry, mentoring, and reciprocal peer coaching, as

well as informal practices such as book clubs, grant/research groups, and groups that review and share best practices. A main goal of reflective practice is to improve one's teaching by paying attention to one's emotional and intellectual well-being and development (Brookfield, 1995; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The current and emerging reflection practices in education are supporting educators and leaders in our schools, colleges, and universities by allowing for the evaluation of teaching practice, with the goal of improving student outcomes.

Adult Learning Development: Relationship to Ways of Knowing and Reflection

It is important to be attentive to developmental diversity when discussing reflective practices. Drago-Severson (2009) has presented four ways of “knowing” that influence reflective practices in educational environments: instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming. An instrumental knower can also be referred to as a “rule-bound self” and has a very concrete orientation to the world. Drago-Severson (2009) explained that this type of “knower” understands and organizes experiences through concrete events, noticeable actions and behaviors, and their own point of view (p. 43). Socializing knowers are individuals who make meaning primarily through socializing; these knowers have developed the capacity for reflection (p. 45). Due to their ability to think abstractly, socializing knowers can think about thinking, make thought generalizations, and reflect on their actions and the actions of others. However, Drago-Severson (2009) concluded that the socializing way of knowing has limitations: these individuals do not yet have the capacity to assume a healthy perspective on their relationships and can feel responsible for others' feelings, as well as hold others responsible for their own feelings (p. 45).

Self-authoring knowers can hold, prioritize, and reflect on different perspectives and relationships (Drago-Severson, 2009). According to Kegan (1982), this is the final

developmental shift away from “I am my relationships” and toward “I have relationships.” Competence, achievement, and responsibility are uppermost concerns for adults who are self-authoring (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 47). Limitations include the fact that self-authoring knowers do not have a perspective on their own self system because it is embedded in their ideals and principles (p. 47). The self is identified with the organization it is trying to run. Lastly, the self-transformative knower learns, contributes to, and grows from themselves, others, and larger social systems (p. 51). They are committed to self-exploration, and their sense of self is emergent and changing constantly. According to Kegan (1982), this often results in relaxation of one’s vigilance, a sense of flow and immediacy, a freeing up of one’s internal life, and an openness to and playfulness about oneself (p. 231). Although reflection is present in the socializing way of knowing, self-transformation creates less personal emotional interference within reflective practice.

Reflection can take place either individually or in a group setting. Collegial inquiry, for instance, is engagement in collaborative reflective practice in the company of other colleagues (Drago-Severson, 2009). This can occur between two professionals or within larger reflective groups. Drago-Severson (2009) described collegial inquiry as the kind of reflection that involves purposely examining and reflecting on one’s assumptions, beliefs, values, commitments, and convictions as a part of learning, teaching, and the leadership process (p. 154).

The experience of collaborative reflection is radically different for each of the four ways of knowing outlined above. According to Drago-Severson (2009), instrumental knowers are adult learners who aim to establish and adhere to ground rules for dialogue when engaging in collaboration and shared decision-making (p. 161). The social knower will be more willing to engage in collegial inquiry with colleagues if a safe environment has been established, since their

environment will enable them to take risks in sharing their perspectives (p. 164). Self-authoring knowers have developed the capacity to look internally—to their own set of values, beliefs, and standards—when engaging in collegial inquiry and making decisions (p. 164). Finally, the self-transforming knower will appreciate the process of collegial inquiry because it presents opportunities to articulate their own perspectives and to learn from a broad diversity of perspectives, including those that are diametrically opposed to their own (p. 165). If we look critically at the differences between educators' individual experiences of and perspectives on reflective practices, we can understand why reflection is valued differently by different parties. Asking educators to engage in reflective practice in professional development contexts without acknowledging and accommodating their way of knowing can create very different reflective experiences and dialogues for educators, especially in group settings.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a common and well-established form of adult learning that reinforces reflective practice. Traditionally, mentoring has been defined in the developmental literature as a reciprocal developmental relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced adult (Drago-Severson, 2009). The explicit intention in the relationship is for the mentor to offer guidance to the mentee in terms of developing his or her career (Kram, 1983, 1985; Levinson, 1978). The importance of the relationship is a consistent theme found in mentoring studies and literature. In these relationships, mentors and mentees have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own thinking, assumptions, and beliefs, and to learn about each other's perspectives, thereby broadening their own perspectives (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 220). Mentoring can offer growth for both the mentor and mentee, as the relationship is viewed as reciprocal by both

members, with no power differential. Focusing on the space that the relationship creates reinforces the possibility for meaningful reflection and growth.

The concept of “holding” frames the mentoring relationship itself as a holding environment for growth (Kegan, 1982). A good holding environment serves three functions. First, the relationship must “hold well,” meaning that it affirms who the mentee is and how they are currently making meaning, meeting the mentee where they are. Second, the relationship should challenge the mentee’s current way of knowing by encouraging them to “let go” (Kegan, 1982). It is important to offer this challenge only when the mentee is ready to move beyond their past way of constructing reality to a more complex way of knowing (Kegan, 1982). Finally, the relationship must be maintained to provide continuity as the mentee establishes a new balance or way of knowing. As McGowan, Stone, and Kegan (2007) have explained, “The consistency of a supportive holding environment provides the individual with an anchor – something to hold on to amidst other shifting life forces” (p. 406). Thus, mentoring is a relationship-based educational reflective practice that highlights meaning making and understanding as essential to the improvement of teaching practices.

Peer-to-Peer Reflective Practices in Education

Peer-to-peer reflective practices emphasize learning from the dialogue and collaborative processes of two or more people who occupy the same position of power within their professional institution. Collaborative action, for example, requires teachers of equal status to observe each other and contribute to the improvement of teaching skills through collaborative engagement (Gonen, 2016, p. 212). Another practice, peer coaching, has the potential to sustain reflection and enhance teachers’ reflective ability to analyze their teaching practices (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Lu, 2010). For in-service teachers, coaching includes both peer observation and

support groups (Hudson et al., 1994). Observation is divided into three sequential steps: (a) an initial meeting to identify specific behaviors the teacher would like to improve; (b) the observation itself; and (c) a debrief, where the coach provides feedback on the targeted teaching skills. New targets and goals can be established at that time (Hudson et al., 1994).

Often in mentoring conversations or meetings, a course of action is identified for the mentee to explore and experiment with. This is often referred to as a “facilitation activity or intervention” for the purpose of “helping individuals to improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development and personal growth” (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 291). Throughout reflective peer coaching, teachers not only meet to talk about each other’s teaching experiences, but also systematically revise their own teaching and critically reflect upon their experiences in a non-threatening atmosphere (Gonen, 2016). Creating these interventions for educators often makes the mentoring process more valuable and meaningful for the mentee.

Reciprocal peer coaching is another reflective practice that has gained traction in education, with several research studies exploring its impact on preservice teachers. Preservice coaches can be taught to observe and record the performance of their peers, provide feedback on observed teaching behaviors, and help correct errors and improve instruction (Morgan et al., 1992). Reciprocal peer coaching can be used at different intensity levels and durations for preservice teachers. Intensive observation, feedback, and support may facilitate preservice teachers’ transfer from the college classroom to independent educational practice, as well as improve problem-solving and collaboration skills for both the coach and the preservice teacher (Hudson et al., 1994). In other words, incorporating reflective practice in preservice teaching can help foster personal awareness and increased confidence when entering the field.

Other Peer-to-Peer Reflective Practices

Additional peer-to-peer reflective practices can be found in educational environments. Typically these practices are not structured reflective protocols or programs but rather practices that are self-initiated by the educators themselves. When teachers build and respond to relationships with other teachers, it becomes easier for them to create effective and emotionally rewarding relationships with families and children (Brinamen & Page, 2012). A common reflective practice that provides opportunities for teachers from the same school or district to meet is book clubs. Typically meeting monthly, these book clubs engage in collegial inquiry and critical collective discussion about how material from different books informs and connects to instructional practices and how it might influence future instructional decisions (Drago-Severson, 2006, p. 193).

Another collaborative reflective practice that utilizes collegial inquiry is informal groups formed by educators in order to share best practices (Drago-Severson, 2006). This is a common way in which teachers support their own and their colleagues' learning and improve instructional practice (pp. 193–194). Lastly, educators may practice reflection through grant writing and research proposal groups. These groups are formed through teacher interest or initiative in order to plan or write research proposals for their learning environments or present their work at educational or professional conferences (p. 194). All three of these informal practices rely on the educator's initiative and desire to engage in reflection—that is, their belief that there is value in reflective practice.

Reflective Practice Structures

The development of reflective practice structures is critical to the follow-through and reinforcement of reflective practices. It is not easy for teachers to engage in reflective practice

without the necessary guidance and practice opportunities. Thus, developing structures for reflection and shared dialogue about instructional matters is a vital step (Blase & Blase, 2001). Reflective structures include allocating time for intentional, collaborative meetings; along with faculty and staff in collaborative decision-making processes; and engaging with faculty and staff as equal partners in the process (Drago-Severson, 2009). When reflection opportunities are provided in a safe and consistent space, it promotes the practice becoming a part of the community and culture of a school.

Social Work Reflective Practices

Reflective Practice in Social Work as a Whole

Reflection is central and necessary to the field of social work, and its importance has been emphasized since the emergence of the very first college-level social work education programs. Reflection is identified as a practice competency in the Council on Social Work Education's 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2015, pp. 7, 9). Social work students are expected to address their thoughts and perspectives on the world. Yip (2006) has stated that reflectivity promotes flexibility and multiplicity in thinking, explaining "students and workers have to be, on one hand, involved in intervention and action, and on the other, be aware of their personal feelings and thinking in action" (p. 253). Recent literature on reflective practice in social work education has reinforced the practice's effectiveness. A reflective practice approach in field education privileges multiple forms of knowledge, including sensory, emotional, and relational, with the perspective that each new case or project is unique and cannot be bound by assumptions or expectations (Shea, 2018). Reflection is an expected and facilitated practice throughout social work education programs and into the profession.

Awareness and Knowing in Social Work Practice

Social work as a profession often uses the term “awareness” when discussing how much a clinician’s beliefs and meanings impact their relationships with clients. “Practitioner know thyself” is a common injunction, as the social worker is urged to make “conscious use of self” through continuous reflection (Kondrat, 1999, p. 455). This self that we grow to know as clinicians is understood as the perceiving subject, the locus for sensations, perceptions, and impressions (Kondrat, 1999). Often in social work education programs, students “apply everything they hear to themselves and find evidence of every symptom” (Saari, 1989, p. 41). These emotional processes and consistent demands need to be supported through supervision, acknowledgment, and validation. Only then can a clinician begin to anticipate and fully understand the work of awareness and the use of self in practice.

Kondrat (1999) has defined the three forms of awareness as (a) simple awareness, or an awareness of what is being experienced; (b) reflective awareness, or the awareness of a self who is experiencing something; and (c) reflexive awareness, or the self’s awareness of how one’s awareness is constituted in direct experience. Simple awareness involves being awake to present realities, noticing one’s surroundings, and being able to name one’s perceptions, feelings, and nuances of behavior (Kondrat, 1999). Reflective self-awareness, which can be attained through reflective practices, turns attention to a self who “has” the experience (Kondrat, 1999). This level of awareness is practiced by looking at events, interactions, effects, and behaviors as the things to reflect on. In other words, the self steps back to observe and consider its own performance (Kondrat, 1999). Reflexive awareness is reached when one has the ability to take on another person’s perspective through one’s own worldview (Kondrat, 1999).

There is an increased call for objectivity in reflective practices. In the field of social work, this can be achieved by scrutinizing one's reactions for the presence of biases, using one's colleagues to provide objectivity, eliciting feedback from clients, and using reflective tools such as audio and video tapes (Gambrill, 1990). By engaging in reflection with the support of those whom you regularly interact with and trust, you can build trust in feedback to improve your practice. While engaging in effective supervision, one is afforded the opportunity to examine cognitive products of the self, such as reasoning and judgment, and attend to the production of knowledge assumed to be implicit in the daily activities of practice (Gambrill, 1990). Reflection on not only the client's perspective but also our own is woven into the practice of social work. When developing plans of care, treatment goals, and even assessments, the client's experiences and perspective are prioritized, which forces the clinician to engage in reflexive awareness.

This section has outlined the definitions and meanings of awareness. However, it is also important to contextualize those understandings through action vocabulary. Summarizing her theories, Kondrat (1999) explained that to be self-aware means that you have the ability to engage in four stages of reflection. The first is to experience "contents" of awareness—the facts and physical evidence of an experience. The second is the ability to stand back in order to observe and critique those contents—the ability to understand and view the evidence and derive meaning from that evidence. The third is to understand how the history and person of the clinician impacts clinical performance and decision-making. Lastly, Kondrat (1999) defined the highest level of self-awareness, becoming reflexive, as an awareness of those processes by which the self interacts with others to create meanings and identities. In order for the practitioner to progress through the levels of awareness, there is typically a consistent, meaningful, and guided reflection practice, such as reflective supervision.

These levels of awareness echo and reinforce the educational theory of the ways of knowing, discussed earlier in this chapter. There is one additional way of knowing that is emerging in social work literature: embodied knowing. Embodied knowing has been defined as knowledge that not only resides in the body but is also gained through the body (Nagatomo, 1992). Hanna (1980) described embodied knowing as a constant flow of senses and actions that occur within the experiences of each individual. The practice of listening to the body for values and information is newer, as cognitive and rational knowing dominated most of the earlier literature. Much of the adult education dialogue surrounding the reintegration of the body has been led by feminist theorists, who have been pivotal in challenging the rational, traditional, masculine way of knowing (Cohen, 2012). By combining the levels of awareness presented by Kondrat (1999) with embodied knowing and the ways of knowing described by Cohen (2012), reflective practices in the field of social work contribute to our understanding and use of the self within relationships.

Reflective Supervision

As discussed earlier in this chapter, reflective supervision is a tool for professional growth in the field of social work, with roots in infant mental health and early childhood education. It is a relationship-based supervisory practice that promotes mutual growth and understanding between a supervisor and a practitioner through careful listening and engagement in the parallel process (Emde, 2009; Neilsen et al., 2011; Tomlin et al., 2014). The three key tenets of reflective supervision are regularity, collaboration, and reflection (Heffron & Murch, 2010). This supervisory approach has been shown to have positive impacts on not only the professionals who engage in the practice, but also the children and families that those professionals serve.

Higher Education and Practice Supervision

A recent study conducted by Shea (2020) investigated a specialized training series for social work field supervisors whose goal was to engage social work interns in reflective practice. Participants were field instructors at Eastern Michigan University at the time of the training series. The training consisted of six sessions covering foundational knowledge in reflective supervision principles, processes, and practices, as well as participants' personal reflection practice needs. The study found that the training sessions helped field instructors hone reflective practice skills that they could incorporate into their field instruction experiences with social work students (p. 198). The participants also reported that the series helpfully informed their supervision of social work interns.

Adapting Reflective Practice to Educational Contexts

There are many concepts that can be transferred from social work and effectively utilized in education. According to Mishna and Rasmussen (2001), the importance of relationships in social work has been researched and analyzed in studies on supervision, field placement, and direct practice. Given this well-articulated role of relationships in social work literature, there is much that can be transferred to education research and practice (Wang, 2012). Believing that relationships first start with one's self, Wang (2012) has insisted on the importance of examining the self through reflective practice to understand how these concepts influence teacher–student relationships and the teaching philosophy of adult learners.

There are two key concepts in social work practice that are particularly valuable in an educational context: transference and countertransference (both part of the parallel process, discussed earlier in this chapter; Ganzer & Ornstein, 1999). Transference is the process whereby feelings about one person are transferred onto another person. Countertransference occurs when

a practitioner inflicts their unresolved issues or emotions on a client or projects their feelings onto the client based on a past experience (Wang, 2009). These two concepts can impact relationships with students in the same way they do clients in social work. Chuah and Jakubowicz (1999) have warned teachers that if they are not in tune with their feelings, detrimental outcomes will likely occur.

Authenticity is another transferable concept from social work that could lend value to the field of education. Authenticity is tied to educators' self-awareness (among other things) and encourages teachers to accept that they cannot be perfect in every situation (Wang, 2012). As Cranton and Carusetta (2004) have stated, "A good way of understanding authenticity is knowing who we are and what we believe and then acting on it...knowing and understanding the collective and carefully, critically determining how we are different from and the same as that collective" (p. 8). Bosniak (1998) defined authenticity as displaying transparency in relationships with students—that is, allowing them to see the real self in the teacher's thoughts, feelings, and reasoning processes. Other components of authenticity include being genuine, showing consistency between values and actions, relating to others in a way that encourages their authenticity, and living a critical life (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004).

The call for extended and intentional personal reflection can be found throughout educational literature. Chuah and Jakubowicz (1999) proposed that instead of acting on our feelings or trying to control them, we should understand their origin and how to use them constructively. The first step to understanding our reactions to, beliefs about, and understandings of our students is investigating how our own meaning making was formed. Reflection is key to that process. By understanding our own expectations of ourselves, we can begin to understand how we transfer these expectations onto our students (Wang, 2012). Mishna and Rasmussen

(2001) have argued that the manner in which educational content is delivered—that is, how the instructor interacts with and responds to students—is as important as the material itself. This again echoes the central tenets of social work, which claim that our understandings of the world shape our interactions with clients. Placing an emphasis on the relationship with students and understanding how that relationship affects students' learning and engagement could have an immense impact on their success.

Similar Practices, Different Names

The reflective practices within the professional fields of education and social work have many similarities; for instance, both fields utilize practice cases. However, the names of those practices are often different. Convening is a common group reflective practice that occurs in educational environments and is defined as a group meeting and conversation around an educator's case. It is the educator's opportunity to benefit from the support and attention of a group of colleagues as they offer (a) their thoughts on the case and the educator's developing relationship to it and (b) their help with a set of questions, concerns, and dilemmas that the educator raises about it (Drago-Severson, 2009). The goal of convening is to hear from group members about the case writer's experiences.

This same practice in social work is called case presentations. Professional development activities and academic literature in social work use case presentations to engage in reflective, collaborative dialogue that utilizes multiple perspectives. It allows practitioners to examine a client's history, diagnoses, and system engagement in a particular case with the goal of professional preparation to handle or treat similar cases themselves. This practice is used both in beginning social work courses at colleges and universities and in practice agencies and continuing education courses for maintaining professional licenses.

The main differences between convening and case presentations as means of professional development are the frequency of use, the type of case, the learning opportunities available, and one's personal connection to the case. In social work, the case presentation is utilized in almost every aspect of classroom and continuing education. In social work classes, lessons about systematic issues in the field are commonly followed by a case review or case presentation, which is used to evoke and assess the students' emotional connection or reaction to that case. A class discussion is then facilitated by the teacher in order to guide the students into a thoughtful reflection on their personal positionality in relation to the case. In convening, by contrast, the teacher that is working with or handling the case is the one giving the presentation, meaning the information is already connected to the teacher's own perspectives.

Early Childhood Education

Given the effectiveness and benefits of reflective supervision in the field of infant mental health, it has been embraced by education professionals working in early childhood education and other early childhood-based services (Emde, 2009; Harrison, 2016; Heller & Ash, 2016; Watson et al., 2014). Reflective supervision or consultation is applicable to early childhood professionals engaged in relationship-based work with families and children who fall into the birth to age 8 range (Susman-Stillman et al., 2020). Other forms of professional development offered for early childhood professionals, such as coaching or mentoring, generally focus on modeling or motivating providers to use specific practices (Susman-Stillman et al., 2020). However, focusing on the relationship, instead of the specific practice, yields a positive impact on early childhood student-teacher relationships.

Assumptions, Implicit Biases, and Beliefs

As previously stated, scholars in both education and social work insist that adults' beliefs, assumptions, biases, and perspectives impact their worldview, language, interactions, and relationships. *Assumptions* are "the taken for granted beliefs about the world and our place within it that seem so obvious to us as not to need stating explicitly" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 2). Brookfield goes on to explain that in many ways we are our assumptions. Assumptions give meaning to who we are and what we do (p. 2). *Big assumptions*, as identified by Kegan and Lahey (2009), are system-level assumptions that are not currently viewed as assumptions but are uncritically taken to be true. If an adult learner does not have the skill or capacity to identify assumptions, the first step of reflection is to have them evaluate their understanding of the world. Assumptions that inform and direct our behavior are not always transparent to us (Drago-Severson, 2009). When one can understand how one thinks and how lived experiences have informed these thoughts and assumptions, then one can enter an interaction with more awareness and intent, getting to know one's reactions, language, and roles.

Implicit biases are attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Operating outside of our conscious awareness, implicit biases are pervasive, and they can challenge even the most well-intentioned and egalitarian-minded individuals, resulting in actions and outcomes that do not necessarily align with explicit intentions (Staats, 2016). Staats (2016) has stated that situations in which we rely on the unconscious mind are most likely to result in implicit bias. These include situations that involve ambiguous or incomplete information, time constraints, and circumstances in which our cognitive control may be compromised, such as fatigue or having a lot on our minds (Bertrand, Chugh, & Mullainathan, 2005, p. 30). In education, the real-life implications of implicit biases

can create invisible barriers to opportunity and achievement for students—a stark contrast to the values and intentions of educators and administrators who dedicate their professional lives to their students’ success (Staats, 2016, p. 33).

Chapter Three: Methodology

America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he is taught; hence we must watch what we teach and how we live.

–Jane Addams

Grounded Theory Method

Grounded theory method was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss at the University of Chicago in the 1960s. The key distinction of grounded theory method is the absence of a direct research question or hypothesis being tested. This method reinforces the discovery of new understandings and knowledge by developing a project or study from the initial interviews or data collected. One of the limitations of hypothesis-based research, they argued, is that the process from proposal to proof is too lengthy, which often makes the findings no longer relevant to the field (Bryant, 2020). Grounded theory method focuses on direct participation in the research context by the researcher(s), often including observations of and interviews with those involved (Bryant, 2020).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) formally introduced grounded theory in their foundational text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, which focused on methods of data analysis. Grounded theory method was developed to counteract criticism of qualitative methods by introducing a more structured approach to data analysis and coding. Glaser and Strauss proposed that systematic qualitative analysis had its own logic and could generate theory and construct abstract theoretical explanations for social processes (Charmaz, 2014). They identified four criteria central to grounded theory: grab, fit, work, and modifiability. These terms can best be understood in light of the work and ideas of the

pragmatists, specifically William James and John Dewey, who were also heavily influenced by George Herbert Mead at the Chicago School (Bryant, 2017, 2019).

The term *grab* refers to the substantive aspect of grounded theory. It was inspired by Dewey's idea of a theory being judged in terms of its usefulness, rather than on any abstract principle of veracity (Bryant, 2020; Lichtman, 2006). *Fit* refers to the need for theoretical insights to adhere to the substantive context of the study rather than to the predilections or biases (whether conscious or unconscious) of the researcher(s) (Bryant, 2020; Lichtman, 2006). *Work* builds on the idea of theory as a tool, as tools are useful within specific contexts or for specific tasks (Charmaz, 2014). The anticipated outcome of a grounded theory, method-oriented research project ought to be a substantive grounded theory—that is, one that is of use in the context from which it has been drawn and within which it has been grounded (Bryant, 2020). The last criteria of grounded theory method is *modifiability*, which is the process of perpetual discovery. Research is not to be thought of as a “one and done” activity but as a continuing and continuous dialogue. Rather than serving as fixed, definitive statements for all time, grounded theories must be understood as modifiable (Bryant, 2020).

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism (SI) provided the theoretical framework for this study. Carter and Fuller (2015) have described symbolic interactionism as a micro-level theoretical framework and perspective in sociology that addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions with individuals (p. 1). Mead (1913) argued that all of society, including its structures and meanings, is developed through social interactions, thus making an important link between macro-level understandings and micro-level interactions. Mead (1934) likened society and its members to a game and its players: individuals take on the roles, beliefs, and values of

their groups, or “games,” which are then generalized by society. An individual must be aware of others’ perspectives and roles within society, which then strengthens relationships into a generalized group or groups. Mead (1934) used politics as an example to explain the framework of symbolic interactionism: “The individual identifies himself with an entire political party and takes the organized attitudes of that entire party toward the rest of the given social community and toward the problems which confront the party within the given social situation” (p. 3). Based on Mead’s explanation of how an individual is situated within individualized contexts that create meaning from social understandings and interactions, meaningful reflection on social constructs and contexts is a requirement for true understanding of one’s self.

According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism has four basic tenets: (a) individuals act based on the meanings that objects possess for them; (b) interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings; (c) meaning emerges from interactions with other individuals and with society; and (d) meaning is continuously created and recreated through the interpretive process that occurs during interaction with others. These four tenets allow for a deeper understanding of the meaning-making process as well as the evolution of meanings and understandings. Charmaz (1980) contributed three additional premises that clarify and extend Blumer’s position: (a) meanings are interpreted through shared language and communication; (b) the mediation of meaning in social interaction is distinguished by the continually emerging process of nature (i.e., meaning making is an ongoing process); and (c) the interpretive process becomes explicit when people’s meanings and/or actions become problematic or their situations change (Charmaz, 1980; Snow 2002).

A Methods Package: Grounded Theory Method and Symbolic Interactionism

This study on reflective supervision and educators set out to discover how educators make sense of their world and how this impacts their identities and roles as educators. More specifically, the study hoped to discover and examine the micro-interactions between two individuals within a reflection session in order to understand how, through these micro-interactions, macro concepts and roles in education are formed for educators. To this end, a combination of symbolic interactionism and grounded theory method was utilized. Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory method complement and can advance each other (Charmaz, 2014, p. 227). This methods package (as named by Kathy Charmaz, 2014) was selected for this study for its ability to not only combine the two methods but also allow them to build on and reinforce each other's key aspects. Combining grounded theory method and symbolic interactionism allows for the development of a coherent unified whole without forcing data and ideas into a prescribed set of concepts (Charmaz, 2014). This methods package was also chosen because of the nature of reflective practice as a whole, and specifically the nature of reflective supervision. Reflective supervision allows for and supports meeting the practitioner where they are in terms of their knowledge of self and use of self. The reflective process does not have a set timeline, topic, or even structured protocols or interventions. Reflective practice does, however, lead the practitioner to understand their meaning-making process in terms of interactions, interpretations, and perceptions, reinforcing the need for symbolic interactionism to be utilized.

Leavy (2020) described symbolic interactionism as the process whereby we take our previous interactions with us and apply them to the next interaction. In other words, interactions, even with people we have just met, are not completely isolated events; rather, each person brings to the interaction all of his or her previous interactions and meanings (p. 121). We then create

meanings and beliefs through our lived experiences and interactions with people and the world. Meanings are constantly evolving through the social interactions that we have. Symbolic interactionism “stresses that people create, negotiate and change social meaning through the process of interaction” (Sandstrom et al., 2006, p. 1). The goal of this study was to investigate whether reflection can help educators explore and understand how their beliefs are formed, as well as how those beliefs impact their perceptions and actions while they are teaching. By bringing our understandings, meanings, and interactions with us to our micro-interactions with students, we are teaching societal concepts of identity and context. If we can learn to understand our own symbols and how they interact with our own and others’ meanings, and then reflect in a meaningful way (Leavy, 2020), the interactions can be viewed differently and with more weight as an educator. By adapting the symbolic interactionist framework, I aimed to dig deeper into the relationship between meaningful reflection and the development of meanings for educators. Because language (both verbal and nonverbal) is the medium of exchange in these relationships, symbolic interactionism provided a useful framework, as the use of language and significant symbols in communication is foundational to symbolic interactionism (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

The tenets of symbolic interactionism, as outlined above, align with and reinforce the act of reflection. If the educator can understand how their sense of meaning was developed within a particular social and cultural context, then they can begin to understand how those meanings create differences in their actions within the world. The ideas we create have a history of context; when an individual can understand how those meanings are constantly changing with new information, it is empowering. Awareness is the first step in reflection, and knowing how our thoughts and interactions can be shaped by our beliefs and meanings is transformative. There is a

reciprocal relationship in meaning making: Interactions create and reinforce meanings for individuals, and meanings create interactions and make changes to those interactions.

Grounded theory method's central tenet is that it is open, both in the beginning and throughout the research study, with no restrictions imposed by a hypothesis or theoretical presupposition. This allows for the knowledge to present itself in a continuous process of data collection and analysis. Symbolic interactionism, meanwhile, acknowledges that the prior interactions of the researcher and of the study's participants have formulated the meanings brought to the reflective supervision session. Using this methods package allowed for both the absence of a structured hypothesis and the incorporation of symbolic interactionism's notion of meaning making through social ideals and structures. The combination of the two methods provided an opportunity to better view the relationship between process and structure, as well as that relationship's influence on meaning making.

Exemplary Studies Using Grounded Theory Method and Symbolic Interactionism

Tourism researchers Santos and Buzinde (2007) used grounded theory method and symbolic interactionism to gain an understanding of how impending gentrification affected a Puerto Rican local tourist industry. The authors showed how the relationship of local residents to their community impelled them to resist relocation, counter dominant discourses, and change tourism, their space, their community, and themselves. The authors drew on traditional symbolic interactionist ideas about self, identity, work, agency, and actions (Blumer, 1969; Hewitt, 1994; Mead, 1934), but also on Denzin's (1992) definition of symbolic interactionism as a "theory of experience and a theory of social structure" (p. 3). Community members told their own history, displayed cultural symbols, affirmed their cultural identity, and communicated that identity through the use of specific cultural objects and locations. By using grounded theory method and

symbolic interactionism together, the researchers were able to provide important clues about the relationship between process and structure. In other words, the structure was able to have different outcomes based on the process of the research. They concluded that tourists' images of the community ultimately changed, moving from voyeurism to engagement with the Puerto Rican community's representations of their own culture and history.

In another exemplary study using both symbolic interactionism and grounded theory method as a packaged method, Jeon (2004) examined community psychiatric nurses' work with family caregivers of older people with depression. The study involved six community nurses and seven family caregivers. Constant comparative analysis of the data yielded the three-phase basic social process of "shaping mutuality," which is central to the actions of and interactions between caregivers and nurses (Jeon, 2004). By using both methods, the researcher was able to discover the data as emergent, reach saturation, and identify a new three-phase social process, which pushed the nursing profession forward.

Methods

Participant Selection

The participants who were selected for this study are all certified teachers in the state of Michigan. More specifically, they are educational site coordinators for a 21st Century afterschool program affiliated with Eastern Michigan University's (EMU) Bright Futures Program. The site coordinators are responsible for coordinating and facilitating in-person and virtual afterschool programs for students and families in three school districts that are considered to be high-needs areas. They engage with families, community organizations, the school, and the district as well as maintain requirements for grant funding and areas of learning and enrichment for students. The study set out to obtain three participants from among the 25 site coordinators in a K-12

afterschool program in a school district building; the study ultimately engaged five participants in reflective supervision. The site coordinators were given printed materials about the study requirements and the nature of reflective supervision practice. Site coordinators who expressed interest and the ability to commit to regular sessions were asked to contact me via email. From among these volunteers, a representative sample was chosen, thus ensuring a diverse group of participants.

The rationale behind this participant selection was to gain access to educators who work in public schools and who maintain a working relationship with school staff and administration. The Bright Futures program was ideal for this research study as it provides a lower stakes environment for the participants, giving staff more opportunities to be free of consequences and display growth and individual vulnerability. More specifically, the organizational culture at Bright Futures is one that celebrates autonomy and individuality within one's individual learning environment. The organization provides opportunities for professional learning that reinforce the importance of reflection and social and emotional learning for staff and for the children and families they serve. The organization focuses on the whole student, including social and emotional learning and community engagement. The EMU Bright Futures (n.d.) program model celebrates collaboration with people in the community, as they are viewed as resources and mentors for the children in the program, supporting their interests.

Participants were given written information about the practices of reflective supervision and reflective free writing. This step was followed by an informed consent, with permission to record reflective supervision sessions and use the 10-minute free writes that they completed at each session. The participants' names and any identifiable information were changed to ensure anonymity.

Data Collection

Data was collected over a 10-week period. Reflective supervision sessions were held weekly over that 10-week period for each of the five participants. These sessions were held on a virtual platform because COVID-19 restrictions were still being enforced by the university's institutional review board. The participants were given a choice of time for the weekly zoom meetings. Recordings and writings were stored in a locked computer within a locked location, with signed consent forms also remaining in locked storage. The data was collected through four methods: (a) in-depth discussions between myself and the supervisees, which were recorded and transcribed; (b) my personal field notes, i.e., reflective supervision notes and observation notes; (c) reflective supervision notes from the supervisees; and (d) 10-minute free writes from the supervisees, based on writing prompts that I provided using the foundational reflective practice pillars.

In-depth discussions were the main source of data in the study. Narration has long been the primary way that humans have made sense of their experiences (Seidman, 2019). Because this study utilized the grounded theory study design, these in-depth discussions took place consecutively, with the goal and expectation that the sessions and reflections would build off of one another to create a more in-depth look into the relationship between teaching and reflection. These discussions were completely controlled by the participant and lacked a formal structure. Each participant was able to bring their week as a whole to the discussion: their thoughts, experiences, emotions, and interactions. This directed the focus of the session toward what the participant was looking to explore or reflect on. My purpose was to listen, validate, observe, document, and ask questions that facilitated more meaningful reflection. The discussions and reflective supervision sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Detailed accounts of the discussions from the reflective supervision sessions were used as data to enhance and create rich descriptions of the participants' reflective processes. Body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, subtle changes in tone of voice, and even periods of silence were closely observed, as they can communicate expressions of emotion. Unconscious nonverbal behaviors such as fidgeting, tapping, crossing arms, or even physical positioning were also noted. Such behaviors not only provide a richer account of the discussion but also help shape an understanding of the participants' process of reflection. The participants were also given the opportunity to be observed while teaching and interacting with students, though this step was entirely voluntary and only conducted if and when the participant asked for the observation. I explained to the participants that the purpose of observation was to provide input about what was witnessed and to facilitate more reflection. This additional step in the research process was not an exercise in feedback methods or teaching practice suggestions.

Memos are a critical part of the grounded theory method. Saldana (2020) has explained that to memo with qualitative data is to reflect in writing on the nuances, meanings, and transfer of coded and categorized data as well as the researcher's analytic processes (p. 888). In the earliest stages, memos may be created in the form of fairly unstructured notes and comments about the developing research, focusing on the researcher's experiences in using the method, as well as on the early results themselves (Bryant, 2020). This form of writing can be considered a "think piece" for deep, meaningful reflection, where a complete understanding can begin to emerge. Continual writing of theoretical memos is a crucial component of the formulation and refinement of theory for reflective studies (Jeon, 2004). A field journal was incorporated as it facilitated a deductive reasoning process and allowed for selection of personal interpretations and expressions. A field journal allows the researcher to analyze the data in a more meaningful way

because it provides immediate opportunities to engage in thinking, before, during, and after gathering data, all in one place (Kathpalia & Heah, 2008).

A common practice in reflective supervision is notetaking by both the supervisor and the practitioner. This practice allows for the concepts, context, and content of the sessions to carry over in the reflective supervision practice. As Tracy (2019) has explained, “Fieldnotes serve to consciously and coherently narrate, synthesize, and interpret practices and actions in the field, offering creative depictions of the data collected. The fieldnote writing process is methodological and systematic, yet also playful and inventive” (p. 137). Thus, a journal was provided to each participant at the beginning of the supervisory relationship. No rules or suggestions were made about how notes could or should be taken or used. These journals were later analyzed for evidence of reflection using deep analytic frameworks, including association, integration, validation, and appropriation (Dempsey et al., 2009). The participants were able to choose whether to share the content of these journals with me, and whether it would be used as study data. Intermittently throughout the 10 weeks of meetings, the participants were asked to collectively engage in a parallel 10-minute free write at the conclusion of our session. The goal was to explore unique perspectives and gain an understanding of differences in interpretation and meaning making.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data began with horizontalization. Horizontalization is the process of laying out all of the data for examination and treating the data as having equal weight (Leavy, 2020). Mustakas (1994) has explained horizontalization as the interweaving of personal, conscious experiences and phenomena. In this process of explicating the phenomena, qualities

are recognized and described; every perception is granted equal value; nonrepetitive constituents of experience are linked thematically; and a full description is derived (Mustakas, 1994, p. 96).

Because reflective supervision creates opportunities to explore and explain perceptions through multiple conversations, the data brought to light the revisiting of content, contexts, and routines in thinking and behaviors. The data collection process lent itself to the open acceptance of expression and granted permission to create different ways of expressing perspectives and thoughts. The vulnerability that reflective supervision encourages inspired many forms of expression: literary, verbal, emotional, visual, and relational. These many forms of data were seen as equal contributors to the story and journey the participants experienced through consistent guided reflective supervision practice. Interpretation and analysis of the data utilized two macro strategies—reasoning and checking assumptions and expectations—allowing for the data to be viewed on a more macro level. Saldana (2020) has explained that reasoning with the data means thinking in ways that lead to summative findings, casual probabilities, and evaluative conclusions (p. 887). Checking assumptions and expectations means emphasizing the researcher’s positionality when interpreting the data (Saldana, 2020).

Lichtman (2006) identified the two key elements of grounded theory data analysis as theoretical sampling and saturation, and she outlined specific approaches to coding study data. Theoretical sampling is a research process that expects researchers to engage in data collection and analysis simultaneously, which helps direct the researcher toward what data to gather. Charmaz (2014) has described theoretical saturation as “the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory” (p. 344). Exploring, evaluating, and analyzing data as it is collected allows the researcher to distinguish between new insights and the reinforcement of

preexisting findings and conclusions. Saturation is reached when responses given in later stages of the interviewing process yield confirmation of earlier findings, but nothing significant or new (Bryant, 2020). In grounded theory method, it is expected that the researcher will create connections in meanings and explore themes. Through this practice, I was able to find repeated language, meanings, and perspectives and thereby recognize when saturation had been achieved.

Coding in grounded theory data analysis begins with open coding, which typically occurs at the beginning of the data collection process. This is where the researcher can identify repeated and therefore relevant categories. Bryant (2017) has described these codes as emergent, appearing as the researcher studies his or her data (p. 120). As the study develops to a more advanced stage, the coding process proceeds to axial coding; this is where the “core category,” or central category that correlates all other categories in the theory, is identified and related to other categories (Lichtman, 2006, p. 66). These codes become foundational by relating to the understandings and theories that are beginning to be constructed. The final approach, selective coding, is utilized when the core category is being reinforced in data collection. In other words, once categories reoccur and correlate to the core of the theory, you have entered selective coding. Coding is a process whereby researchers enter into a dialogue with their data—that is, it is a relationship that depends on both the nature of the data and the experience and background of the researcher (Bryant, 2020).

Reflexivity

The consideration and examination of the reflexivity of the researcher is critical when conducting qualitative research. Madison (2005) has stated that reflexivity involves “the politics of positionality” and acknowledging our power, privileges, and biases throughout the research process (p. 6). Reflexivity refers to one’s attention to how power and biases come to bear during

all phases of research (Leavy, 2020). A critical aspect of the grounded theory method is that the researcher must maintain theoretical sensitivity at every step of the research process (Jeon, 2004). When using grounded theory method (as with other research methods), the study often begins from the researcher's own preconceptions about what a particular experience means and entails. Charmaz (2014) proposed that preconceptions that emanate from class, race, gender, age, embodiment, culture, and historical era may permeate an analysis without the researcher's awareness. As long as these standpoints remain outside of the frame of analysis, they will remain fundamentally unproblematic (Charmaz, 2014). In other words, being aware of these standpoints, learning how to recognize them in oneself, and continually filtering them out of the analysis and discussion are critical to the researcher's reflexivity.

In the discipline of social work, reflexivity is introduced, guided, and taught as a part of our consistent work with families and individual clients in the community. This concept of reflexivity, first introduced formally in college-level social work instruction, is foundational to the identity and practice of a social worker and is a critical part of the National Social Workers Association's Code of Ethics. Reflexivity is an individual's carefully considered response to an immediate context; it involves making choices for further direction to ensure consistent evaluation of positions of power and unconscious bias. This concept is concerned with individuals' ability to process information and create knowledge to guide life choices and has implications for both the role of social workers and the relationships between social workers and clients (D'Cruz et al., 2007). In the field of social work, reflexivity is reinforced and consistently evaluated within professional development, continuing education, and reflective supervision sessions once one is practicing with clients. Having evaluated my individual reflexivity for many years and in many contexts of clinical practice, I have acquired the skills to bring the concept of

reflexivity to reflective supervision sessions within supervising practices. This consistent, practiced approach allows individuals to create awareness, improve critical reflection, and identify and continue to work on their individual reflexivity.

Positionality

Positionality and reflection about one's social position, power, and identity in the research study are a critical part of qualitative research and grounded theory method. According to Hall (1990), "You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all" (p. 18). The process of reflecting on positionality creates an awareness of the shared space shaped by both researcher and participants (England, 1994). Positionality refers to the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization, or the participant group (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Research continues as the researcher reflects on the development of an idea, data collection, findings, and implications. Reflections may also take shape in other ways (Bourke, 2014). Consideration of and consistent reflection on the positionality of the researcher ensures that the totality of perspectives and perceptions will be explored.

My experiences, both personal and professional, correlate with the study in ways that continue to feed my curiosity and that underscore the deficits I have witnessed in educational environments. I am positioned as a White female who identifies as a member of the LGBTQ community. I have lived in the southern part of the United States and in the Midwest, where I currently reside and work. Prior to conducting this reflective research, I worked both in education and social work. I have worked as a clinical social worker for the last seven years, both in agency settings and private practice, and before that I was an educator and administrator in a private Montessori school in southeast Michigan for 12 years. I am strongly aware of the

privileges I possess, such as my socioeconomic level, professional career as a clinical social worker, and current level of education.

These positions in terms of privilege, power, and opportunity are not afforded to many individuals. The possibility (or probability) that the participants of this study did not have the same privileges was a call for consistent and critical self-reflection. Thus, the following four questions served as my positionality guideposts throughout the study: (a) What role does my positionality as a White woman play in the gathering, coding, and interpreting of data? (b) How does my educational level and career as a licensed clinical social worker impact my interactions with and views of the participants? (c) How does my positionality impact the different reflective spaces and relationships within the study? (d) How does my personal educational history impact my worldview and influence my interactions within reflective supervision with the participants? These questions supported my intentional and proactive reflection on the role my positionality played within the study.

My inability to find safety with educators and continual lack of educational support in learning environments in my K-12 education, as well as my ability to find meaningful and empowering relationships in higher education, brought me to this research project. I pursued an “alternative” educational career that included not attending traditional school consistently after seventh grade, obtaining a GED, and making three unsuccessful attempts at community colleges and universities. Some educators I encountered expressed fatigue or annoyance with my desire to keep learning and going to school, while others supported my ambitions. These relationships with educators, both toxic and empowering, have positioned me with a deep desire to understand how educators view interactions with students and their roles in students’ lives.

This project was also developed as a result of the positive and meaningful relationships with some educators and supervisors in my professional career who taught me how to use reflection to challenge my meaning making in relation to “intelligence” and “academic success” and discover my abilities to teach, advocate, and gain two secondary degrees from a university. Throughout my professional journey as a social worker and the reflective practices that have been incorporated in my career, reflection has allowed me to understand how my meaning-making processes and experiences impact my interactions with others, including students and clients. The correlation of a safe reflective space to the professional learning process led me to investigate how the practice of reflective supervision can impact educators’ relationships with students who have yet to experience a safe and validating space, which is needed to obtain transformational learning.

Chapter Four: Findings and Reflective Journeys

Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself.

–John Dewey

Findings: Their Five Stories

There were five participants in this reflective study. Their stories are presented in the order in which each of the participants joined the study. It is important to note that each of these five reflective narratives stands alone and is independent from the others. Just as in reflective supervision, each reflector is the teller of their own story and meanings. It is because of this that I made the choice to present the stories independently. Each story holds equal weight and importance. It was at the researcher's discretion to select a particular session that highlighted the power and impact that reflective supervision had on their transformational learning and professional growth. Each was selected with attention to the participant's reflection style and reflection journey within the 10-week study.

Participant One: Roses and Thorns of Meaning Making

Participant Profile

The first participant in the study went by the name of Margo. She identified as a heterosexual, Caucasian woman and was in her early 40s. She had been in the field of education for 15 years at the time of the study. She graduated from a university with a degree in secondary education in 2007 and went directly into the classroom, teaching at a Catholic charter school in the state of Washington. In her initial years of classroom teaching, she reported a strong need for shared leadership in the form of mentorships. She was trained in a pilot peer instructional coaching program that focused on equity and student success within her school district. The

program gave Margo training and practice with frequent and non-evaluative observations and feedback sessions focusing on instructional goals. She then completed her master's degree in curriculum development and educational instructional coaching from a university in Washington state. Three years ago, she moved to Southeast Michigan to be closer to extended family. At this point, she began working at Bright Futures in a high school setting. During the 10-week data collection period for this study, Margo made the decision to resign from her position at Bright Futures to pursue a position where she could better utilize her training and passion for instructional coaching of educators.

Summary of Reflective Journey

Margo came into the study with extensive reflection experience. Not only was her graduate degree in curriculum coaching, which supports the tenets of reflective practice, but she was also enrolled in the Brené Brown Dare to Lead 6-week course while participating in this study. This professional learning experience and reflective mindset allowed for a deep meaning-making process and self-awareness during the data collection sessions with Margo. She reported that reflective practice is consistent and intentional with both staff and students in her classroom environment. She engaged in daily reflective activities on an individual, small group, and large group basis at her site.

One of the most notable topics during our sessions was the formulation and understanding of vocabulary words in education, such as “boss,” “leadership,” and “strength.” After talking through how those meanings have developed, Margo reported that parts of her personality did not fit into those definitions. The contradictions between educational definitions and core beliefs about herself were a point of emotional discomfort for her when attempting to understand her areas of growth.

Margo reported engaging in personal and independent reflection, outside of work and this study, a practice that is not typical within reflective sessions with educators. Unlike other participants, Margo was spending time independently thinking, reflecting, and understanding herself. As a result, the data gathered from this participant yielded increased insight on the power of consistent and intentional reflective practice. This observation was highlighted when Margo spoke about a book she was reading about the inner critic and how to advocate for one's own personal growth. She reported needing to keep certain ideas constantly within her frame of thinking in order for them to be useful. The example highlighted below from Margo's journey with reflective supervision involved reflection on and analysis of a specific emotional response to a reflective exercise in her summer program.

Reflection as a Tool: Building Awareness and Curiosity and Developing a Plan

The largest and most notable difference between reflective supervision and other forms of one-on-one professional development in education (such as mentoring or coaching) is the utilization of historical context clarification and personal historical perspective taking. These tools were utilized with each participant within the reflective practice to gain a greater understanding of personal meanings in the learning environment.

The usefulness and value of historical context clarification can be seen in Margo's reflection on her professional relationships. As part of the regular reflective practice that she had already established in her classroom, Margo proposed a simple reflection activity with her entire summer staff of six: the well-known and familiar reflection activity "Roses and Thorns." Within this protocol, each member of the staff identifies one "rose"—a positive event or interaction that happened that day—and one "thorn"—a negative event or interaction. Margo expressed being "triggered" emotionally by another staff member's response. She experienced a negative

emotional response and thoughts of self-doubt because the fellow staff member consistently reported that they did not have any thorns.

Margo: Yeah and not even [if] you asked but a staff member triggered me again today, because we were like doing a reflection at the end and we're doing rose and thorns, reflection, and he was like no thorns, nothing today. Today was a shit storm, what are you talking about no thorns?

During the reflective session, Margo reported feelings of frustration and self-doubt because she, unlike the other staff member, had many thorns. She reflected on what it means to be a leader and how a leader should be viewing experiences. Margo shared, “It makes me feel like, well, why do I have so many thorns if I’m supposed to be in charge?”

Margo described a strain on the professional relationship and expressed several times that she was “trying to get to the bottom of why.” She expressed that this staff member was acting out of character by not following through with requests, not taking ownership of tasks, and limiting communication. She shared that other staff members were aware that this person was not following through with expectations because responsibilities were falling on them instead. Margo also shared that she had witnessed some facial expressions and body language that signaled frustration from the other staff as well.

Margo: Definitely tension there today between us; he was late today too. I think he’s super comfy right now. I think he knows like there’s no other people that know that building better than he does, so I think it’s like so comfortable for him.

Margo then reflected on the history of their professional relationship, describing their changing and evolving relationship roles based on their respective strengths and experiences.

Margo: I think at the beginning, I leaned on the staff member a lot because he had the institutional knowledge. And then halfway through I said to myself, he doesn't know all the right things. And then, by the end I was like, I actually disagree with most of the things.

This awareness of the progression of their relationship was critical to understanding the other staff person's perspective. He was often viewed as a "seasoned veteran," knowledgeable because he had been in the building both as a student and staff. He was an alum of Bright Futures and was now serving as Margo's assistant. This staff member was consistently placed in leadership roles; however, though he had institutional knowledge, Margo felt that his experience and context were limited by his singular viewpoint.

Reflecting on the roses and thorns activity provided Margo with an opportunity to think about the role of a leader. When I prompted her with a question about meaning and how it is created, the conversation moved to establishing how the meaning making of leadership was historically developed. She communicated that her way of expressing leadership was to not show any vulnerability and to internalize her thorns. Margo stated, "I'm not being a good leader because I'm thinking I need to, like, internalize my thorns." She engaged in perspective taking of the other staff member's positionality at the school, paying attention to his history in the school building and the shift in roles and relationships. This perspective taking displayed Margo's awareness of how personal experiences can impact the individual's view of a particular situation or relationship; she also expressed curiosity about how different life experiences and perspectives can lead to vocabulary being defined differently. Reflecting on the other staff member, Margo shared, "We see things very differently when it comes to, like, what's not working."

Margo clearly expressed that she had a desire to engage in a conversation with the staff member, stating she wanted to not only gain the staff member's perspective on the reflection activity but also share her own.

Margo: It would be helpful for us to talk about it because I like learning about other people's perspectives and maybe you want to hear my perspective on the reflection activity.

However, Margo expressed a lack of trust in herself to initiate a conversation about the roses and thorns activity with the staff member due to the strain in communication within their professional relationship. She also expressed a desire not to bring her emotional responses into the conversation.

Margo: I think the fear that I'm not going to regulate my emotions, based on what they do, makes me feel like I'm not mature or something like that, and I'll break trust in the relationship.

Despite these hesitations, Margo expressed her feelings about the staff member with an empathetic and caring tone in her voice.

Margo: It was an interesting interaction, but listen, I adore this person, and so I don't want to sound like it's a venting session

She continued to stress that her priority was to build a relationship wherein care, guidance, and shared leadership were present and reinforced with mutual reflection. While verbally confirming her positive feelings about the professional relationship, Margo reminded herself that she had ownership of her emotional regulation and responses. Margo then asked, "So, how do I remember that this is my lens?" Through reflection, Margo was able to become aware of her physical reaction to emotions, identifying the initial "rumblings" of emotional responses. By

doing so, Margo was able to slow down historical context making experiences and observe her somatic sensations and physical responses. After building this awareness and defining the emotional line where she would be able to stay in a learning mindset, Margo then chose a plan for the conversation with the staff member. Creating a script to initiate, maintain, and transition in and out of the conversation lowered Margo's apprehension and opened a dialogue based on curiosity and reciprocal learning.

Margo began the next reflective supervision session reporting that she had had a conversation about the "thorns" with the staff member. Margo and the staff member had needed to run an errand for Bright Futures. The following conversation occurred between Margo and the staff member during that errand.

Margo: *[On the errand] Can you tell me what you hear when you hear thorn? What do you think about, because this is the second day in a row when you said you didn't have a thorn? And I'm just curious: it's not been easy. These past few days, right?*

Staff Member: *I think it's like the worst thing.*

Margo: *That makes sense.*

Staff Member: *I just don't ever think like there's a worst thing.*

Margo: *Well, yesterday you didn't have a thorn either.*

Staff Member: *Yes, I did.*

Margo: *What was it—can you remind me?*

Staff Member: *It was that he feels out of the [communication] loop.*

Margo: *Okay, so tell me about it, also then we did evaluation and so in my head feedback is feedback.*

Margo reported that she entered the conversation from a place of curiosity, with the goal of understanding the staff member's perspective while also sharing her own meaning. She referenced and reported on her plan to create an intentional opportunity to revisit the initial reflection using reflective practice. She reported a mutual sharing of the meaning of "thorns," during which she displayed active listening and personal vulnerability.

Margo reported that in the weeks after the meaning of "thorns" was established, the staff engaged in a reflective activity. This time, the staff member was able to use their mutual understanding of "thorn" to approach reflection from a learning perspective instead of feeling frustrated with the activity. Margo also reported that their relationship improved after the conversation. She began to see more engagement in the team from other staff members, too, which increased ownership and accountability. The staff member was organically initiating more conversations with all of the staff as well as with students. As a result, Margo began to understand how personal emotions had been interfering with the staff and "showing up" in reflections that were meant to build connection and improve communication among the educators. Once both Margo and the staff member were practicing self-awareness, identifying emotions through vulnerability, and engaging in mutual meaning making, multiple areas of their relationship were impacted. There was an overall improvement in ownership over responsibilities and, seemingly most impactful, in communication and relationships with students.

Throughout the 10-week data collection period, this "roses and thorns" experience entered the reflection conversation often as an area of growth. It was used as a tool to explore three specific areas: historical context and meaning making, the relationship between Margo and the staff member, and emotional responses while teaching. This experience illuminates how one

reflective conversation or session can be used for reflection moving forward. Creating a reflection experience together creates an opportunity for revisiting in order to provide mutual meaning contexts for future reflection.

Researcher Role and Positionality

Attending to the emotional dysregulation that Margo experienced during the reflective activity with her staff, I asked for more details of the situation. Coming from a place of validation, I displayed active listening in order to gain information about the interaction, the relationship, the emotions that were felt, and the source of those emotions. After engaging in active listening and validation, I determined it was important to ask Margo how she viewed support with this situation. I wanted to follow the reflector's lead and not automatically go into problem-solver mode without Margo's consent. I therefore inquired, "Is there something I can do to support that? Do you want to have a conversation with him?" I then posed questions about the perspective of the staff member on the other end of the interaction. Bringing curiosity into the reflective session introduced the question of meaning making.

Researcher: I think that it would be okay if you have a conversation with them or a dialogue to say when you say no thorns it immediately makes me feel this. Then asking him of how do you decide between a rose and a thorn? If you engage in a dialogue asking how you define thorns, can you tell me how you define a thorn because if you're not having any, that's okay and I don't want you to think that it's not, however, I'm wondering if we're defining it differently, because I have a lot.

The question, “What is a thorn to you?” gave the reflector the opportunity to see how she was interpreting and understanding the reflection activity. I again actively listened and then shared how I define a “thorn.”

Margo: A rose is a good way to put something that you put in place and it kind of is like going according to plan or it's something that's working right.

I guess like it helps me prevent... forecasting yeah, are forecasting more problems, you know.

Researcher: Roses grow, correct? So you put effort into a result that's beautiful and it smells good, right?

Margo: And a [rose] bud is like something that's curious, not good or bad. I'm just wondering what's going to happen there and a thorn could be like a sticking point, like something that I might want to go back and look at again.

Researcher: Wearing gloves when you get poked with the thorn, you want to be able to say, oh, there's a door in there and do be able to be prepared to manage whatever you need supplies accommodations to be able to not continually get hurt.

By reflecting on personal meaning making and providing examples of my past experiences with “thorns,” I displayed vulnerability and reciprocity, which contributed to my relationship building with Margo. Once vulnerability and trust had been built, I posed a question: “How do you think the other staff member defines a thorn?” This question allowed Margo to follow the pattern of our conversation in an attempt to walk through the development of the other staff person’s meaning. Her thinking about that staff member’s possible meaning-making process was based on

the existing relationship and the information she had available. I then shared a statement that sought to bring curiosity into the conversation.

Researcher: *It makes me wonder if asking him how he defines thorns could be helpful in understanding each other and finding mutual meaning.*

I asked Margo if she would want to revisit the conversation one-on-one with the staff member: “Would you be willing to ask him how he defines the roses and thorns?” The next step was for us to brainstorm how particular personal experiences can establish or alter the meaning of a thorn.

Margo reported apprehension about her ability to have the conversation while keeping her emotions regulated, which would be necessary in order to remain in a learning space for both herself and the other staff member. I validated these feelings. I then explained strategies for recognizing personal emotional responses in order to build awareness of her stress responses. Such strategies create an opportunity to identify and acknowledge when a conversation is slipping away from curiosity and toward responding to emotions, signaling a loss of safety and vulnerability. After understanding Margo’s personal emotional response, I talked about how to validate and pause the conversation, using statements like, “I am glad that we took a moment to start exploring this; I would like to give it some more thinking time” or “Thank you for sharing. Can we revisit it again in a few days?” Once she had the opportunity to build self-awareness of her emotional responses, identify strategies and vocabulary for staying in a learning mindset, and acquire the tools to respectfully pause the conversation if needed, Margo reported lower apprehension at the thought of future conversations with the staff member.

Depending on the mindset of both the reflector and the supervisor, repeating the plan of action for the reflector near the end of the reflective session can be a useful tool in reflective

supervision. This repetition allowed Margo to refocus on the core objective of the conversation, as well as the objectives of reflection as a whole.

Researcher: *Vulnerable enough to where you feel like you're still in control.*

Margo: *Yeah. Vulnerable enough but still be in control.*

Researcher: *That's tricky.*

Margo: *Yeah that's why we are here.*

I also revisited the conversation about how core beliefs are formulated from historical experiences or contexts, stating that it can impact the way in which we “show up” and interact with both students and staff. This conversation initially began when Margo was speaking about the self-doubt created by having so many thorns. She expressed hesitation to bring up thorns because she felt like a leader would just “take it.” Deeper into the session, Margo brought up how her beliefs about what it means to be a leader and an educator were being challenged by her vulnerability; this required her to build a greater awareness of her emotional responses.

Researcher: *I'm wondering if there's a belief that was formulated a long time ago. For example, when you are the disseminator of knowledge, or when you are in charge, when you are the leader in education, there is an expectation that at all times that person is observing you for the quintessential response—that even in that moment, you don't have the capacity to stabilize your emotions because emotions equal bad and not in control. And having no emotions means that you're perfect and you're in control, right? When in actuality, what we're trying to do is to engage in this experience with more emotions and be more vulnerable.*

Margo: *Yeah, so I'm modeling the exact opposite.*

Researcher: *Based off of fear.*

Margo: *Yes, but also to model making mistakes, to model that moment when you don't have the answers—especially when it's about emotions—is super valuable.*

Reflecting on this core belief allowed Margo to understand the conflict between her historical understanding of educational leaders and her present knowledge of that role based on graduate-level coursework in educational leadership. This conflict was creating the emotional response that was impacting her self-concept as an educator and the professional relationships with her staff members.

Next, I presented a mezzo-level intervention: I suggested that Margo request a clarification of meaning during a reflection and feedback session with all the staff in the room.

Researcher: *I think what you could do is talk about, maybe the next time that you are all meeting together as a team, is to talk about the importance of feedback with one another, and what that does.*

I also warned about the impact of using emotion in communication, especially in reflection.

Researcher: *Giving people feedback about their behavior with emotions or tones only holds your meaning. It doesn't hold the other person's meaning. A lot of educators do this, where they try to embarrass students for not getting their homework done. That might work for a small subset of the class, whoever has that same meaning that not getting homework done is embarrassing, but the other students are going to be like you're my enemy because you just embarrassed me in front of my peers.*

This highlighted why the reflection activity “roses and thorns” was so important to do as a group. We are continually learning about each other's meanings and assessing how others might be noticing the same thorn, or how one thorn could be another's rose. Reflecting as a group gives

the opportunity to understand others' perspectives and create a collaborative form of feedback and support through mutual meaning making and historical perspective taking.

Margo: You might be thinking your thorn is the reason that it is happening and this person has the same thorn but for their own reason, but then we can compare notes.

I shared with Margo the typical impact when one person in the group is not being vulnerable or participating in meaningful reflection.

Researcher: Every one of the staff that is doing meaningful reflection is going to immediately take a step back emotionally, but they're still going to be cool, right? And they're still going to reflect but from a guarded stance.

Margo experienced this typical reaction when talking about roses and thorns the following week at her site.

Margo: We did the reflection activity again. And again, he said, I don't have any thorns, moving on.

Researcher: What was your emotional reaction this time after we had talked about it? Was it different at all?

Margo: No. It was like, okay, so this is a conversation I should probably have because a couple other people said no thorns as well.

This displayed how a breakdown in trust and vulnerability with just one member of the staff can negatively impact the overall usefulness of reflection activities. It is important to develop awareness of our emotional responses and how they enter the group dynamic and ultimately impact relationships with staff, which inevitably impacts relationships with students as well. This chain reaction reinforces the idea that reflective supervision is a macro practice, even though it is

facilitated through a personal relationship. Those who practice historical meaning making and perspective taking can utilize skills that improve relationships in the classroom with both the students and the staff.

Participant Two: Finding Voice and Building Awareness as a Reflective Leader

Participant Profile

The second participant in the study went by the name of Skylar. She identified as a heterosexual, African American woman and was in her mid-20s. She had been in the field of social work for four years at the time of this study. She graduated from a university in southeast Michigan with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in social work. Skylar then went straight into her master's level studies, obtaining a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a different university in Southeast Michigan. She had been working in out-of-school time enrichment and academic spaces since graduating with her bachelor's degree and had worked for Bright Futures in different roles and capacities. At the time of the study, she was finishing up her first school year as a site coordinator. She continues to work at Bright Futures in a middle school setting, where she works with students in grades 6 through 8. Along with her role as a site coordinator, Skylar worked part-time at a court-ordered substance abuse program, where she engaged in clinical assessments and individual therapy. Skylar was familiar with the format and professional practice of reflective supervision, as she had engaged in the practice weekly throughout her internship placement as part of her MSW internship. She was a self-reported reflector, and because of her reflective supervision experience, she understood and had buy-in to its benefits and positive impact on her work with clients and families.

Summary of Reflective Journey

For Skylar, the major themes of her reflective journey were being new and getting to know her professional identity as a social worker in an educational environment. She reflected often on how she was contextualizing her work at Bright Futures through social work understandings and theories. With a solid understanding of how reflective practice could be utilized, she came into the sessions with pre-selected topics and readily identified emotional responses that brought her discomfort in her professional space. During her sessions, Skylar used reflection to access an understanding of systems, including family systems, community systems, and the organizational system of Bright Futures. She arrived at these understandings through historical meaning making and perspective taking and by contextualizing the knowledge from her formal secondary education, which helped her work with parents in challenging interactions and improve leadership of her staff amidst breakdowns in communication. Overall, Skylar's reflective journey in the study could be summarized as the finding, refining, and mastering of her voice as a leader in an educational environment. By making connections between previous knowledge and current situations and relationships, and by creating proactive plans to improve her practice, she grew professionally, which in turn supported growth in her staff and students.

Using Reflection as a Tool: Building Awareness and Curiosity and Developing a Plan

In a previous reflective session, Skylar had shared a particularly challenging relationship that she was having with a staff member. She reported feeling powerless to change the relationship for multiple reasons. The staff person was actively crossing professional and personal boundaries with the students, "playing around" with the students instead of modeling appropriate behavior, reinforcing site expectations, or providing meaningful learning opportunities. Skylar's feelings of powerlessness stemmed from the fact that this staff member

had worked in a different Bright Futures classroom prior to coming to her site. Skylar determined that there were patterns of behavior that were common for this staff member and that had been accepted by other educators before her. There was also the knowledge that the staff member would not be returning after the summer program, so Skylar wondered if confronting the issues would even be valuable with such a limited window. With only 3 weeks left, she was concerned that any confrontation would only cause more challenges for her and the students. Discussing this topic in the reflective sessions resulted in more venting and the sharing of other examples that were eliciting the same emotional response from Skylar.

In the following reflective session, Skylar reported that she had had a meeting with her staff to review expectations, using reflective strategies to make sure everyone was doing their part. She also included that she had talked with all of the staff about being a strong leader and setting boundaries with students. She laid out the three reflective questions that she had prompted her staff to respond to prior to the meeting.

Skylar: I had them write down a glow and a grow moment, a challenge and reward that they had so far for the summer. I also had them identify something that they felt strong at and something that they felt they were not strong at.

To her surprise, the staff member that she was having a challenge with stepped up before she had a chance to say anything.

Skylar: It was kind of like he felt like let me tell you what I know and I need to do better before you have a chance to tell me what I need to improve on. I didn't even need to give him feedback on what I would think would help him grow.

She reported feeling almost shocked that he was aware that some of the things he was doing might not be the best when working with students. She reported that he spoke about everything

that she felt he needed to improve upon, including boundaries with students and appropriate leadership roles. The staff member stated that he knew he needed to do better in terms of playing around with the kids and stepping up more. Skylar expressed surprise: “He said everything that I had concerns about and he knew! It was crazy to me that he knew.” After processing the fact that he was aware of best practices, she shared that engaging in reflection had helped her have this difficult conversation.

Skylar reported a continued plan to keep this reflective practice going by having the staff hold onto their glow and grow moments so they could be discussed at the end of the summer program. That way, this particular staff member would be able to look back and think, “Hey, I was able to do this and grow!” Re-centering on her role as a leader, she focused on the things she could do to be more supportive of her staff. She expressed a reinforced desire to help them achieve their goals and overcome challenges, which provided a refocusing on her personal perspective and emotional responses toward this particular staff member. She shared with her staff some resources that Bright Futures provides to support staff grappling with student behavior, and all of the staff expressed interest in continuing their professional learning.

This conversation illuminated a common barrier to providing staff training: finding a time when part-time staff can be trained. It can be challenging to create opportunities for the group because part-time staff often have other obligations, such as school and other employment. Even with this identified barrier, Skylar expressed a renewed energy and motivation to support the summer staff’s professional learning and development. She reported seeing value in engaging in reflection as a form of improving perspective taking and tackling tough conversations, even if this particular staff member was not going to be at Bright Futures for a long period of time.

Reflection allowed that staff member to see that there were opportunities to learn and make things better each day.

Skylar and this staff member came up with a list of things he could do to really begin stepping up. She reported that this list was initiated by the staff member in response to her sharing information about general expectations at the site. By providing a list of job expectations and initiating a reflective dialogue, rather than a punitive one-sided directive conversation, Skylar paved the way for the staff member to set his own goals to support and equally contribute to the students in a more appropriate way. Skylar reflected on how she could utilize this reflection activity as a launchpad to revisit the conversation about professional growth, stating, “Yes, I can pull from those last reflections and keep talking with him.” Finally, Skylar reflected on how this same strategy and example could be useful when having conversations with students about their behavior in the learning environment. She expressed that she was motivated to use this strategy during tough student conversations. By doing so, she would help students take the perspectives of other students and of the learning community as a whole.

During the next reflective session, Skylar reported the value of this initial reflective conversation. She stated that it had opened the door to open dialogue and honest feedback and had also created more trust within her professional relationships. She reported feeling more at ease in casual conversations with the staff as well. Her emotional responses were different when she observed a situation where feedback was needed. She noticed through her own continued reflection that she had greater feelings of care and support, rather than feelings of frustration and helplessness, when interacting with staff and students.

Researcher Role and Positionality

When Skylar brought this professional relationship to the reflective session, my main function was to engage in active listening and to validate her perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate interactions with youth. We both shared examples of historical meaning making related to drawing boundaries in student relationships. As I tried to assess whether Skylar was ready to move to reflective action based on how she was feeling, she shared a sense of powerlessness and helplessness. She made statements like, “I am just over it” or “I am just going to ride it out.” These statements communicated that she was not yet able or ready to create a plan of action. There could have been a variety of reasons for this; for example, she may not have felt as though there was a clear enough entry point or a solid enough relationship with the staff member to create meaningful change. It also could have meant that historically, when working with individuals who did not have the ability to draw boundaries, Skylar had extended effort with no success. It is important for the supervisor to bring curiosity into the conversation and then assess if the reflector is able to move beyond simply sharing their personal perspective and receiving validation. Within reflective supervision, this assessment is typically done by expressing curiosity about someone else’s perspective to see if the reflector moves into the mindset of curiosity as well.

I was notably and pleasantly surprised when Skylar shared that she had engaged in a reflective practice in a staff meeting. Skylar felt as though she could not support the summer staff sufficiently in the time allowed, but she had been struggling to turn this awareness into action. I focused once again on active listening and validation while she was sharing her experience of the meeting and reflecting on the emotional responses of her staff. Attending to

Skylar's positive emotional response to the staff member's self-awareness, I reflected back to her the positive effects of making this a group meeting.

Researcher: You handed it really well and really beautifully by making it a group conversation to ensure that you were taking care of all of the relationships that you have with the staff, so everyone has the chance to grow, not just the staff that needed more direct feedback and correction.

I identified and reflected on her staff's goal to grow professionally in the final weeks of the program. I also provided a general statement of curiosity to again assess her motivation to use this new perspective and reflective knowledge.

Researcher: So, we know that the desire is there [for improvement], but what we don't know yet is if the desire will meet the motivation in the program with students. So, what do we do with that now?

Skylar was ready to engage in reflecting for action. She shared how she was excited about setting up a more structured and intentional reflective practice for her staff. Her desire to keep this going into the fall semester was on full display as she brainstormed how to facilitate and reinforce consistent and successful reflective practice.

Attending to Skylar's emotional response of excitement, I provided personal historical examples where tough conversations, when facilitated with reflection, had not only been able to change the situation, but had also proactively prevented the need for further tough conversations. I also brought curiosity back into the session by offering a plan or framework for continuing the staff's professional learning through reflection.

Researcher: With the limitations of timing for training and reflection, I wonder if coming from a place of curiosity and asking the staff when we are in real time and

working, how would you like me to give you feedback? For example, how do you want me to help you grow or maybe even how can I support you to help you with your identified goals for the summer?

I communicated to Skylar that this strategy would reassure her staff that they have control and autonomy over their own growth; it would reinforce trust in the relationship and cultivate voice and choice so the staff would feel empowered by feedback, rather than belittled by it. I shared that it is important for staff to feel there is continued learning in feedback. Identifying oneself as a tool or facilitator of that learning builds trust and vulnerability between the supervisor and the staff. In addition, it demonstrates how a leader can usefully mobilize information from past reflections, much like the model of reconnecting from reflective supervision. It provides opportunities to ask questions (for example, “What were you feeling or thinking today during club?”) so that staff can identify which parts of their day feel better than others and which behaviors produce those positive feelings, rather than just engaging when there are negative behaviors to identify and address. Skylar expressed a desire to connect the staff’s emotions to their growth in a professional context. I then provided a reflective restatement and validation of Skylar’s idea: “Creating a culture of curiosity and trying to figure out where the staff member is at when they are interacting with the kids is key to supporting professional growth.” Restating the idea and employing mutually understood vocabulary reinforced the learning for Skylar.

Participant Three: Identifying the Needs of Students in a New Context

Participant Profile

The third participant in the study went by the name of Alex. He identified as a heterosexual, Caucasian male and was in his mid-30s. At the time of the study, he had been in the field of education for 8 years. He graduated from a university in Southeast Michigan with a

degree in education and had worked at Bright Futures since obtaining his degree, focusing on out-of-school time for students. He was pursuing a graduate degree in education and curriculum development, with a focus on technology and media resources, from a university in southeast Michigan. At the time of the study, Alex was finishing up his sixth year as a site coordinator. His last year was at a new school with new administration. He continues to work at Bright Futures in an elementary school setting, where he works with second through fifth grade students. Alex was a self-reported developer of creative and relevant technology-driven opportunities and content for his students. He was completing a work-site internship, where he was developing a digital platform for his students to understand how to connect long-term interests and goals to community roles and continued learning.

Reflective Journey Summary

Alex came into the study with a strong understanding of the benefits of reflection, and he reported feeling a sense of excitement to learn from the practice of reflection. He did face a barrier due to a diagnosis of COVID-19 in the second week of the data collection period. This diagnosis created a 3 week break in his attendance. However, this break provided an opportunity for a greater understanding of how the pandemic has left educators feeling about their work. Alex utilized the reflective sessions to discuss topics such as the importance of developing a common language with the families that he serves, providing valid leadership to his staff (especially when he was unable to be present for programming), and learning how to meet the needs of his students. Alex's data gave a unique and very impactful view of how others reflect. Instead of following the reflective steps in sequential order (a sequence that is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five), he often reflected with a macro lens on larger systemic challenges and tended to jump to steps based on the order in which he needed the information.

Reflection as a Tool: Building Awareness and Curiosity and Developing a Plan

Alex began the session by sharing how it felt to return to his learning environment after the 3 week break. It is important to note that the summer program at Bright Futures is only 6 weeks long, and after the first week, Alex was unable to attend for 3 weeks due to complications from his COVID-19 diagnosis. This absence left Alex with only 2 weeks left with his staff and students. Alex reported that this absence only reinforced his feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which he had already been experiencing due to his perceived inability to “make things better” professionally. When revisiting the feelings of helplessness, he made a very honest and transparent joke.

Alex: I think what I am feeling is helplessness and hopelessness (laughing)—why not both? They go so well together, I guess (continuing to chuckle). I am sorry for laughing: it’s just that the last couple of years have been draining in every sense of the word.

When referencing a conversation that he had had with his supervisor, Alex shared the idea of creating a “reset” for the fall, since the summer program was almost over. While searching for clarification about what such a reset might mean, he determined that it was much like restarting your computer and making sure all systems are functioning at an optimal level. He shared that this reset was the only strategy that worked in his thinking, noting that the past two years had been disorienting.

Alex: Nothing surprised me about what happened during the pandemic. I was unpleasantly unsurprised. Nothing was shocking to me about what happened; I just do not know what to do with it.

He reported feeling stuck, without a clear plan or strategy of how to move to a more proactive and empowered place.

Alex reflected on the major changes to his learning environment over the last two years. The school district made the decision to close his school during the pandemic and redistribute the students and staff to other elementary schools in the district. This redistribution forced Alex to change schools, which he reported brought a range of both positive and negative emotions. The new school was double in size and well established, with strong parent and school connections and organizations. As a result, Alex had to learn how to “fit in” to an existing and extremely functional system.

Alex: Finding my place there has been tricky because I am not used to a lot going on and now, I am finding that, like, the PTO can support Bright Futures; however, I am still finding it challenging to create buy in and connection with the school day staff.

Alex also reported a sense of relief in changing schools because there were many things that bothered him emotionally about the previous administration and even the treatment of the students. He often felt he was placed in the role of advocate.

Alex: There were elements of how the school ran, down to the school climate, that were challenging for me because my views of learning and discipline were so different.

This difference created a lot of feelings that contributed to Alex’s sense of helplessness; the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic extended those feelings to his new school.

The conversation transitioned to focusing on what Alex could control in order to reduce the feeling of helplessness, which led to an identification of resources. Searching

for resources that could support his goals, Alex described the valuable support he had received from his supervisor, who came from a space of curiosity whenever they talked. He stated that it has always been a challenge to analyze his past actions without reflecting on the process of how he got to that action.

Alex: The reset thinking works well with how my supervisor works. He supports my professional growth by asking me to walk him through the process. He comes from a place of curiosity which I, s like, it's not why did you do this, but more of, like, what motivated you to devote time to this?

Alex expressed verbal gratitude for this supervisory relationship during the reflective session. He felt as though that relationship was critical to his professional growth because it provided a space for safety and learning from the supervisor, rather than being disciplined by him.

Shifting his focus to how he could gain access to more control within his learning environment, Alex organically shared about his identity as an educator and what kind of learning environment he wanted to provide. We each explored our meaning making and historical perspective of a term Alex introduced: “spinning.” Alex described spinning as a student focusing in and having excited emotions around something they have learned.

Alex: I want them to have the freedom to “spin,” which is engage the interest they have and ultimately figuring out what kids need out of the program.

He shared feelings of both frustration and hope about the progress of one particular student, noting that some strategies had been effective. However, there were still many challenges stemming from the student’s lack of awareness of the classroom community and his peers. Alex

reported many reflective conversations where he had been successful in getting the student to consider the perspectives of other students. However, the student still had challenges with proactively adopting other students' perspectives prior to communicating with behavior.

After talking through some interactions and conversations he had had with the student, Alex shifted to a macro perspective, reflecting on how this one student was positioned within the overall goals of the program.

Alex: This is just one example of a child in the program that has multiple needs out of the program, but the most foundational [needs] for the program are kindness, acceptance, and structure.

By keeping this macro lens, Alex gained an opportunity to create a framework for how he would like to support staff in their efforts to support students. He expressed a desire to have each of his staff develop a plan for the students to ensure they were getting their needs met. He was excited by the idea of supporting the staff as they created action steps for each individual student's needs.

Alex: As a team, we need to support this particular student to [help him] understand and become aware of other students' perspectives in the room at any given time.

In subsequent reflective sessions, Alex revisited this particular student and reported that setting up this expectation and communicating this particular need to the staff had positively impacted the student's success in the program.

By creating a different perspective around the student's behavior—which often seemed disruptive or non-compliant to the staff—they could provide that student with the proactive awareness he needed in order to have different, less confrontational interactions with his peers.

Alex reported that the student was getting more of his needs met, but not at the expense of other students having their needs met, which decreased his own and his staff's negative emotional response when interacting with this student.

Researcher Role and Positionality

According to Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, it is beneficial for the supervisor—or, in this case, the researcher—to check in with the reflector if the reflector has disclosed something in a previous session about health or safety (such as housing or resources). In Alex's case, after our first reflective session, he shared a diagnosis with me that led to the cancelation of three consecutive reflective sessions for the study. Although the details of this will not be shared in the findings, it is important in these kinds of situations for the supervisor to create a space that enables a human-to-human connection of care and an awareness of what the other person is going through. In Alex's case, it was important that he know that taking care of his and his family's physical needs was the top priority. I also checked in to ensure that our sessions were mutual and desired. In reflective supervision, personal information is not typically inquired about unless the reflector brings those personal experiences into the relationship; however, when this does occur, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to validate and utilize this information to help support the growth of the relationship.

With this in mind, I validated the heaviness of the pandemic and the changes over the last two years, creating a safe space through mutual sharing of similar feelings. My goal was to help him move out of a reactive space and feel empowered to make proactive plans, despite the ongoing disruptions of COVID. I validated Alex's feelings and experiences by explaining that I was hearing similar statements from many educators. After Alex shared that he felt that very little was in his control, I inquired about how he gains access to feelings of control within his

learning environment, referencing his experience transitioning to a new school and learning a new system. Reinforcing curiosity and asking an indirect question, I offered a query to be answered by both Alex and myself.

Researcher: It makes me wonder, how do we as educators help the students feel like they have a voice and power over things when we do not always feel that way?

Acknowledging this emotional conflict validated Alex's feeling of how challenging the dichotomy can be. It also provided a chance to discuss refocusing on the power that we hold within our own individual learning environment. Creating awareness for the reflector about what we can control provides a perspective and a way out of the feeling of helplessness, which supports the parallel process of facilitating a democratic education system.

Responding to the professional relationship that Alex had identified as a resource for professional growth, I affirmed that positive leadership is indeed critical for professional growth, stating, "For me and my professional experience, people in positions of power make or break our professional growth." Creating this mutual understanding and meaning making regarding the importance that leadership held for both of us built trust and validation for the reflective relationship. Finding a shared value, engaging in active listening, and offering transparent validation are the foundations of vulnerability in communication.

Alex's shift toward a more macro perspective, described in the previous section, is worth highlighting in the findings. Moving from the identification of one student's needs to the overall needs of the program was a clear example of Alex's reflecting style. Though one might see this shift in thinking as evidence that the reflector is not digging deeply enough into reflective

practice or is avoiding topics, this pattern of thinking can be utilized in reflective supervision by moving to a macro mindset *with* the reflector. In this case, providing Alex with a clear and concise reflective statement that summarized the transition in his thinking helped to validate that shift to a broader perspective.

Researcher: Yes, identifying what each student needs, and in this student's case, it is just perspective taking. Self-discipline, self-awareness, and what that means within the community: like, if you need to get your needs met, cool, but your needs can't prevent other students from them getting their needs met.

This kind of reflection also supports the supervisor's transition into curiosity, prompting questions such as: "What do we do with our new understandings and perspectives?" Curiosity is initiated to access the reflector's feelings of safety and empowerment to create change in their professional world and how they understand it. It is critical to avoid simply assigning the reflector tasks or things to try; instead, the goal is to provide a safe space in which the reflector can be curious about how things could be changed and what position they occupy in relation to that change. Overall, this reflective supervision process supports perspective taking, self-awareness, and social awareness.

To this end, I invited a new perspective on how Alex could support his staff's professional development in order to prepare them to identify a student's needs and help them have successful interactions with the students.

Researcher: Finding mutual goals for the staff but then allowing for the staff to discover their path to attaining that goal. Each staff is going to be different in how they meet the needs of the kids based from personalities. With this example, it

would be providing opportunities for this student to organically take other people's perspectives, without being prompted.

When reflecting on this conversation in later sessions, Alex was able to observe a notable change in his connection with his staff. The staff in turn were able to understand how the students' needs could be met and the connection between needs and behaviors. One of Alex's main reflective priorities was voice, both with his staff and his students. He held this priority and value by honoring each person in the room as a whole individual with strengths. During this particular reflective session, he displayed this priority by acknowledging the unique and powerful relationships that staff hold with students and by making plans to give them information that could improve that relationship.

Participant Four: Breaking through Stereotypes to Find Strength

Participant Profile

The fourth participant in the study went by the name of Evelyn. She identified as a heterosexual, Caucasian woman and was in her early 30s. At the time of the study, she had been in the field of education for 10 years. She graduated in 2017 with a degree in education and went directly into being an assistant site coordinator, then a site coordinator, with Bright Futures. At the time of the study, she was finishing up her fourth year in this role. She continues to work at Bright Futures in an elementary school setting, where she works with second through fifth graders. Evelyn reported her passion for out-of-school time and her commitment to the population she works with, engaging in independent research and professional development opportunities to create more meaningful connections with her students and families.

Reflective Journey Summary

During the 10-week period of data collection for this study, Evelyn was embarking on a weight loss journey that consisted of a major weight loss surgery and a highly restrictive liquid diet. This physically demanding undertaking caused us to pause the data collection for 3 weeks. However, capturing the participant's reflection during this time of transformation allowed for a deeper connection to the meaning making of her identity as an educator and supervisor. Evelyn processed and discussed her experience with trauma in the workplace, including being a victim of sexual harassment at a previous employer. She explored her relationships with not only her staff but also her supervisors, which allowed her to build awareness of how behaviors can be interpreted and how they ultimately impact relationships. In the example I chose to highlight from Evelyn's journey with reflective supervision, she reflected on and analyzed her supervisory style and how that style was being impacted not only by her actions but also by her fear of societal stereotypes.

Reflection as a Tool: Building Awareness and Curiosity and Developing a Plan

The primary reason that Evelyn decided to join the study was her desire to gain skills to be a better supervisor to her staff. She began many of the reflective sessions by talking about her supervisory style or other interactions that she had had with the staff. She shared examples of past and present relationships with co-workers and direct staff as well as challenges she was having, including with communication and expectation setting. She identified one particular personal challenge: her inability to follow through on expectations set for the program.

Evelyn: When it comes to expectations, following through to the end, I will be honest: I am not good at that.

She shared that she had earnest intentions to improve accountability and communication, but that she had struggled to follow through with those plans. She reported having strong emotional responses when having to engage in tough conversations with staff about their follow-through on responsibilities.

Evelyn explored the thoughts that accompanied this emotional reaction, sharing that sometimes she worries her staff views her job as extremely easy. She often felt like she had to prove to her staff that she does work. Evelyn shared, “I think that I have some kind of transference of imposter syndrome.” She expressed that when she first came to Bright Futures in the role of site coordinator, she experienced imposter syndrome. She offered particular examples, such as having a fear response that she might be viewed as not working whenever she sat at her desk completing administrative tasks. She found herself providing self-reassurance that she was indeed working and completing necessary tasks. Evelyn reported having a strong emotional response when thinking about what her staff thinks about her and her work. She expressed vulnerability when she stated, “There is something emotional happening, and I could be putting it there.” When thinking about when that emotional reaction comes up, Evelyn shared that her feelings stemmed in part from the fact that she had needed to take a number of days off work due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, which contributed to her sense of guilt. Overall, she reported overwhelming feelings of guilt that impacted her behavior when she could not be at the school.

Evelyn: I felt really guilty, like I felt like shit the whole time. I was constantly checking my phone. I remember not even being able to even fully engage at a funeral this year because I felt so guilty.

Evelyn was quick to report that this feeling was not present because of anything that the staff had said or hinted at. She felt as though her staff was competent and able to handle her absence

without resentment. Rather, the emotional response stemmed solely from her, with no identifiable external source. Evelyn shared feelings of selfishness for taking care of herself in a personal context but also recognized a double standard: Whenever a staff member called in, she always made sure to be supportive and tell the staff to take care of themselves. She clarified that her work ethic was not how she defined her worth; rather, she worried that was how others evaluated her worth.

In an effort to bring curiosity into the session, I asked if she had ever experienced a time when someone personally or professionally accused her of being lazy. Evelyn displayed a connection with the question through her body language, exhibiting a strong emotional reaction and an obvious eagerness to share a major discovery. She shared with a shaking voice, “I can tie it back to being a fat person.” After an intentional pause that allowed both of us to absorb that emotional revelation, Evelyn began sharing personal experiences and the historical context in which this thinking had been created. Talking through her tears and with the strength of her discovery, she detailed interactions with peers and adults that reinforced this thinking and these strong emotional responses. She exchanged meaning making with me about the trauma and emotional weight of “being a fat person.” Evelyn was open and vulnerable about how this trauma had impacted her relationships with others, with her professional identity, and, most of all, with herself. Woven throughout each of these stories were clearly identifiable societal stereotypes that surround those who carry extra weight. There was a mutual vulnerability present in the releasing of these stories, and in those stories being accepted and validated.

Evelyn: I have been battling with weight and the trauma that comes with it since the second grade, and always, the stereotypes that come with that.

Evelyn shared stories that held hurt “to this day.” She reflected on how she was linking these stories to her professional identity, and how they had created a feeling that she must prove something regarding her work ethic. She was also able to link this to her relationships and leadership style with co-workers in the past. Most importantly, she realized that she had always broken through these stereotypes, and continued to do so, even when those around her were unaware of the stereotypes. This powerful emotional moment created a peaceful and meaningful pause in the conversation.

Researcher: *That’s big.*

Evelyn: *Yeah.*

Researcher: *Yeah.*

Evelyn: *(Laughing) I am not crying (continuing to laugh, wiping away tears).*

Researcher: *(Laughing) I am not crying, you’re crying (wiping away tears).*

Evelyn shared a recent story of how this trauma continued to impact her professionally: A past co-worker within the organization had crossed a boundary by offering unsolicited advice about her weight loss journey. Evelyn reported experiencing a wide range of feelings that are typically saved for personal relationships, such as anger and hurt. This story evoked empathy between myself and Evelyn, as we found mutual historical meaning making and true validation.

Researcher: *True empathy is hearing someone’s story and believing that their story is their truth, and you can’t fix it or know their story better than anyone else.*

Evelyn: *Exactly.*

Continuing with the lens of perspective taking and empathy, Evelyn made an effort to view both sides of these historical exchanges. She noted that people throughout her life had no idea that their comments were hurtful. Displaying this deep empathetic understanding of someone who

had hurt her showcased Evelyn's ability to organically assume perspectives and recognize realities different from her own. She reached emotional regulation by processing not only her own perspective but also those of others. Evelyn closed this transformative reflection session with an amazing story of success. She had experienced a medical emergency while on site at the offices of Bright Futures, which had left lingering fear and trauma tied to the location of the emergency. But on the day of our reflective supervision session, she walked up the stairs where the medical emergency had happened. Evelyn had decided by herself and for herself to overcome the fear from this major trauma, which had invaded her professional world and identity: "I just said to myself, I am walking up those fucking stairs. It felt great!"

Evelyn created an opportunity for transformative learning through her own historical meaning making and perspective taking in this session. This awareness ignited a sense of empowerment in her, both professionally and personally. She was able to explore and link her emotional responses within a professional context to her past personal experiences. Beginning to understand our emotional responses allows us to gain power. Awareness has always provided knowledge, and knowledge leads to power in our thinking and interacting with the world, which is beautifully displayed in this reflective example.

Researcher Role and Positionality

Initially, the foundations of my reflective relationship with Evelyn were built through reciprocal sharing of past professional roles and experiences. This led Evelyn to share her desire to improve communication with her staff. She described her relationships with her direct staff and supervisor as simultaneously fulfilling and challenging and shared examples of their interactions. I was engaged in active listening, posing clarifying questions and reciprocally sharing examples. Evelyn identified the one thing that she felt she was "not good at": following

through in the context of communication with her staff. I validated this statement by sharing an area that evoked a similar emotion for me: “Everyone has their things. I drop the ball a lot, that’s my thing I am not good at.” This comment created an opportunity to invite curiosity and awareness into the conversation by sharing a different perspective on “knowing your thing.”

Researcher: The power of awareness is knowing what your thing is. [It] allows us the opportunity to gain support for it. For me, that was learning about executive functioning.

I shared how the concept of executive functioning has provided me the framework to set myself up for success, teaching me how to create systems and reminders that address areas prone to neglect. This sharing created the opportunity for Evelyn to reflect on “knowing her thing,” though she admitted to feeling there was more emotion behind “her thing” than mine.

While Evelyn was sharing her defensive emotional reaction to her staff’s potential perception of her work ethic, I recognized an opportunity for perspective taking and asked her if the staff had ever given her a verbal or non-verbal indication that they felt she was lazy. Asking Evelyn to gather evidence of why she might be having this emotional reaction created a curiosity to compare her emotions to the facts of their interactions. She reported that there was no evidence to back up this emotional response, which led to a long and purposeful pause. That pause allowed Evelyn to engage in continued historical evidence gathering. I then provided the rationale behind this evidence-gathering exercise.

Researcher: When we find something that is like, “Why is that there? It should not be there,” it’s typically somewhere along our development, either professionally or personally. We were working really hard at something and someone was telling you that you were not.

This statement resonated with Evelyn. Because of this, I felt that a revisiting of the ground rules for reflective supervision was warranted.

When a reflective supervision relationship is established, norms and boundaries are set up and agreed upon by both the supervisor and the reflector. These norms serve as parameters or guardrails to ensure that the relationship stays emotionally safe for both individuals. In this case, the boundary that was revisited was the permission and ability to end the reflection if one person felt as though the conversation was shifting toward something that was too emotionally personal or unsafe to talk through in this professional context.

Researcher: *I want to say again and make sure that if I ask a question and you feel like I hit on something too personal, or I hit on something that you are not comfortable with, you can say: I can't answer that, or that is too far.*

Restating the norm or rule that had been previously established provided an opportunity for Evelyn to pause and reflect on her emotional state, and to make a decision without pressure or uncomfortable feelings.

Evelyn communicated her personal choice to stay on this topic, sharing that she felt comfortable moving forward in the reflective conversation. This permission provided an opportunity for me to ask an extremely personal question in order to directly support Evelyn's use of historical meaning making to help understand her emotional reaction.

Researcher: *Did you ever have a situation either personally or professionally when someone accused you of not working hard or being lazy?*

This was the moment when emotions collided with cognition for Evelyn. She had connected her lifelong journey as an overweight person to these feelings of defensiveness about her work ethic and her challenges with professional relationships. Evelyn shared several stories of how the

trauma of being overweight had been with her throughout her life and how stereotypes had been consistently reinforced, both personally and professionally.

This was a powerful emotional moment for both of us. Evelyn's realization that she had continually broken through stereotypes throughout her life left a peaceful and meaningful pause in the conversation. Realizing that she had made a strong cognitive connection, I affirmed this breakthrough by simply stating, "That's big." By using few but meaningful words, I created a space where emotions could be felt and mutually expressed by both of us. Granted, this moment of shared emotional responses could be viewed as inappropriate because there were emotional expressions not typically found in educational or professional relationships. However, because we both gave permission to reach this level of vulnerability, a moment of connection and sincere relationship building occurred. Emotions can and should be used with others in a learning space (assuming that everyone involved has consented) because they can inform ourselves and others of the level at which we care about something. This example of shared emotional response created a foundation of human connection and trust—bonds that are often difficult to forge and access.

In order to attend to and recognize this important moment of connection, I provided a statement of validation and reassurance that emotions were welcome in these sessions, and that this was a space to let those emotions be a tool to support growth. This moment created an awareness of how this trauma had impacted Evelyn's self-concept professionally. Validation was a critical piece of this interaction. In between sniffles and tissues, I shared my own meaning and perspective that extra weight in our society often leads to traumatic experiences. In order to maintain the feelings of empowerment and self-discovery in Evelyn's consciousness, it was important to reiterate her statements and

direct her to continue with her reflection as she entered her time off for her weight loss surgery.

Researcher: This is it, this is big for you. This is the thing to reflect on, think about over the next two weeks when you are in recovery from your surgery. How the trauma of being someone who is overweight has weighed you down in relation to your core beliefs and identity as an educator.

Another notable part of this reflective session was my recognition that it could have been harmful to stop the session at a moment when emotions were high and vulnerability was completely open. There are time constraints and other obligations that need to be honored to create boundaries around the reflective relationship. However, in this particular conversation, Evelyn was making deep emotional and cognitive connections right when the hour was ending. Recognizing that leaving the session in the middle of her discoveries could have damaged trust and vulnerability moving forward, I decided to continue the discussion and honor where Evelyn was at emotionally, asking, “I can go over today. Can you?” In this case, the reflective session went approximately 20 minutes over the scheduled time. By providing this extra safe space, Evelyn had the opportunity to share a personal milestone of overcoming a traumatic barrier. As we jointly celebrated her surmounting of this fear, Evelyn was able to personally reflect on this impactful and empowering moment.

The session concluded with both of us realizing this was our last scheduled session until after her surgery recovery. I stated, “Well wishes for your surgery – you got this, you are going to do great!” I offered support if needed in the form of texts or emails during her time off, thus reinforcing care and the value of the relationship. This was also an opportunity to reinforce

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs within the relationship. Because Evelyn had shared the personal story of her ongoing health journey, it was important for me to recognize that her physical needs were the top priority. Thus, I gave no specific timeline for when Evelyn was expected to resume our sessions; I told her to reach out when she felt ready to connect again, leaving her in control of the care for herself and her family.

Participant Five: In Search of Comfort

Participant Profile

The fifth participant in the study went by the name of Poppy. She identified as a heterosexual, Caucasian woman and was in her mid-30s. At the time of the study, she had been in the field of education for 15 years. She had graduated with a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in reading and literacy from a university in southeast Michigan and had been working in out-of-school time enrichment and academic spaces ever since. At the time of the study, she was finishing up her tenth year as a site coordinator, making her the longest standing site coordinator at Bright Futures. She continues to work at Bright Futures in an elementary school setting, where she works with second through fifth grade students. Along with serving as a site coordinator, Poppy had facilitated professional development trainings for Bright Futures, utilizing Brené Brown's Dare to Lead curriculum. Poppy was considered a veteran at the organization and was called upon to support and mentor newer educators.

Reflective Journey Summary

Poppy entered the reflective session reporting a large change in herself as an educator. She agreed to participate in the study in order to gain insight and support as to why she was feeling less emotionally connected to her work and less comfortable in her role. Poppy was fully engaged in the reflection process and verbally expressed the importance of reflective practices,

saying she was looking forward to exploring the change. Poppy began the sessions by using historical meaning making to understand her change in motivation and emotional response, which in turn helped her reconnect with her educator identity. She also utilized the reflective sessions to discuss challenging peer relationships with other site coordinators and members of the administration team. She created opportunities to reflect with the staff at her site, which allowed the parallel process to flourish within her reflective journey. The following example from Poppy's journey with reflective supervision involved her reflecting on and analyzing a specific emotional feeling of comfort and contextualizing it in relation to her professional identity in daily practice.

Reflection as a Tool: Building Awareness and Curiosity and Developing a Plan

Poppy entered the study as a seasoned reflector who understood the practice; from the start, she was comfortable and confident being vulnerable and honest. She often began the sessions by updating me on how she was feeling overall and sharing her personal plans, such as attending a yoga class or a weekend getaway. Poppy also began the first session with raw honesty about where her thoughts and emotions as behaviors were landing. Not knowing what to “work on” or where to begin, Poppy shared an overwhelming feeling of exhaustion, declaring, “I’m tired; I just can’t seem to find rest.” She reported waking up tired and feeling emotionally emptied. She acknowledged that she had a lot going on but still felt as though she should be able to find rest. She stated that she did not understand why she felt almost defeated at times by this tiredness. Poppy reported not remembering a time when she had been able to gain access to emotionally and physically restorative feelings. She went on to compare her schedule pre- and post-pandemic, discovering and building awareness of the fact that, though the quantity of work was comparable, the emotional labor was much higher for her post-pandemic. She also shared

that an unexpected cancellation by one of her tutoring students brought her positive feelings of emotional capacity, empowerment, and the autonomy to make choices with her time.

While reflecting on her work pre- versus post-pandemic, Poppy shared the changes the pandemic had brought into her professional life and her negative emotional reactions to those changes; she ultimately discovered that there were many things that she was grieving. When grief was introduced into the reflective session as a possible emotion she might be feeling, she reported a sense of connection to that understanding. Poppy reported feeling grief in three main ways: grief at losing certain staff relationships after having worked with the same team for several years; grief at losing her ability to teach fitness classes in her community due to an injury; and, most profoundly, grief at losing her strong and competent sense of self and purpose as an educator. She reported feeling a “mental block” of self-blame and self-doubt.

Returning to her comparison of pre- and post-pandemic life, Poppy said she felt a loss of control of professional and personal time boundaries, noting the intrusive forms of technology that had entered her home and off hours during the pandemic. She expressed a challenge with actively saying no or setting emotional capacity boundaries with work relationships.

Poppy: I know it is hard for me to say no to Bright Futures and I make excuses in my mind about why I can't say no, like, if you don't say yes, they will stop asking me and I will no longer be seen as the person who gets stuff done, and honestly that I won't be valid anymore.

Poppy felt that her value and identity were shaped by her professional role as an educator; in her own words, she was emotionally “filled up” by others recognizing and finding value in her work. She shared stories of attending conferences and bringing ideas into her learning environment, and of others at Bright Futures noticing her work ethic and passion through the work she was

doing with her students. Poppy noted that many of the systems that had provided her with personal value had been removed by the pandemic. For example, when learning became virtual, she felt a loss of connection with the students, which made her doubt her ability to connect with youth and be an effective leader at her site. She reflected on her professional career overall, using the lens of comparison that we had fostered in conversation. Poppy expressed, “Everything just feels uncomfortable, like I can’t gain access to it.” She reported that this past year was as hard, if not harder, than her first year as a teacher. This feeling of “starting over” and relearning how to be an effective educator had exacerbated her feelings of tiredness and her inability to find comfort. Poppy then disclosed the compounding challenge of managing emotions about what was happening with current events, referencing value systems and political differences with family and friends.

At the next reflective session, Poppy shared that she had completed the homework—to notice experiences of comfort over the course of the week—and that she was surprised how many times she was able to identify experiencing the feeling of comfort once she began to pay attention. She reported gaining access to comfort both individually and while doing activities with her partner, such as walking the dog, driving, and preparing food. She reported a feeling of empowerment knowing that comfort was present in her daily living and knowing where to look for it moving forward. She even reported certain activities where anxiety or discomfort had been present at first but had turned to comfort over time, such as a group yoga class in the community.

Throughout the reflective journey, this sourcing of comfort became a repeated task, subject to consistent reflection and review. The initial homework exercise, which asked her to utilize the meaning making of comfort, gain awareness of her own perspective of comfort, and then develop a plan to reconnect with that feeling, jump-started her ability to access comfort. She

reported beginning to gain access to it within her professional identity, referencing interactions with students and staff; ultimately, she was able to use these sources of comfort to build restorative practices on difficult days or in challenging relationships. Although she reported that she had not yet attained the level of comfort she possessed pre-pandemic, there was a notable difference: She was more aware of what brought her comfort, which provided more opportunities to feel in control of her emotions.

Researcher Role and Positionality

When the reflective relationship is first being formed in reflective supervision, there is a critical need to build a foundation of trust. This foundation is mutually established at the beginning of the sessions, when both individuals check in and see how the other is feeling and how their week went. These kinds of questions can invite both professional and personal responses, though overtly personal or probing questions should be avoided; the supervisor and reflector each communicate the level at which they are comfortable sharing personal details. Trading information about oneself is a typical element of relationship building, as is asking follow-up questions, actively listening to the responses, and finding shared experiences or similar perspectives. The information that is shared can be used to forge genuine connections and reciprocal perspective taking. As the sessions progress, this step often becomes less necessary. Nonetheless, that initial process of sharing experiences or emotional responses can be utilized in later reflective sessions as evidence of an understanding of perspectives. In the case of Poppy, our initial practice of relationship building touched on the topics of family, wedding planning, pets, and children. We each evaluated which topics we were comfortable with and found common ground and mutual understanding of the other person's personal connections.

Poppy came into the study with a desire to engage in reflective practice, understanding its value from previous experiences. However, she did not come with a particular goal or topic that she felt needed her attention. This openness created an opportunity for me to provide a frequently used reflective prompt. Utilizing the lens of curiosity, I asked if there were any thoughts that seemed too prominent or that were always “on repeat” in her head. She responded that her most prominent thought was about not being able to rest and feeling exhausted most of the time.

This led to the introduction of the concept that “saying yes is saying no to something else.” This concept provides decisional awareness and a framework for making professional and personal decisions easily and readily available for assessment. Every choice we make has an unintended and possibly even unknown consequence. If a person answers “yes” to a request to support or help with someone or something, they have also made the simultaneous decision to say “no” to something else. Sometimes there is an awareness and understanding of this exchange: For example, I may be perfectly aware that saying yes to helping a family member means that I am saying no to dinner plans with a friend. Other times, the trade-offs are less obvious, especially when saying yes comes at the expense of self-care commitments we have made to ourselves. By learning about this concept, individuals can understand their reasons for saying yes and acknowledge what they are saying no to.

Next, I provided validation by acknowledging that it is common for our sense of self to be largely based on our professional identity. I also explained how that professional identity can change as our roles and relationships change. I noted that if our core beliefs about worth and value are tied to our professional role, and those beliefs or roles then shift, it can bring conflict and confusion to our thinking if we do not engage in intentional reflection about the shift.

Researcher: *Our values change throughout our lives, everyone. We all need to spend time intentionally thinking about and reflecting on how we derive value from those new roles and relationships. If we do not, we are left unbalanced because we are engaging in the new roles or values but still attempting to gain value from the old patterns or roles.*

Referencing a concept that held mutual meaning for us (due to a professional development training we had both attended), I explained emotional capacity through the metaphor of “spoons.” In this framework, an individual’s emotional capacity is represented by 10 spoons, which must be distributed across multiple roles and responsibilities. How we choose to allocate our spoons is based on how we first learned our priorities, both personal and professional, and how we continue to reinforce them. The spoons metaphor emphasizes that variables and crises are introduced throughout our daily lives, which alter our emotional capacity. In this case, Poppy was expressing a lower emotional capacity in general, and my explanation validated her change in behavior, or the change in how her spoons were being allocated.

Researcher: *Life takes more spoons right now. The spoons that would normally be used for students and for work are now being needed to manage and maintain family relationships with everything that is happening in the world right now.*

This reference to our mutual meaning of spoons was extremely valuable to this reflective session.

Part of being a reflective supervisor is observing and tracking both emotional responses and patterns of language within the reflective session. I observed during the session that Poppy had repeated one particular statement in several different contexts and situations; she repeatedly shared, “Everything is uncomfortable right now, like, even the

things that used to bring me comfort do not.” Based on this observation, I asked Poppy if she would like a reflective task or homework assignment. In order to help her build awareness of moments where comfort may be present, as well as help her identify what comfort might feel like when returning to work post-pandemic, I requested that she pay attention to the situations, either personal or professional, in which she experienced a sense of comfort over the course of the week. The overall purpose was to help her gain access to the knowledge of where comfort can be found so that she could utilize that in situations where she did not have sufficient control.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion

History is always the interpretation of the present.

—George Herbert Mead

Reflective Practice Is a Macro Practice

As we learned in Chapter Two, research on the value of reflection in educational environments goes back nearly a century. Dewey's (1933) seminal work defined reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (p. 6). Dewey (1933) taught us that reflection leads to new understandings of our actions, new consequences, and new conclusions, but that concrete experiences are needed in order to situate learning. More recently, reflective thinking in an educational context has been defined as "making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions" (Taggart & Wilson, 2005, p. 1). Donald Schön (1983, 1987), who authored two foundational texts on reflective practices, also emphasized the importance of reflection in the field of education. In *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön (1983) reinforced the belief that the most effective practitioners are those who use improvisation to solve problems instead of relying solely on the knowledge acquired while attaining a degree. He thus emphasized the value of experience and continued reflective practice. This continued learning from reflection is critical to creating and maintaining effective learning environments. So, too, is the need to continuously evaluate the systems in place for educators to intentionally engage in reflection.

In reviewing the literature on reflection, it became clear that many effective reflective practices are already in place for educators, including mentoring, coaching, and reciprocal peer coaching. Mentoring has been defined as a reciprocal developmental relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced adult (Drago-Severson, 2009). Reciprocal peer

coaching is another reflective practice that has gained traction in education; several research studies have explored its impact on preservice teachers. Preservice coaches can be taught to observe and record the performance of their peers, provide feedback on teaching behaviors, and help correct errors and improve instruction (Morgan et al., 1992). All of these practices have value in the context of curriculum planning, teaching strategy development, and lesson delivery. However, they all leave out one critical piece: evaluation of the self as a part of the learning relationship and environment. Building awareness of our emotional reactions and their impact on behavior can create immeasurable opportunities for professional growth. This awareness enables educators to view each person as an individual with different lenses and worldviews, recognizing the diverse ways in which personal meanings are made and reinforced. Often educators rely solely on their own perspective, which may skew their beliefs about another's experience.

As discussed in Chapter Two, reflective supervision or consultation is a form of ongoing professional development that increases professionals' capacity to manage the strong emotions inherent in direct service work and understand relational dynamics within families and between professionals and family members, with the goal of developing and maintaining effective service delivery (Heffron & Murch, 2010; Watson & Gatti, 2012; Weatherston et al., 2010).

Relationship-based work requires reflection, collaboration, and reliability, which create a trusting relationship where vulnerability and meaningful growth can occur. Heffron and Murch (2010) have explained that during reflective supervision, a supervisor creates a safe and welcoming space for staff members to reflect on and learn from their own work with a trusted mentor at their side (p. 42). This reflective practice provides individuals with the tools and space to remain in a curious mindset and avoid judgement based on their past experiences and relationships.

With the functioning and sustainability of U.S. school systems currently at risk, it is more critical than ever to evaluate whether and how we are creating opportunities for meaningful reflection and interventions for emotional responses. Both students and educators have experienced a tremendous amount of trauma and fear due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As reviewed in Chapter One, the pandemic, with all of its implications for our lives and identities, fits the diagnostic criteria for a traumatic event. We also learned in Chapter One that traumatic events change our individual core beliefs, which are defined as fundamental assumptions about human behavior, the unfolding of events, and our own abilities (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). For most victims of a traumatic event, their core beliefs shift to explain what happened, and they use the information from the event to prepare for future interactions with the world. With an increasing number of educators reporting secondary traumatic stress symptoms and leaving the field of education, the time is now to address educators' mental health and thereby engage the parallel process of addressing our students' mental health. This urgent call to action was the motivation behind this study, which aimed to utilize reflective supervision, a practice founded in the field of social work, to address the critical need to support educators. Borrowing this effective and systematic reflective practice and applying it to an educational context led to meaningful and transformation learning for both myself and the reflectors.

This study set out to identify, explore, and understand new perspectives and ideas on the relationship that is created in a reflective supervisory relational space within an educational context. The data provided insight on how the reflective relationship is formed, developed, and reinforced, and how the process of reflection interacts with that relationship. The findings illuminated the importance of trust and vulnerability to the development of the reflective relationship. The reflective sessions conducted for this study, which held to the central tenets of

regularity, collaboration, and reflection (Heffron & Murch, 2010), provided new insights and understandings about the forming of this reflective relationship. The data also supported the development of a grounded theoretical perspective on how this relationship interacts with meaning making and transformational learning. The outcomes of this study expanded upon previous research findings and generated new perspectives and knowledge by investigating the impact of reflective practice outside of the infant mental health/early childhood areas—in this case, the impact on established educators working with youth in high-needs districts. By viewing the development of the reflective relationship from the perspectives of both contributing members of that reciprocal relationship, as well as observing and understanding that relational space, this study provided a fresh theoretical perspective on the value of reflective supervision in the field of education.

Analysis and Discussion

The data in this study provided valuable insight into how the practice of reflective supervision can positively impact reflectors' professional growth. Five central tenets of reflective supervision in educational environments were uncovered during data collection and analysis. The following section reports on those findings, outlining the five tenets and linking them to foundational understandings of reflective practice. The participants' voices and reflective journeys were used as evidence to support each of these foundational connections and reinforce the critical need for providing reflective supervision opportunities in the field of education.

The Meaning of Reflection

Prior to engaging in reflective practice, it is critical to understand the individual's experience with and perspective on reflection through the mutual sharing of past reflective experiences. The following example illustrates how defining, introducing, and engaging in

consistent reflection can change one's perspective on the practice and create meaningful learning, thus increasing the value of reflection in educational environments.

Skylar shared an example of meaning making in relation to the meaning of reflection. After engaging in the study for 1 week, she decided to facilitate a reflection activity with her summer staff of three, including her assistant site coordinator and two other direct care assistants. She prompted them to share one positive and one negative experience with the middle school youth from that day of the program. Immediately, the two staff assistants displayed disinterest in doing reflection at all, and one assistant asked Skylar to "just tell them what they are doing wrong and they will fix it." Skylar reported being taken aback by their response and frustrated that the staff was reinforcing the power differential when she was trying to cultivate communication and collaboration in problem solving.

After sharing this experience with me, Skylar self-validated by restating her reason for initiating the reflection activity: She wanted to bring more awareness of expectations to her staff. I also shared my personal perspective and identified a possible emotion by stating, "I would be frustrated, too" and "You were wanting it to be such a different outcome than how they responded." I then brought curiosity into the conversation by stating, "It makes me wonder what they think reflection is," making sure to pause to give space for perspective taking. This led the reflective conversation down the path of perspective taking and historical meaning making for the staff engaging in the activity. Skylar reported feeling a sense of relief once she began to consider possible reasons for their disengagement from the activity. She had been assuming it was simply disinterested non-compliance and felt that the staff had brought the power differential of supervisor and staff into the activity, but she now saw that there were other possibilities, including previous negative experiences with reflection. The reflection then turned

to how Skylar could help change the meaning of reflection for them and establish a space of safety for her staff to solve site challenges collectively. Skylar reported feeling more motivated to revisit the activity and formed a plan to create consistent, meaningful reflection opportunities for staff so that their meaning could gradually shift toward trust in each other, thus reinforcing the positive impact of reflection.

When Skylar and I reconnected, the reflection activity situation was revisited. Skylar reported that she and her staff had engaged in a conversation about what it means to reflect and why we do it, emphasizing group and collaborative reflection. She was then able to understand their past experiences with reflective practice. Through shared stories and examples, she realized that they experienced reflection as something that was only needed when there was a problem; in the past, it had been used to create disciplinary actions. Skylar shared her intention to use reflection differently. She reported that the team had reflected together and generally had more open and meaningful conversations with the youth as a result. Skylar revisited and re-reflected on the situation several times throughout the 10-week study, applying her discovery to new interactions by acknowledging a possible difference in meanings or perceptions with students and parents. By digging deeper into her frustration and identifying the possible reasons behind this feeling, she was able to understand her emotional response and be curious about others' perspectives.

The reflective sessions recorded for this study contained multiple examples from each of the participants that mimicked this process narrated by Skylar. In each of these examples, there was evidence of relationship building, trust, and vulnerability between researcher and reflector as the participants reflected on such topics as meaning making of their own educator identity and historical meaning making of commonly shared vocabulary. From these examples, five central

tenets of the reflective supervision process emerged, usually occurring in a fixed order (though in a few examples, the tenets were visited in a different order).

The five tenets of reflective supervision in education environments that were uncovered during this project's data analysis are as follows: (a) historical meaning making; (b) perspective taking; (c) finding voice and choice; (d) inviting a different perspective; and (e) reconnecting, revisiting, and re-reflecting. Historical meaning making involves investigating where in our past experiences our own personal meanings were created and expressing curiosity about how others' meanings were formed. Perspective taking occurs when the reflector explores different possible perspectives of other individuals, including children. Finding voice and choice describes how the reflector chooses to utilize their understanding of newly discovered meanings and perspectives. Inviting a new perspective occurs when the reflector is invited to see an emotional response or situation from a different perspective after implementing their voice and choice plans and decisions. The final tenet is reconnecting, revisiting, and re-reflecting, which involves a reconnection with the supportive reflective relationship and a revisiting of past reflective sessions, situations, or emotional responses. The end goal is to re-reflect in order to create meaningful and contextualized learning from the reflective practice.

Historical Meaning Making

The first tenet that was evident and consistent in the data findings was historical meaning making. Dewey (1933) defined reflection as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge” (p. 6). This foundational understanding of reflection supports the practice of historical meaning making, which calls for careful consideration of the source of any belief or knowledge. Our experiences and relationships shape what we know, as well as how that knowledge is viewed. Popa (2022) has equated historical meaning making with

historical consciousness, defining the term as a disposition to engage with history in order to make meaning of past human experience for oneself. Put another way, it involves making the historical past one's own. This disposition is manifested in three interrelated abilities: sensitivity toward the past, understanding of the past, and representation of oneself in relation to history. Each ability is associated with a particular meaning-making process—respectively, experiencing historical temporality, interpreting historical material, and orientating in practical life through history (Boix et al., 2007; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015). The practice of historical meaning making in reflective supervision reinforces the foundational processes of meaningful reflection.

Schön (1987) has argued that the typical “one size fits all” model of professional development and problem-solving is not effective because situations and conflicts are often interpreted and processed differently for each individual. Each historical interaction, relationship, and independent action shapes the way in which one views the world and one's position in it. When historical meaning making is not present in professional development, there are missed opportunities for reflective learning and professional growth. As defined by Boyd and Fayles (1983), “Reflective learning is the internal process of exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in a changed conceptual perspective” (p. 19). Historical meaning making in reflective supervision provides reflective learning opportunities by creating a space where we can begin to understand how our meanings have impacted our view of the world and changed our conceptual perspectives (Boyd & Fayles, 1983).

The process of mutual historical meaning making in reflective supervision begins with trust and vulnerability within the supervisory relationship. This is fostered through the three foundational components of reflective supervision: regularity, collaboration, and reflection

(Heffron & Murch, 2010). In other words, mutual meaning making is achieved through regularly scheduled meetings, mutual sharing of experiences and emotions, and reflection that encourages an understanding of where our meanings are rooted and how they impact the way we interact with the world. Building a reflective relationship with a solid foundation provides opportunities for both members of the relationship to open their individual meanings by exploring historical experiences that have formed their core beliefs about themselves and their interactions with others. This dual exploration of meanings allows the reflector to see how different perspectives are formulated.

This process can be best observed in a reflective session with Margo. Margo explored many meanings for both herself and the individuals she worked with, but one that continued to give her negative emotional responses was the meaning of the word “strength.” Her struggles with this word entered her thinking frequently because she equated strength with “power, loud and outspoken, and doesn’t take any shit.” Margo shared that her experience growing up in sports and with older brothers had always reinforced this idea of strength. A negative emotional response to the word often arose for her because there were fundamental aspects of Margo’s personality and character that did not support this meaning or definition of strength. I also shared my personal meaning of strength: someone who remains in control and is unaffected by others. Both definitions shared a common “isolation” for the person displaying strength, meaning someone who is strong does not seek or need support from others. Margo shared that, logically, she knows she holds strength and would even define herself as someone who is strong; however, the conflict arose when speaking about her outward behavioral expressions of strength. She was admittedly quiet and reflective and was often guided by her emotional responses. She laughed as she stated, “And I take a lot of shit.”

I asked if Margo had a relationship with anyone whose version of strength aligned more closely with her own personality. She immediately referenced a teacher she had a close friendship and mentoring relationship with back in Washington state. I asked Margo to list some of the behaviors that displayed this co-worker's strength, with concrete examples of interactions she had witnessed between her co-worker and other staff and students. I also asked Margo to pay attention that week to her own behaviors of strength and list them on paper so we could have the chance to discuss and reflect on this meaning-making process for her.

Once reciprocal sharing has taken place during reflective sessions, the reflector learns to trust that their personal perspective will be viewed from a place of curiosity and understanding, rather than a place of judgment or evaluation. This foundation of trust and vulnerability allows for deeper and more personal reflections on self-perception and individual educator identity. It can also lead to candid disclosures of negative feelings like defeat and hopelessness, as seen in the reflective sessions with Poppy and Alex.

Historical meaning making is especially critical when the educator or reflector has a history of trauma. As discussed in Chapter One, the COVID-19 pandemic meets the diagnostic criteria for a prolonged traumatic event, which was confirmed when the participants all reported symptoms of secondary traumatic stress (STS), the official diagnostic category for adverse effects that stem from teaching and serving children with trauma (Borntrager et al., 2012; Lawson et al., 2019). When educators learn about primary victims' traumatic experiences, they are at risk for vicarious trauma, which may result in STS. Margo reported somatic stress body responses in the classroom, and Poppy reported a lack of connection to her identity as an educator since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in part due to changes in her learning environment and her grief at the loss of student and professional relationships. Alex missed three

of the study's reflective sessions due to a COVID-19 diagnosis and family health complications. This illness during the study also prevented Alex from attending half of the Bright Futures summer program, which left him with feelings of helplessness and a loss of control over his learning environment and relationships with students. Skylar described her stress responses to classroom management in the face of students' social and behavioral deficits and struggles with emotional regulation. Evelyn reported a feeling of helplessness due to her inability to effectively implement relationship-building strategies that had been successful in the past. As the reflectors were sharing and describing their symptoms of STS, it was an opportunity for all of them to reflect on the emotions that accompanied those symptoms and to identify significant cognitions. By engaging in historical meaning making, the participants were able to recognize how the last two years had altered their ability to cope with circumstances outside of their control.

Perspective Taking

The second tenet that was present in all of the reflective supervision sessions was the practice and process of perspective taking. Perspective taking is defined as the active cognitive process of imagining the world from another's vantage point (Ku et al., 2015). For educators, these other perspectives can come from staff, students, or students' families. The foundation of perspective taking is first allowing yourself to know that your perspective is individualized and that no one can fully assume your perspective without mutual vulnerability and sharing. Once you understand the origins of your own perspective through the historical meaning making process, then curiosity can enter the reflection, but only when someone's individual perspective is validated. This space of safety from evaluation or judgment opens the door to perspective taking.

Brookfield (1995) and Kegan and Lahey (2009) have insisted on the importance of educators engaging in reflective practices not only to think more carefully and deeply about their own beliefs and the issues under discussion but also to grow from exploring alternative possibilities and perspectives, and to understand the consequences of their actions. This growth can be seen in the increase in open-mindedness that practicing perspective taking provides. Tannebaum et al. (2013) have described open-mindedness as an active desire to listen to and analyze the perspectives of others in an attempt to adjust one's practice and find alternative possibilities and solutions to problematic situations. Growth in open-mindedness and a welcoming of other viewpoints were present in the reflective journeys of all of the participants, who engaged in consistent and meaningful perspective taking.

A strong example of this was seen when Alex was discussing the challenge of collaborating with the school where his Bright Futures classroom is housed. He shared feelings of helplessness due to not gaining the support of the building principal when he asked if he could push into the classroom to observe. He shared that he wanted to understand the content in the classroom so that he could build contexts and experiences that connected with the curriculum. In short, he wanted to make meaningful connections for the students. Alex discussed how part of his inspiration for becoming an educator was to create hands-on, concrete materials and lessons that contextualized learning for students and fostered their excitement. He stated that half sheets had been provided to the teachers so they could share lessons and content with the Bright Futures staff. However, without follow-through, this led to a dead-end in collaboration.

Using curiosity, Alex and I talked about the teachers' experiences during COVID, when they were required to engage in contact tracing and isolate in their classrooms with no lunchrooms or school-wide events. We concluded that the teachers at the school may have

developed the perspective that others coming into the classroom felt unsafe or threatening given the emphasis on isolation over the last two years. The reflective session then turned to how to communicate with the teachers in the building so that Alex could validate their feeling that visitors represented a loss of safety. I asked whether there could be a reciprocal exchange that would benefit both parties (Alex and the other teacher). This reciprocity could be achieved by seeing if a teacher needed a 15-minute break to grade papers, make copies in the office, or even make a cup of coffee while Alex connected with the students and the classroom. Doing so would communicate to the teachers that he understood that breaks were hard to come by, while also laying the foundation for a new relationship. By engaging in perspective taking of how the teachers might be feeling, Alex was able to stop focusing on the behavior that was keeping him out of classrooms and focus instead on an entry point by taking other teachers' possible perspectives into account.

Evidence of rich perspective taking was apparent in each of the participants' reflective sessions, as was growth in the skill of perspective taking. Participants progressed from only engaging in perspective taking when prompted by one of my comments or questions to adopting and sharing perspectives spontaneously. Toward the beginning of the study, participants were guided through this process, much like in Margo's example of the roses and thorns activity. First, I facilitated perspective taking by sharing my own view of the situation through conversation or emotional response in order to gain access to vulnerability, trust, and connection. By inviting the reflector to think about the perspective of another, curiosity remained the main entry point for the reflective conversation. As the weeks of reflective sessions continued, I observed how perspective taking became more organic and natural, with the practice being independently

initiated and processed by the reflectors. This growth points to the importance and value of consistent reflective supervision.

Creating Voice, Choice, and Personal Empowerment

Creating voice and choice refers to the power and autonomy that the reflector has over how they will utilize their newly discovered meanings and perspectives. The voice and choice tenet turns reflection into a tool for developing a personal plan of action based on a new awareness and understanding of the situation. Reflective supervision provides an opportunity for the reflector to utilize their new understandings and knowledge to create meaningful change within their professional roles.

This tenet reinforces Kathpalia and Heah's (2008) definition of reflection as combining experience and knowledge to "create new knowledge" (p. 301). Using the reflective space to create a plan of action provides space for the reflector to understand how they can use their new knowledge, as well as what barriers might be present. Hewson and Carroll (2016) detailed the three stances of reflective supervision as the mindful stance (noticing what's happening), the consideration stance (analyzing what's happening and unpacking the assumptions that underpin it), and the consolidation stance (putting this learning into practice so that it becomes routine). The voice and choice tenet falls within the consolidation stance. Creating voice, choice, and personal empowerment within the reflector means helping them identify actions that are tangible and that will continue to reinforce critical thinking and transformational learning.

Voice, choice, and personal empowerment were created within each participant's reflective journey; however, it was not always a uniform process. This tenet was observed and formed on an individual basis, with different plans for action emerging at different moments over the 10-week data collection period. For example, one reflector in the study created a plan for

thought redirection, which is a strategy to identify thoughts that elicit particularly negative emotional responses and that skew our view of a particular situation or relationship. Reflection can help identify a replacement thought or perspective to elicit a neutral or positive emotional response. This tenet may also involve the recognition of a somatic or physical feeling and the development of a plan to regulate emotions to stay in control in a professional environment. On a relationship level, voice, choice, and personal empowerment were created when one reflector made a plan to initiate communication or activities that would help them find mutual meaning with their staff and share information about their intentions. On a mezzo level, this tenet of voice and choice allowed two reflectors in the study to create a picture of the overall learning environment they hoped to provide for the professional growth of their staff and the academic growth of their students.

Within this step, it is critical that the supervisor avoid throwing ideas or interventions at the reflector to help solve the problem from their perspective. What might be a solid and easily executed plan to one individual may seem impossible or not particularly useful from another person's perspective. It is important to let the reflector find a plan that is comfortable for them with all the knowledge they hold about themselves, their capabilities, and their strengths. In short, it is critical to let the reflector have authorship and ownership over their voice and choice. When the supervisor enters the reflection with curiosity, the reflector can engage with more vulnerability and openness about possible solutions. Otherwise, emotional responses from both parties can create a breakdown in communication. This breakdown can lead to further negative emotions about the reflector's work, which may impact their emotional capacity. This is especially noteworthy because emotional capacity is critical to making meaningful connections and relationships with youth.

Evelyn shared the emotional response of frustration and helplessness when dealing with a breakdown in support staff communication. She reported sending emails to her staff with essential information. After failing to receive any responses, she would send texts asking people to read their emails, but there was evidence that the emails continued to go unread. For example, she reported staff being unaware of schedule and staff changes—information that was being sent to them via email. There was a feeling of being ignored when attempting to communicate expectations, and the lack of follow-through on tasks made her feel overwhelmed and isolated in her responsibilities at the site.

While exploring her emotional response, Evelyn was quick to acknowledge the staff's constrained schedules due to their other professional and personal responsibilities; she ultimately shared that she empathized with her staff and recognized that they might feel overwhelmed. After validating her feelings about the experience, I asked Evelyn if she wanted to have a discussion or take any action to possibly help improve communication with her staff. She reported feeling helpless and was also afraid that some staff members might choose to leave their positions at Bright Futures if she confronted the communication challenges.

Bringing curiosity into the conversation, I asked whether it might be helpful to elicit ideas from the staff about what form of communication would best support their busy schedules and outside obligations while also facilitating consistent communication follow-through. This conversation would allow the staff to engage in curiosity about their needs and how to be successful, rather than creating a consequence or punishment that ultimately reinforced the power dynamic. Evelyn shared with me in the following reflective supervision session that she had initiated a conversation about finding a communication type or format that would work for all of her staff. She knew that doing so would ultimately make everyone feel better and help

them stay informed, which in turn would lead to the students benefitting more from the teachers. She was surprised to hear that her staff felt guilty and even a bit defensive about the communication breakdown. She was able to gain more insight into the emotional responses of her staff, and with their help a new individualized communication plan was organized: one of her staff chose texting, while another chose emails. They also developed a plan to do more communicating and reflecting in person. Moving away from fear, hopelessness, and frustration and toward meaningful connection through proactive communication supported all of the staff's emotional responses as well as Evelyn's sense of empowerment.

Inviting a Different Perspective

Inviting a new perspective is the mutual process of inviting the reflector to operate from a different vantage point once they have engaged in reflective actions outside of reflective supervision. Put another way, inviting a new perspective means identifying and exploring newly discovered knowledge and contextualizing one's learning. Dewey (1933) stated that reflection leads to new understandings of our actions, new consequences, and new conclusions, but he added that concrete experiences are needed in order to situate or contextualize learning. This tenet reinforces Kondrat's (1999) theorization of the three levels of awareness. She described the first two levels of awareness as simple awareness, or an awareness of what is being experienced, and reflective awareness, or the awareness of a self who is experiencing something. The highest level of awareness—and the one that this tenet supports—is reflexive awareness, which is the self's awareness of how one's awareness is constituted in direct experience. Put another way, it is awareness of the processes by which the self interacts with others to create meanings and identities (Kondrat, 1999). A consistent, meaningful, and guided reflection practice, such as reflective supervision, can help the practitioner progress through the levels of awareness.

By emphasizing awareness, the tenet of inviting a different perspective aligns closely with the practice of mindfulness. Kabat-Zinn (1994) has defined mindfulness as the “awareness that emerges by paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (p. 4). Building awareness of emotional responses in the initial supervision sessions can lead the reflector toward curiosity and new perspectives in subsequent meetings. With this tenet, the reflector is encouraged to recognize emotional responses in themselves, stay curious about why those responses emerged, and problem solve in the moment. It provides a space to use the tools of historical meaning making, perspective taking, and creating a plan for action to foster meaningful growth and learning for the reflector. In other words, the reflector is encouraged to ask, “What information will help me see the situation or emotional response in a different way? What information is useful for lowering my emotional response, and what information will impact my behavior?”

Evelyn provided a strong example of how inviting a different perspective while analyzing an emotional response can be the spark for igniting transformative learning. At the initial meeting for this study, Evelyn stated that her goal for our reflective sessions was to “become a better supervisor.” In one of our sessions, she was discussing the different leadership styles of her immediate supervisors, reporting a strong emotional response because she did not understand or know where the line was between friend and supervisor. As a result, she reported feeling uneasy or even cautious about sharing information during conversations with supervisors.

During this session, I prompted Evelyn to take the supervisor’s perspective and to try to see why there may not be a strong boundary line in the relationship. We both shared personal experiences with supervisors, including the outcomes of some supervisory behaviors. To contextualize Evelyn’s emotional response, I asked her if the behaviors she was witnessing in the

supervisors reminded her of anyone. After a long pause, Evelyn stated in a surprised tone, “That is me; I supervise my staff in that way!” By inviting perspective taking, Evelyn was able to recognize that her inability to draw firm boundaries with her staff might be making them feel the same way she was feeling about her interactions with her supervisors.

After connecting during the following reflective session, I checked in about Evelyn’s awareness surrounding boundaries with staff. She reported that several times over the week, she had said something to her staff and immediately thought of how her statement might not be setting a clear expectation or might be crossing the boundary from professional to personal. When revisiting this topic, I asked Evelyn how this awareness had impacted her actions or even her thinking. She reported that later in the week she found herself being more mindful about her statements and more prepared for interactions with staff, which in turn made her feel more in control.

This example clearly demonstrates how a different perspective can come to us if we are able to remain present as a reflector, and how we can gain awareness by holding that perspective over a period of time. When educators have goals and areas that they wish to improve on, it is important to build awareness and context prior to developing a plan. Simply asking Evelyn to be more direct with her staff might have created a temporary change, but one that would have been difficult to maintain because it would not have been gained through evidence or reinforced in real time. Prompting her to be curious and allowing her to arrive at a plan in her own time gave her more ownership over her actions, which was ultimately more impactful for both Evelyn and her staff. Remaining mindful and present in the moment is a skill that takes time to master. However, reflective supervision can teach and reinforce this skill so that educators can draw from their reflections to create new perspectives and knowledge.

Reconnect, Revisit, and Re-Reflect

One of the three central tenets of reflective supervision is consistency, which provides opportunities for reconnecting with the other party in a supervisory relationship. Forming a reflective relationship that is dependable and reliable builds trust and provides a chance to be in a space with mutual respect. This building of trust supports and reinforces the foundation of a meaningful relationship. In short, consistent reciprocal reflection supports transformative learning. Reconnecting also reinforces the non-evaluative process of reflection, confirming for the reflector that it is not the content of what they have expressed that holds the relationship together (such as a common opinion or interest), but rather the simple act of reflecting and learning together.

This consistent practice of not only reflecting but also *re*-reflecting within reflective supervision provides the educator the opportunity to engage in all four types of reflection presented in Chapter two, each of which offers different insights and entry points. Schön introduced the first two categories—reflecting in action and reflecting on action—in the 1980s. Reflecting in action is the capacity to walk around the problem while you are right in the middle of it—to think about what you are doing even as you are improvising those actions (Schön, 1983). This type of reflection was evident in the initial reports that the reflectors gave of challenging situations or emotional responses. Reflecting on action is reflection after the fact, once the situation is over (Schön, 1987). This type of reflection was supported in the study whenever reflective practice was used to create voice, choice, and a plan for action. Both types of reflection are necessary to achieve the level of reflection that can create change in one's practice and, ultimately, transformative learning.

Reconnecting, revisiting, and re-reflecting provide opportunities for the reflector to engage in the final two types of reflection, reflecting about action and reflecting for action. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) have described the third category, reflection about action, as “reflection about things in their environment that distract them from what is important, that get them so immersed in busy activity there is no time to think” (p. 99). They explained that reflection about action drives you to change the context and conditions of what you practice so that your practice can improve (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). By encouraging the reflector to reconnect with the intentional supportive reflective space and the reflective relationship while revisiting newly attained knowledge, reflective supervision creates sustainable and meaningful growth. The fourth type of reflection, presented by Hewson and Carroll (2016), is reflection for action, which is defined as “planning on how to put the new knowledge or learning into practice” (p. 45). In the fifth and final tenet of this study, the consistency of reflective practice and critical thinking, as evidenced by the reflectors reconnecting, revisiting, and re-reflecting, facilitates planning and reinforcement for sustainable transformative learning.

This final tenet also supports the central function of reflective supervision: the parallel process. Shahmoon-Shanok (2009) defined the parallel process as the impact of supervisory relationships on other relationships. The parallel process suggests that “as we are nurtured, so we are enabled to nurture” (p. 11). Brinamen and Page (2012) have explained that “successful reflective practice focuses on creating a mutually respectful and safe relationship in which the facilitator cares about and understands the staff” (p. 42). When a practitioner or educator experiences a relationship where transformational learning takes place, that experience can be transferred to the classroom and students. This process emerged in each of the reflector’s journeys during the study whenever they engaged in reflective practice with staff and students.

Revisiting in a reflective context means returning to a particular conversation, situation, or emotional response that was explored in a previous reflective supervision session. Revisiting provides opportunities for a deeper exploration of a particularly vulnerable topic with someone who already knows the details, such that the reflector does not need to repeat the full story or provide context. Revisiting also provides extended learning opportunities outside of the original learning by establishing a reciprocal connective conversation about the situation over multiple weeks. Lastly, it provides the supervisor with the ability to gain insight into how much the reflector is using reflection outside of the session. Setting a pattern and expectation of consistent reflection builds the reflector's capacity to learn in between reflective sessions, thus encouraging independent learning and personal empowerment.

A strong example of this process was found within the reflective sessions with Poppy when she discussed her professional relationships in the summer program at Bright Futures. She stated that two of the site coordinators at her school were difficult to connect with; she felt a large disconnect with them in terms of communication and mutual respect. Poppy admitted to feeling avoidant about her work as a whole after uncomfortable interactions with these staff members, or in the absence of interactions (when she felt they were ignoring her). These uncomfortable interactions sparked a negative emotional response in Poppy.

I asked about the history of the relationship with those two particular site coordinators. Poppy stated that most staff members tried to get to know one another through typical patterns of reciprocal social exchange, such as saying "Hello" or "How was your weekend?" These exchanges were never present in the relationships with the two "problem" staff members. While this lack of interaction could not be definitively identified as the sole reason the relationships were not growing, Poppy reported feeling powerless and frustrated about how these relationships

were impacting her motivation and her attitude toward her work in general. This topic was a particularly challenging one for Poppy to reflect upon because she was unable to find a space to use her voice and choice to improve her feelings about her work. She began questioning her identity within the organization and as an educator. Over the 10 weeks, these challenging relationships were revisited and re-reflected on almost every session. The choice and voice that Poppy focused on involved her relationship with herself and her identity, rather than working on the relationship with her co-workers. She created opportunities to engage in her typical relationship-building social exchanges and was able to not let their responses impact her emotions or, more importantly, her relationship with her own identity and with her students. She reported fewer intrusive thoughts about the negative staff relationships and more thoughts about building stronger relationships with her students and direct staff.

In this example, Poppy gained awareness and understanding through reflection and learned how processing our emotional responses, patterns of behaviors, and relationship perspectives can create transformational learning. As discussed in Chapter Two (in the context of adult learning), Drago-Severson (2009) has presented four ways of “knowing” that influence reflective practices in educational environments: instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming. Poppy’s example above emblemizes the self-transforming knower, which is the highest level of knowing. The self-transforming knower appreciates the process of collegial inquiry because it presents opportunities to articulate their own perspectives and to learn from a broad diversity of perspectives, including those that are diametrically opposed to their own (Drago-Severson, 2009). Drago-Severson (2009) further explained that the “self-transformative knower learns, contributes to, and grows from themselves, others, and larger social systems” (p. 51). Poppy displayed the ability to gain knowledge and change patterns in her personal behavior

as a result of the reflective practice, which improved the learning environment for the students. By reinforcing the parallel process, the four types of reflection, and the qualities of self-transformative knowers, the final tenet discovered in the data illuminates how reflective supervision can create meaningful and sustainable professional growth in the field of education.

Education through a Human Service Lens

It is evident from the reflective practice findings and examples discussed above that the reflective relationship is central to the meaningful and transformational learning that occurs in reflective supervision. Fenichel (1992) defined reflective supervision as relationships for learning, stating that the relationship between the supervisor and the practitioner is the mechanism of change. It is through this learning relationship of reflective supervision that an educator learns to look inward and take the perspective of others, including their students. The relationship between practitioner and supervisor provides a thoughtful and respectful space where authentic feelings, observations, and ideas can be explored on a regular basis (O'Rourke, 2011). This relationship is central and reinforces the argument that education is a human service. Understanding the important role that relationships play in learning can positively impact both the educator's mental health and the students they serve.

Education and social work courses teach Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. This theory is reinforced by the client-centered intervention model used in social work, which focuses on personal empowerment and self-actualization. It is through this lens that social workers view the individuals and families that come into their care. Maslow's hierarchy has five levels, with the higher levels building on the ones below. As noted in Chapter One, physical and safety needs come before relationship and esteem needs. In fact, all other areas of need must be met prior to meeting esteem needs, which is where cognition and learning take place. The research findings

confirmed the need for educators to reflect on how to create a safe physical and emotional space for their students; this is essential in order to meet their cognitive needs and help them engage in meaningful learning, which is where educators find value and success. As we have seen, this process begins with learning about and knowing ourselves as a part of the learning relationship. By recognizing and validating the reflective relationship as a method of knowledge exchange, reflective supervision provides the opportunity for educator self-reflection.

Parallel Process

As discussed above, the ultimate goal of reflective supervision is engagement in the parallel process. When an individual is consistently reflecting outside of the reflective session, this parallel process come to life. The experience of being validated through active listening creates a pattern of thinking and behavior that reinforces other relationships with the same reflective patterns. As Brinamen and Page (2012) have explained, “Successful reflective practice focuses on creating a mutually respectful and safe relationship in which the facilitator cares about and understands the staff” (p. 42). When a practitioner or educator experiences a relationship where transformational learning takes place, that experience can be transferred to the classroom and students. When teachers build and respond to relationships with other teachers, it becomes easier for them to create effective and emotionally rewarding relationships with families and children (Brinamen & Page, 2012).

Individual reflection allows for insight and learning from one’s own emotional responses and thinking, which supports the individual learning from another’s emotional responses and thinking. This perspective taking and positionality paves the way for the reflector to avoid communicating solely through behavior and to be curious about their own behavior and that of the staff and students they work with. Once reflection is practiced and holds value for the

reflector, it begins to be shared, encouraged, and reinforced in the learning environment. The parallel process can be seen in the extension of reflective practice to the students and other staff members that the reflector works with. Several times throughout the 10-week study, participants reported engaging in reflection activities and conversations in their learning environments, once again supporting the finding that reflection is a macro practice, even though it begins on an individual level with reflective supervision. Individuals often initially locate the value of reflection in the attainment of personal empowerment before shifting to a lens of curiosity and learning about others. This shift in awareness and perspective is then present in interactions and relationships moving forward.

Importance of Analyzing Yourself as a Part of the Reflective Relationship

It is critical for each member of the reflective relationship to have some level of self-awareness and to enter the relationship with a learning mindset in which trust can be built. Heffron and Murch (2011) explained that during reflective supervision, a supervisor creates a safe and welcoming space for staff members to reflect on and learn from their own work with a trusted mentor at their side. One main goal of reflective practice is to improve one's teaching by paying attention to one's emotional and intellectual well-being and development (Brookfield, 1995; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Believing that relationships first start with one's self, Wang (2012) has insisted on the importance of examining the self through reflective practice in order to understand how that self influences teacher–student relationships and the teaching philosophy of adult learners. Relationships are essential to building the trust and vulnerability required for transformational learning. When students and educators create non-hierarchical relationships where there is mutual understanding, respectful communication, and personal connection, those relationships can be motivating and inspiring for both the student and educator.

Social work, which is considered a human service, prepares students and professionals by encouraging them to examine their own thinking. Part of the preservice social work curriculum involves gaining knowledge of the clinical, community, and system-level challenges that an individual might face throughout their career. These include but are not limited to poverty, mental health, and the implications of culture, race, gender, sexuality, and religion. Through the study of these challenges and barriers, the social work student has an opportunity to personally reflect on their experiences and develop an understanding of what those experiences mean to them. This in turn gives social workers a chance to identify how their personal experiences have shaped their understanding of the world and to learn how those understandings can impact service to clients. The preservice reflective practice in social work could support the field of education in creating an ethical understanding of the responsibility of human service and a set of reflective expectations for educators in a non-hierarchical space. These expectations could be presented and reinforced by teacher education programs as a responsibility *to* the student (not *of* the student), allowing them to experience the removal of judgment and evaluation in learning relationships. Providing educators with reflective capacity and intentional opportunities to better analyze their own (and others') thinking, emotions, and behaviors ensures that ownership, accountability, and personal empowerment can grow.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Connection

Reflective supervision allows individuals to gain insight into the connections between their cognitions, their emotional responses, and their behaviors. Remaining in a professional context during these reflective explorations can create changes in our cognitions, including how we view students' behaviors and the buildings, districts, and systems in which we operate. Much like reflective supervision, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) supports awareness of and

cognitive connection to our emotional responses. CBT is an evidence-based treatment in a mental health environment that treats a variety of challenges, such as anxiety, trauma, and depression; it is defined as a structured, skills-based psychological intervention that alters the unhelpful patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that characterize depression and anxiety (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000).

Reflective supervision is also connected to CBT through the prioritization of non-evaluative and confidential environments. Mental health professionals are taught to meet the clients where they are in their self-awareness and understanding of relationships, and to build from the resources and strengths of their clients. Reflective supervision emulates this same individualized point of entry for reflectors. Removing the position of power in the reflective relationship creates more vulnerability for the reflectors. This can be seen in the five examples provided in this study. Each of the participants entered the study with different reflective journeys and different professional goals to work on, much like when a client engages in CBT. Each participant had a base level of self-awareness and understanding of the importance of reflective practice. My validation of their perspectives and positions within this reflective journey created acceptance and vulnerability, both of which are necessary for growth and meaningful learning. Each of the participants found the reflective supervision sessions valuable to their roles as educators and expressed growth in their understanding of themselves and their students' perspectives.

Lastly, this connection to CBT supports the idea of teaching as a human service. Viewing the educator as a part of the learning relationship provides educators with a chance to understand themselves in the context of their learning environment. This self-understanding then helps them draw healthy emotional boundaries and stay focused on the things over which they have control.

CBT often has a profound positive impact on patients, not because it necessarily “cures” mental health challenges, but because the treatment offers life-long tools and strategies to return to when mental health symptoms return or intensify. Utilizing reflective practice in a professional context has similar impacts, providing the tools to continually develop personal empowerment and a sense of control and awareness of one’s emotional responses. By continuing to engage in reflective practice, educators gain not only knowledge of strategies that can be carried forward in their professional and personal lives, but also a reinforcement of how these practices support positive mental health outcomes in learning environments.

Highest Level of Empathy: Curiosity through Safety and Validation

Active listening and validation, where someone feels heard and understood, are recognizable forms of empathy. Taking empathy to the highest level means creating and providing a safe space for curiosity: the desire to know, to see, or to experience, which motivates exploratory behavior, information seeking, and learning (Berlyne, 1954; Lievens et al., 2022; Loewenstein, 1994). The foundation of any safe space is reciprocal vulnerability and relationship building. When individuals in a reflective relationship engage in curiosity together, there is a sense of support as well as personal empowerment as both parties collaborate to better understand the challenges that one of them is facing. Curiosity is critical to learning, and safety is critical for curiosity. For a student to propose a hypothesis or ask a meaningful question, they need to feel like the environment supports different perspectives and possibly even different modes of thinking. It is almost impossible to engage in curiosity in a highly evaluative environment or in an overly critical relationship where one person holds power over the other.

Validation is key to creating a space of safety where learning can occur. Validation in a reflective supervision context essentially means actively listening and verbally confirming that

you have heard the other person. This confirmation can assume the form of statements like, “That sounds so challenging” or “I can’t even imagine what that must have been like.” To achieve the highest level of empathy, another critical step is to reference, rephrase, or reframe what the reflector has said in your own words after engaging in active listening and validation. This could take the form of telling a story from your own experiences or even referencing a past reflective session from the reflective relationship. Doing so displays to the reflector that you are curious about and engaged in their perspective of the experience. Introducing this ultimate form of empathy allows the supervisor to ask exploratory questions and dig deeper to understand the rationale behind both parties’ thinking, emotional responses, and behaviors.

Outcomes and Recommendations

In teacher preparatory programs, we are teaching educators in the same way that we are attempting to teach students in K-12 environments. Both Schön and van Manen have expressed discontent with the notion that certain professions—including teaching—are consistently micromanaged and limited to a generalizable form of practice (Tannebaum et al., 2013). Current preparatory programs define and contextualize the challenges that students face, including poverty, racism, and trauma, and give educators strategies to support those students. However, educators are rarely asked about their experiences with those challenges. As discussed in Chapter One, lived experiences shape our core beliefs, which are defined as fundamental assumptions about human behavior, the unfolding of events, and our own abilities (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). We also know from psychological research that core beliefs impact the way we interact with the world. By giving educators the opportunity to explore those core beliefs in a safe, non-evaluative space, and in the context of their educating experiences, they will be better able to understand themselves, their students, and the relationship between the two, which we know is critical to

meaningful and transformative learning. Understanding personal emotional responses empowers educators to gain awareness and control of themselves in their relationships with staff, students, and families.

The outcomes of this study displayed the potential impact of individual reflective supervision and the opportunities it creates for transformative learning on a macro level. Seeing how reflective practice impacted the five participants in their daily connections with youth reinforced the critical need to give attention to educators' mental health through the professional practice of reflective supervision. Given the well-articulated role of reflective relationships in social work literature, there is much that can be transferred to education research and practice (Wang, 2012). Now more than ever, educators are working with and within a system where students' mental health needs are increasing. It is critical that we prepare educators with the necessary awareness and tools to explore their core beliefs and manage their own emotional responses.

The highest macro-level recommendation based on the findings and outcomes of this study is to extend the reflective capacity of educators. Pally (2017) has explained that reflective capacity attaches meaning to behavior so that we can make sense of how a person is acting, both toward us personally but also toward the world. Approaching the concept from more of an internal lens, Tomlin (2014) explained reflective capacity as the awareness of one's own personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as an understanding of how these elements affect one's behaviors and responses when interacting with others. Reflective practice can begin on a mezzo level in secondary teacher education programs with more personal reflection writing opportunities on emotions and experiences throughout the curriculum; topics could include human development, cultural and racial diversity, behavioral and classroom

management, and more. Engaging educators in perspective taking about student populations while simultaneously building awareness of their own emotional responses and personal perspectives will create the emotional capacity for professional growth, which in turn will positively impact students' growth in the learning environment.

As discussed in Chapter Two, reflective supervision is a requirement for all preservice social workers so they can begin to reflect on and analyze their individual beliefs and biases toward specific populations. During social work internships (which are comparable to student teaching placements in the field of education), students meet weekly with a fully licensed social worker to reflect on their cases, their clients, and their personal emotional responses. Mirroring this system, teacher education programs could provide meaningful reflective relationships as educators are first setting out into classrooms and into their careers. Reflective practice approaches in the field of social work education privilege multiple forms of knowledge, including sensory, emotional, and relational, with the perspective that each new case or project is unique and cannot be bound by assumptions or expectations (Shea, 2019). Training educators in these reflective approaches could assume much the same form as professional licensing procedures in social work. Lastly, and once again mirroring the processes of social work, educators who have engaged in reflective supervision within their preparatory programs could then provide this supervision to education students, student teachers, and educators just entering the field.

Creating a non-evaluative safe space for educators to reflect provides immeasurable opportunities for professional growth. The removal of a traditional power dynamic is critical for mutual vulnerability and relationship building. As we know from countless scholars and practicing teachers, relationships are key to meaningful learning. If an educator emotionally

connects with the content and with students, motivation and transformational learning flourish in learning environments. It is therefore critical to build awareness of how relationships—with oneself, with learning institutions, and with students—impact educators’ own meaning making. In order for educators to display vulnerability and meaningfully reflect, reflective supervision cannot be provided by someone who holds the power to discipline the educator, either from a grading or an employment perspective.

Another macro connection worth mentioning is the continued meaningful learning that the supervisor (or, in this case, the researcher) has access to in providing this reflective practice. Reflective supervision allows the supervisor to continuously assume different perspectives and maintain the practice of historical meaning making, thus extending and reinforcing reflective capacity. In short, reflective supervision fosters a parallel process from supervisor to reflector for continuous learning. As we know from the literature, and as stated many times in this study, having a sense of belonging and relational connection allows for individuals to explore new ideas and perspectives free from fear of consequences and evaluation. Having the opportunity to explore our experiences, emotional responses, and beliefs as supervisors also provides us with more anecdotal examples to use in professional development trainings for educators. Consistent engagement in reflective supervision allows for the witnessing and contextualizing of personal reflective practice; not only is the individual reflector validated, but discoveries can also be shared and passed on.

Furthering the Research

The findings in this study revealed a continued need to examine the impacts of the social work practice of reflective supervision in educational environments. My first suggestion on how to extend this study would be to recruit educators working in a traditional public-school setting

during the regular school day, rather than in summer or after-school programs. With funding from a grant focused on the dual disciplines of social work and education, a school case study could provide further evidence of the impact of reflective supervision on educators' mental health and the parallel process with students. In order to fully explore the effects of this reflective practice, the study would need to prioritize building the reflective relationship, ideally gathering evidence from both educators and students over an even more extended data collection period than was utilized in the present study. Another micro-level extension of this study, which could be accomplished with support from an education program, would be to develop a small pilot program wherein a cohort of preservice teachers would engage in reflective supervision as they first entered the field. This would provide deep insight into the utility of reflective practice at a key point of entry, mirroring the entry point to reflective supervision for social work secondary education students.

The need for system-level interventions in order to enhance educators' reflective capacity can be supported by the development of professional learning opportunities that hold to the central tenets of the findings of this study. For example, funding could be secured to develop an adult learning curriculum that provides opportunities to explore historical meaning making, perspective taking, and the use of reflection as a pedagogical tool. Establishing follow-up learning sessions to this curriculum would provide an opportunity to both revisit the knowledge and tools already acquired in earlier reflective trainings, as well as develop new meanings and understandings; this in turn would allow for reflection to become consistent and contextualized for more transformative learning, both in and out of professional development sessions.

As discussed in this study, Jane Addams created Hull House in South Chicago in collaboration with the University of Chicago in order to display the incredible power of action

research. Utilizing this action research model, a more ambitious follow-up goal would be to develop and cultivate a school that treats reflective practice as foundational to developing social emotional learning and that therefore provides reflective supervision to all educators, administrators, and support staff. Serving as a case study, or an action research destination, the school could be continuously observed and studied while making a macro impact on students, educators, and the community. If the resources were made available through grant funding, and if a charter could be obtained from an authorized party, this would provide the opportunity to not only build on the knowledge that Jane Addams, John Dewey, and Herbert Mead provided out of Hull House, but also utilize the action research model and thereby extend the value of reflection to the community level.

My immediate plan for further research is to increase awareness within the field of education of the meaningful positive impacts that reflective supervision can have on educators. Encouraging other education professionals to view education through a trauma-informed lens and as a human service will help bring the mutual learning relationship to the fore so that the parallel process can support meaningful and sustained change. Presenting this research at educational conferences will support educators and students in both traditional school day settings and out-of-school time programs. By building greater awareness of reflective supervision, I hope to engage the parallel process, sparking curiosity in researchers, educational leaders, and teacher educator programs and inspiring others to explore reflective supervision in educational environments. The critical need for reflection in our learning environments is evident and immediate. Facilitating awareness of reflective supervision and sharing the outcomes of this study will hopefully help initiate transformative reflective practices in education.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge how my positionality within the Bright Futures organization could have had an impact on the level of vulnerability and reflection in the study findings. I support Bright Futures through my position as a mental health educational specialist for the organization. Through this role, I had an established professional relationship with the participants prior to this study. At the organizational level, I had conducted professional development trainings for the site coordinators on trauma-informed practice, student behavior, and reflection, as well as providing student and site observations. Although professional relationships had already been established, they did not entail reflective supervision prior to the beginning of the study. The foundation of mutual learning in reflective practice was established at the start of the 10-week data collection period, and the reflective relationship was established once reciprocal reflection began. However, it is important to note that this existing professional relationship could have impacted the reflectors' comfort level, with the consistency of our encounters already building the seeds of trust.

Another potential limitation of the study was my introduction of reflective writing into the data-gathering process. It was my intent to try and capture through writing a perspective that may not have come verbally in the sessions. The practice of reflective writing was discussed during the initial meeting, and each participant was provided with a journal. However, from the beginning, the writing process often interrupted reflective conversations. The transition to writing shifted the session toward more of a task orientation, with the reflector dutifully completing a formal assignment. I noticed that in the first few weeks of data collection, the participants would engage in rapport-building conversations and begin each session by either

talking about a situation or emotional response or reviewing the previous week's reflection event. However, the writing tasks sometimes seemed to stifle these more spontaneous conversations.

It is because of this observation that the writing became more independent for two of the participants, sometimes discussed in reflective sessions, but sometimes not. The study ended with only one participant continuing to engage in meaningful writing. There is a space in reflective practice for reflective writing, as discussed in the methodology section of this study. However, I found that writing as a form of reflection holds different meanings for different people. Verbal processing in a conversational format allowed for reciprocal validation and active listening, which elicited emotions of care and trust, thus helping a relationship to form. If I were to replicate the study, I would allow each participant to either opt in or out of the writing activities. Throughout the study, I observed and reflected on the behaviors and emotional responses surrounding the reflective writing prompts, recognizing when writing facilitated reflection and when it actually impeded it. By accessing and following the reflectors' engagement in reflective writing (or lack thereof), I made space for what each reflector needed, providing a meaningful, safe, and mutually respected space that supported each individual's preferred format for transformative reflecting. Though reflective writing can be an effective way to access deep thinking for some individuals, requiring it of all of the reflectors brought unexpected outcomes. It is important to note that reflective writing is not a typical or recommended part of reflective supervision as practiced in the field of social work.

References

- Addams, J. (1981). *Twenty years at Hull-House*. Franklin Library. (Original work published 1910).
- Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health and Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. (n.d.). *Best practice guidelines for reflective supervision/consultation*. <https://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Best-Practice-Guidelines-for-Reflective-Supervision-and-Consultation.pdf>
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychiatric Association Publishing.
- Berlyne, D. E. (1954). A theory of human curiosity. *British Journal of Psychology*, 45, 180–191.
- Bertrand, M., Chugh, D., & Mullainathan, S. (2005). Implicit discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 94–98.
- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2001). *Empowering teachings: What successful principals do*. Corwin.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. University of California Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Herrmann, A. F. (2020). Practicing narrative inquiry II: Making meanings move. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 284–328). Oxford University Press.
- Bogo, M. (2015). Field education for clinical social work practice: Best practices and contemporary challenges. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 43, 317–324.

- Boix Mansilla, V., & Gardner, H. (2007). From teaching globalization to nurturing global consciousness. In M. M. Suarez-Orozco (Ed.), *Learning in the global era: International perspectives on globalization and education* (pp. 47–66). University of California Press.
- Borntrager, C., Caringi, J., Van Den Pol, R., Crosby, L., O’Connell, K., Trautman, A., & McDonald, M. (2012). Secondary traumatic stress in school personnel. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 5(1), 38–50.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1754730X.2012.664862>
- Bosniak, M. (1998). Relational teaching for “Teacher 2000.” *Education Digest*, 63, 4–9.
- Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: Reflecting on the research process. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(33), 1–9.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory*. Basic Books.
- Boyd, E. M., & Fayles, A. W. (1983). Reflective learning: Key to learning from experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 23(2), 99–117.
- Boyd, M. R. (2020). Community-based research: A grass-roots and social justice orientation to inquiry. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 741–771). Oxford University Press.
- Brayton, J. (1997). *What make feminist research feminist? The structure of feminist research within social sciences*. Brunswick Press.
- Brinamen, C., & Page, F. (2012). Using relationships to heal trauma: Reflective practice creates a therapeutic preschool. *YC Young Children*, 67(5), 40–48.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. Jossey-Bass.
- Bryant, A. (2017). *Grounded theory and grounded theorizing: Pragmatism in research practice*. Oxford University Press.

- Bryant, A. (2019). *The varieties of grounded theory*. SAGE.
- Bryant, A. (2020). The grounded theory method. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 167–199). Oxford University Press.
- Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (Eds.). (2019). *The SAGE handbook of current developments in grounded theory*. SAGE.
- Cann, A., Calhoun, L. G., Tedeschi, R. G., et al. (2010). The core beliefs inventory: A brief measure of disruption in the assumptive world. *Anxiety Stress Coping*, 23, 19–34.
- Carter, M., & Fuller, C. (2015). *Symbolic interactionism*.
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/303056565_Symbolic_Interactionism
- Carver-Thomas, D., and Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Learning Policy Institute.
<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-turnover-report>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, February 24). *Data and statistics on children's mental health*. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>
- Chang, M. L. (2009). An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review*, 21, 193–218.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y>
- Chappelle, N., & Tadros, E. (2020). Using structural family therapy to understand the impact of poverty and trauma on African American adolescents. *The Family Journal*, 29(2), 237–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480720950427>
- Charmaz, K. (1980). *The social reality of death*. Addison-Wesley.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). Grounded theory. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of sociology*. Blackwell.
- Charmaz, K. (2014a). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

- Charmaz, K. (2014b). Grounded theory in global perspective: Reviews by international researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20, 1074–1084.
- Charmaz, K. (2017a). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23, 34–45.
- Charmaz, K. (2017b). Special invited paper: Continuities, contradictions, and critical inquiry in grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-8.
1609406917719350. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1609406917719350>
- Charmaz, K., & Henwood, K. (2007). Grounded theory. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 238–256). SAGE.
- Chuah, T., & Jakubowicz, S. (1999). Enriching the experience of teaching through understanding and using countertransference feelings. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 24, 211–231.
- Coghlan, D., & Brydon-Miller, M. (2014). *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research* (Vols. 1–2). SAGE. <http://doi.org/10.4135/9781446294406>
- Cohen, H. L. (2012). The manifestation and integration of embodied knowing into social work practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 62(2), 120–137.
- Costello, L. H., Belcaid, E., & Arthur-Stanley, A. (2018). *Reflective supervision: A clinical supervision model for fostering professional growth*. National Association of School Psychologists.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2015). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*. <https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS/2015EPASandGlossary.pdf>
- Cox, E. (2012). Individual and organizational trust in a reciprocal peer coaching context. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 20(3), 427–443.

- Cranton, P., & Carusetta, E. (2004). Perspectives on authenticity in teaching. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55, 5–22.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study*. University of Nebraska Press.
- D'Cruz, H., Gillingham, P., & Melendez, S. (2007). Reflexivity, its meanings and relevance for social work: A critical review of the literature. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37, 73–90.
- Deegan, M. J. (1990). *Jane Addams and the men of the Chicago School, 1892–1918*. Routledge.
- Deegan, M. J., & Burger, I. S. (1978). George Herbert Mead and social reform. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 14, 363–378.
- Dempsey, S., Warren-Forward, H. M., & Findlay, N. (2009). Development of the Newcastle reflective analysis tool. *Focus on Health Professional Education: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 11(1), 32–40.
- Denzen, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. SAGE.
- Dewey, J. (1909). *How we think*. D.C. Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. D.C. Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Kappa Delta Pi.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2009). *Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools*. Corwin.
- Eastern Michigan University Bright Futures. (n.d). *Eastern Michigan University Bright Futures program model*. <https://www.emubrightfutures.org/program-model/>
- Emde, R. (2009). Facilitating reflective supervision in an early child development center. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 30(6), 664–672.

- England, K. V. L. (1994). Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer*, 46(1), 80–89.
- Fenichel, E. (1992). *Learning through Supervision and Mentorship To Support the Development of Infants, Toddlers and Their Families: A Source Book*. Zero to Three/National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, 2000 14th Street North, Suite 380, Arlington, VA 22201-2500.
- Fenichel, E. (Ed.). (1992). *Learning through supervision and mentorship to support the development of infants, toddlers and their families: A sourcebook*. ZERO TO THREE.
- Ferguson, H. (2018). How social workers reflect in action and when and why they don't: The possibilities and limits to reflective practice in social work. *Social Work Education*, 37(4), 415–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1413083>
- Fine, M. (1992). *Disruptive voices: The possibilities of feminist research*. University of Michigan Press.
- Fleming, J., & Benedek, T. (1966). *Psychoanalytic supervision: A method of clinical teaching*. International Universities Press.
- Forte, J. A. (2004a). Symbolic interactionism and social work: A forgotten legacy, part 1. *Families in Society*, 85(3), 391–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104438940408500317>
- Forte, J. A. (2004b). Symbolic interactionism and social work: A forgotten legacy, part 2. *Families in Society*, 85(4), 521–530. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104438940408500410>
- Franklin, L. D. (2011). Reflective supervision for the green social workers: Practical applications for supervisors. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 30(2), 204–214.

- Frosch, C. A., Varwani, Z., Mitchell, J., Caraccioli, C., & Willoughby, M. (2018). Impact of reflective supervision on early childhood interventionists' perceptions of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and job stress. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 39(4), 385–395.
- Gale, T., & Jackson, C. (1997). Preparing professionals: Student teachers and their supervisors at work. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 25(2), 177–191.
- Gallup. (2014). *State of America's schools: The path to winning again in education*.
<https://www.gallup.com/education/269648/state-america-schools-report.aspx>
- Gambrill, E. (1990). *Critical thinking in clinical practice: Improving the accuracy of judgments and decisions about clients*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ganzer, C., & Ornstein, E. (1999). Beyond parallel process: Relational perspectives on field instruction. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 27, 231–246.
- Garmston, R. (2007). Collaborative culture: Balanced conversations promote shared ownership. *Journal of Staff Development*, 28(4), 57–58.
- Gonen, S. I. (2016). A study on reflective reciprocal peer coaching for pre-service teachers: Change in reflectivity. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(7), 211–225.
- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 2–27). Lawrence & Wishart.
- Hamington, M. (2018). Jane Addams. In E. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition). Stanford University.
<https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/sum2019/entries/addams-jane/>
- Hamlin, R. G., Ellinger, A. D., & Beattie, R. S. (2008). The emergent coaching industry: A wakeup call for HRD professionals. *Human Resource Development International*, 11(3), 287–305.

- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Hanna, T. (1980). *The body of life* (1st ed.). Random House.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (n.d.). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.
- Harrison, M. (2016). Release, reframe, refocus, and respond: A practitioner transformation process in a reflective consultation program. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 37(6), 670–683.
- Heffron, M. C., & Murch, T. (2010). *Reflective supervision and leadership in infant and early childhood programs*. ZERO TO THREE.
- Heller, S. S., & Ash, J. (2016). The provider reflective process assessment scales (PRPAS): Taking a deep look into growing reflective capacity in early childhood providers. *ZERO TO THREE*, 37(2), 22–28.
- Hendricks, C. O., Finch, J. B., & Franks, C. L. (2013). *Learning to teach, teaching to learn* (2nd ed.). Council on Social Work Education Press.
- Hewitt, J. P. (1994). *Self and symbolic interactionist social psychology* (6th ed.). Simon & Schuster.
- Hewson, D., & Carroll, M. (2016). *Reflective practice in supervision: Companion volume to the reflective supervision toolkit*. MoshPit.
- Hoffman, I. (1992). Some practical implications of a social-constructivist view of the psychoanalytic situation. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 2, 287–304.
- Hoffman, L., McNamee, S., & Gergen, K. (1992). A reflexive stance for family therapy. In S. McNamee & K. Gergen (Eds.), *Therapy as social construction* (pp. 7–24). SAGE.

- Hudson, P., Miller, S., Salzberg, C., & Morgan, R. (1994). The role of peer coaching in teacher education programs. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 17(4), 224–235.
- Huston, T., & Weaver, C. L. (2008). Peer coaching: Professional development for experienced faculty. *Innovations in Higher Education*, 33, 5–20.
- Iancu, A. E., Rusu, A., Măroiu, C., Păcurar, R., & Maricuțoiu, L. P. (2018). The effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing teacher burnout: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 30(2), 373–396. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9420-8>
- Working Group on Youth Programs | Youth.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2023, from <https://youth.gov/federal-departments/interagency-working-group-youth-programs>
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1989). Assumptive worlds and the stress of traumatic events: Applications of the schema construct. *Social Cognition*, 7(2), 113–136. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1989.7.2.113>
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma*. Free Press.
- Jeon, Y. (2004). The application of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 18(3), 249–256.
- Johnson, K., & Brinamen, C. (2006). *Mental health consultation in childcare: Transforming relationships among directors, staff, and families*. ZERO TO THREE.
- Jones, P. (2009). Teaching for change in social work: A discipline-based argument for the use of transformative approaches to teaching and learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 7(1), 8–25.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. Delacorte.

- Kadushin, A. (1976). *Supervision in social work* (3rd ed.). Columbia University Press.
- Kathpalia, S. S., & Heah, C. (2008). Reflective writing: Insights into what lies beneath. *RELC Journal*, 39(3), 300–317.
- Kaufman, J. S., Allbaugh, L. J., & Wright, M. O. (2018). Relational wellbeing following traumatic interpersonal events and challenges to core beliefs. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 10(1), 103–111.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000253>
- Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development*. Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Kena, G. (2015). *The condition of education 2015*. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015144>
- Kleber R. J. (2019). Trauma and public mental health: A focused review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 10, 451. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2019.00451>
- Kohut, H. (1971). *The analysis of the self*. International Universities Press.
- Kondrat, M. E. (1999). Who is the “self” in self-aware: Professional self-awareness from a critical theory perspective. *The Social Service Review*, 73(4), 451–477.
- Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(4), 608–625.
- Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Scott Foresman.

- Ku, G., Wang, C. S., & Galinsky, A. D. (2015). The promise and perversity of perspective-taking in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 35, 79–102.
- Lane, H. J. (1984). Self-differentiation in symbolic interactionism and psychoanalysis. *Social Work*, 29, 270–274.
- Larrivee, B., & Cooper, J. (2006). *An educator's guide to teacher reflection*. Cengage Learning.
- Lawson, H. A., Caringi, J. C., Gottfried, R., Bride, B. E., & Hydon, S. P. (2019). Educators' secondary traumatic stress, children's trauma, and the need for trauma literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 89(3), 421–447, 517–519. <https://doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-89.3.421>
- Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2020). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P., & Chilton, G. (2020). Arts-based research: Merging social research and the creative arts. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 601–632). Oxford University Press.
- Lelli, C. (2014). 10 strategies to help the traumatized child in school. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 50(3), 114–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2014.931145>
- Levinson, D. J. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. Ballantine Books.
- Lichtman, M. (2006). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. SAGE.
- Lu, H. L. (2010). Research on peer coaching in preservice teacher education: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 748–753.
- Madison D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography*. SAGE.
- Maines, D. R. (1997). Interactionism and practice. *Applied Behavioral Science Review*, 5(1), 1–8.

- Marthinsen, E. (2011). Social work practice and social science history. *Social Work & Social Sciences Review*, 15(1), 5–27.
- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. D. Van Nostrand Company.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970a). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Row.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970b). *Religions, values, and peak experiences*. Viking Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Matsudaira, I., Takano, Y., Yamaguchi, R., & Taki, Y. (2021). Core belief disruption amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Japanese adults. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00976-7>
- McGowan, E. M., Stone, E. M., & Kegan, R. (2007). A constructive-developmental approach to mentoring relationship. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 401–425). SAGE.
- McLeod, S. (2007). *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
- McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research*. Kingsley.
- Mead, G. H. (1913). The social self. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 10(14), 274–380.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). Section 20: Play, the game, and the generalized other. In C. W. Morris (Ed.), *Mind, self, and society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist* (pp. 152–164). University of Chicago Press.
- Mishna, F., & Rasmussen, B. (2001). The learning relationship: Working through disjunctions in the classroom. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 29, 387–399.

- Morgan, R., Gustafson, K. J., Hudson, P. J., & Salzberg, C. L. (1992). Peer coaching in a preservice special education program. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 15*, 249–258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088840649201500403>
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and application*. SAGE.
- Nagatomo, S. (1992). An eastern concept of the body: Yuasa's body scheme. In M. Sheets-Johnstone (Ed.), *Giving the body its due* (pp. 48–68). State University of New York Press.
- Nagel, T. (1986). *The view from nowhere*. Oxford University Press.
- National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment. (2019, January). *Adverse childhood experiences and the school-age population: Implications for child care policy and out-of-school time programs*. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/ncase-aces-implications-child-care-508c_2.pdf
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021, August 12). *Adverse childhood experiences*. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces.aspx>
- Neilsen Gatti, S., Watson, C. L., & Siegel, C. F. (2011). Step back and consider: Learning from reflective practice in infant mental health. *Young Exceptional Children, 14*, 32–45.
- Noda, Y. (2020). Socioeconomical transformation and mental health impact by the COVID-19's ultimate VUCA era: Toward the new normal, the new Japan, and the new world. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 54*, 102262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102262>
- Nordgren, K., & Johansson, M. (2015). Intercultural historical learning: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 47*(1), 1–25.
- O'Neill, L., Guenette, F., & Kitchenham, A. (2010). “Am I safe here and do you like me?” Understanding complex trauma and attachment disruption in the classroom. *British*

- Journal of Special Education*, 37(4), 190–197. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2010.00477.x>
- O'Rourke, P. (2011). The significance of reflective supervision for infant mental health work. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 32(2), 165–173.
- Pally, R. (2017). *The reflective parent*. W. W. Norton.
- Pawl, J. H., & St. John, M. (1998). *How you are is as important as what you do in making a positive difference for infants, toddlers, and their families*. ZERO TO THREE.
- Pearlman, L. A., & Courtois, C. A. (2005). Clinical applications of the attachment framework: Relational treatment of complex trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 18(5), 449–459. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20052>
- Pedro, J. Y. (2005). Reflection in teacher education: Exploring pre-service teachers' meanings of reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, 6(1), 49–66.
- Plumb, J. L., Bush, K. A., & Kersevich, S. E. (2016). Trauma-sensitive schools: An evidence-based approach. *School Social Work Journal*, 40(2), 37–60.
- Popa, N. (2022). Operationalizing historical consciousness: A review and synthesis of the literature on meaning making in historical learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 92(2), 171–208.
- Ramos, C., & Leal, I. (2013). Posttraumatic growth in the aftermath of trauma: A literature review about related factors and application contexts. *Psychological Community Health*, 2(1), 43–54.
- Robinson, V. (1936). *Supervision in social case work*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Ruch, G. (2002). From triangle to spiral: Reflective practice in social work education, practice and research. *Social Work Education*, 21(2), 199–216.

- Rudnick, L. (1991). A feminist American success myth: Jane Addams's twenty years at Hull-House. In F. Howe (Ed.), *Traditions and the talents of women*. University of Illinois Press.
- Saldana, J. (2020). Qualitative data analysis strategies. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 876–911). Oxford University Press.
- Sandstrom, K. L., Martin, D. D., & Fine, G. A., (2006). *Symbols, selves, and social reality: A symbolic interactionist approach* (2nd ed.). Roxbury.
- Santos, C. A., & Buzinde, V. (2007). Politics of identity and space: Representational dynamics. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45(3), 322–332.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning and learning in professions*. Jossey-Bass.
- Schram, T. H. (2003). *Conceptualizing qualitative inquiry: Mindwork for fieldwork in education and the social sciences*. Prentice Hall.
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Shahmoon-Shanok, R. (2009). Introduction: What is reflective supervision? In L. Gilkerson & S. Heller (Eds.), *A practical guide to reflective supervision* (pp. 77–123). ZERO TO THREE.
- Shalin, D. (1988). G. H. Mead, socialism, and the progressive agenda. *American Journal of Sociology*, 93, 913–951.
- Shea, S. E. (2019). Reflective supervision for social work field instructors: Lessons learned from infant mental health. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 47(1), 61–71.

- Shea, S. E. (2020). Field note—Engaging social work interns in reflective practice: A specialized training series for field instructors. *Journal of Social Work Education, 56*(1), 193–200.
- Shea, S. E., Goldberg, S., & Weatherston, D. J. (2016). A community mental health professional development model for the expansion of reflective practice and supervision: Evaluation of a pilot training series for infant mental health professionals. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 37*(6), 653–669.
- Shoshani, A., & Kor, A. (2022). The mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents: Risk and protective factors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 14*(8), 1365–1373. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0001188>
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. SAGE.
- Sitler, H. C. (2009). Teaching with awareness: The hidden effects of trauma on learning. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 82*(3), 119–123.
- Snow, D. A. (2002). Extending and broadening Blumer’s conceptualization of symbolic interactionism. *Symbolic Interaction, 25*(4), 571–575.
- Southam-Gerow, M. A., & Kendall, P. C. (2000). Cognitive-behaviour therapy with youth: Advances, challenges, and future directions. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 7*, 343–366.
- Staats, C. (2016). Understanding implicit bias: What educators should know. *American Educator, 39*(4), 29.
- Steiner, E., & Woo, A. (2021). *Job-related stress threatens the teacher supply: Key findings from the 2021 state of the U.S. teacher survey*. RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.7249/rra1108-1>

- Strand, K. (2003). *Community-based research and higher education: Principles and practices*. Jossey-Bass.
- Strauss, A. (1993). *Continual permutations of action*. Aldine.
- Strauss, A., Glaser, B., & Quint, J. (1964). The nonaccountability of terminal care. *Hospitals*, 16, 73–87.
- Susman-Stillman, A., Lim, S., Meuwissen, A., & Watson, C. (2020). Reflective supervision/consultation and early childhood professionals' well-being: A qualitative analysis of supervisors' perspectives. *Early Education and Development*, 31(7), 1151–1168.
- Taggart, G. L., & Wilson, A. P. (1998). *Promoting reflective thinking in teachers*. SAGE.
- Tannebaum, R. P., Hall, A. H., & Deaton, C. M. (2013). The development of reflective practice in American education. *American Educational History Journal*, 40(1), 241–259.
- Tomlin, A. M., Weatherston, D. J., & Pavkov, T. (2014). Critical components of reflective supervision: Responses from expert supervisors in the field. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 35(1), 70–80.
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Turner, J. H. (1998). Must sociological theory and sociological practice be so far apart? A polemical answer. *Sociological Perspectives*, 41, 243–258.
- Urdang, E. (2010). Awareness of self—A critical tool. *Social Work Education*, 29(5), 523–538.
- van Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(3), 205–228.
- van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice*. Left Coast Press.

- Virmani, E. A., & Ontai, L. L. (2010). Supervision and training in childcare: Does reflective supervision foster caregiver insightfulness? *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 31(1), 16–32.
- Wade, T. D., Wilksch, S. M., & Lee, C. (2012). A longitudinal investigation of the impact of disordered eating on young women's quality of life. *Health Psychology*, 31(3), 352.
- Wang, D. (2012) The use of self and reflective practice in relational teaching and adult learning: A social work perspective. *Reflective Practice*, 13(1), 55–63.
- Watson, C., & Gatti, S. N. (2012). Professional development through reflective consultation in early intervention. *Infants & Young Children*, 25(2), 109–121.
- Watson, C., Gatti, S. N., Cox, M., Harrison, M., & Hennes, J. (2014). Reflective supervision and its impact on early childhood intervention. In *Early childhood and special education* (Vol. 18, pp. 1-26).
- Weatherston, D., & Barron, C. (2009). What does a reflective supervisory relationship look like. *A practical guide to reflective supervision*, 63-82.
- Weatherston, D. J., Kaplan-Estrin, M., & Goldberg, S. (2009). Strengthening and recognizing knowledge, skills, and reflective practice: The Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health competency guidelines and endorsement process. *Infant Mental Health Journal: Official Publication of The World Association for Infant Mental Health*, 30(6), 648-663.
- Weatherston, D. J., & Tableman, B. (2015). *Infant mental health home visiting: Supporting competencies/reducing risks*. Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health.
- Weatherston, D., Weigand, R. F., & Weigand, B. (2010). Reflective Supervision: Supporting Reflection as a Cornerstone for Competency. *Zero to Three (J)*, 31(2), 22-30.

- Williams, R., & Grudnoff, L. (2011). Making sense of reflection: A comparison of beginning and experienced teachers' perceptions of reflection for practice. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 12(3), 281–291.
- World Health Organization. (2018). *International classification of diseases, 11th revision*. <https://icd.who.int/en>
- Yamaguchi, K., Takebayashi, Y., Miyamae, M., Komazawa, A., Yokoyama, C., & Ito, M. (2020). Role of focusing on the positive side during COVID-19 outbreak: Mental health perspective from positive psychology. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S49–S50. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000807>
- Yip, K. (2006). Reflectivity in social work practice with mental-health illness: Promise and challenge in social work education. *International Social Work*, 49, 245–255.
- Zaner, R. M. (2014). *Conversations on the edge: Narratives of ethics and illness*. Georgetown University Press.
- Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (1996). *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Routledge.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Reflective Supervision Study Participation Opportunity

Dissertation Title: The Exploration of the Reflective Supervision Relationship: Meaning Making, Communication, and Collaboration in Educational Environments

University: Eastern Michigan University, College of Education

Program of Study: Educational Studies

Primary Researcher: Betsy Stoelt LMSW

Dissertation Chair: Wendy Burke, PhD

What is Reflective Supervision?

Reflective Supervision is a “the shared exploration” [by supervisee and supervisor] of the emotional content of work with children and parents. This exploration occurs within the context of a trusting supervisory relationship that highlights the [supervisee’s] strengths and vulnerabilities and invites attention to the awakening of thoughts and feelings that occur in the presence of children and parents. The discussion leads [the supervisee] to introspection and deeper understanding of herself and of the work he or she performs with families (Weatherston & Tableman, 2015, p. 370).

What is the study looking for?

The study is hoping to gain understanding and insights on the impacts of Reflective Supervision within education professionals. To gain perspective on the reflective relationship and explore the parallel process of the extension of reflective relationships in the educational environment.

What is the commitment?

What does it mean to participate? 10 consistent weeks of weekly Reflective Supervision meetings with the primary researcher, Betsy Stoelt. These meetings typically last between 45-60 minutes and will take place virtually over the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

What will the data be?

What would data collection look like? The Reflective Supervision sessions will be recorded and transcribed. The recordings will be not shared and will be destroyed after transcription is complete. There will also be reflective writing exercises that will be completed during the weekly meetings that will be transcribed from both the participants and primary researcher.

Your Privacy?

A common and important question is, “would the participation and data collected be anonymous? The answer is yes as the participants will not be identifiable in the study by name, location and educational setting. The participant will be in control over what is able to use as data in the study.

Interested?

If you are interested in the opportunity to participate please email Betsy Stoelt at estoelt@emich.edu or call 734-707-6536. Reaching out for more information in no way commits you to participate in the study or Reflective Supervision.

Weatherston, D.J., &Tableman, B. (2015). *Infant mental health home visiting supporting competencies/reducing risks*. Southgate: Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health.

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Educational Reflective Supervision Research Participation Informed Consent

The people that are conducting this research is Betsy Stoelt. Betsy Stoelt is a Doctoral candidate working toward her dissertation for the completion of a PhD in Educational Studies. Throughout this form, Betsy Stoelt will be referred to as the principal investigator.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to gain more knowledge the use of Reflective Supervision in Educational settings. Reflective Supervision, with it foundational roots in the social work practice, is an individualized adult learning and professional growth practice in which a professional will gain reflective practice skills through individual meetings with a licensed social worker. This reflective relationship is used to gain understanding on one's meanings, bias, perspectives, and relationships with clients in order to understand how these things impact and interact their professional behaviors and success. The study will examine how this practice can be used in the area of education.

What will happen if I participate in this study?

Participation in this study involves:

- Participating in 10 consecutive weekly 45 to 60-minute Reflective Supervision sessions via Zoom virtual meeting platform.
- Recording notes during and in between the weekly sessions and also engaging in 10-minute free write activities at the end of each session.

What are the foreseeable risks for participation?

There are no anticipated physical or psychological risks to participation.

Some of the topics and conversations that occur during the reflective supervision sessions may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that cause duress or that you simply do not want to answer. You also can choose to not participate in the writing prompt at the end of the session of you feel uncomfortable.

Are there any benefits to participation?

You will not directly benefit from participating in this study.

What are the alternatives to participation?

The alternative is not to participate in this study. Please let the principal investigators know that you do not wish to participate in this study.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The principal investigator will keep all personal information confidential by not including any names of identifiable information when recording data. All information regarding this study will be stored in a password-protected computer. We will make every effort to keep your information confidential. There may be instances where federal or state law requires disclosure of your records.

You will be asked at the time of first of 10 reflective supervision sessions if you would like your identifiable information included in the article. Your response will be recorded for our records.

The principal interviewer would like to video record the zoom virtual sessions for this study. If you are video recorded, it will be possible to identify you through your voice, or video images. These identifiable recordings will not be shared as a part of the study findings. If you agree to be video recorded, sign the appropriate line at the bottom of this form.

We may share your information with other researchers outside of Eastern Michigan University. If we share your information, we will remove any and all identifiable information so that you cannot reasonably be identified.

The results of this research may be published or used for teaching. Identifiable information will not be used for these purposes.

Storing study information for future use

The principal investigator would like to store your information from this study for future use related to Social Emotional and Reflective Supervision practice Publications. Your information will be labeled with a code and not your name. Your information will be stored in a password-protected file. Your de-identified information may also be shared with researchers outside of Eastern Michigan University. Please initial below whether or not you will allow us to store your information:

_____ YES

_____ NO

Are there any costs to participation?

Participation in this study will not cost you anything. It is free and voluntary.

Will I be paid for participation?

You will not be paid or compensated in any way for your participation in this study.

Study contact information

If you have any questions about the research, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Betsy Stoelt at estoelt@emich.edu or by phone at 734-707-6536 or the Dissertation Chair, Dr. Wendy Burke, at wburke@emich.edu, or by phone at 734-487-1975.

For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu, or by phone at 734-487-3090.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is your choice. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may choose to leave the study at any time with no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published.

Statement of consent

I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

If you agree to audio recorded, sign the on the appropriate line below.

Name of Subject being recorded

Signature of Subject being recorded

Date

I have explained the research to the subject and answered all of his/her questions. I will give a copy of the signed consent form to the subject if requested.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date