ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE DURING A SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Calls to redesign clinical experiences within teacher education programs continue to gain widespread attention. Traditional student teaching placements, characterized by one-to-one (1:1) assignments of a cooperating teacher and student teacher currently dominate most clinical experiences. Research studies continually identify concerns with these traditional placements, including but not limited to student teachers’ feelings of isolation, weak professional relationships among participants, and limited exposure to multiple pedagogies. Some interventions, such as paired placements and web-based communication tools, are encouraging but rarely used within the same experience or expanded in scope. As a single-iteration design-based research study (Ma & Harmon, 2009), I present a new model of shared student teaching placements whereby student teachers systematically work across a number of classrooms and regularly engage with multiple peers and practicing teachers in a broader community of practice. I investigate the model in its original design in a single high school setting with a small number of participants (n=11). Through qualitative data collection and analysis, I consider the design of the shared student teacher model with regard to participants’ experiential learning, instructional practices, and collaborative relationships. Presenting findings in three distinct narratives of critical learning incidents, I then discuss the student teachers’ situational learning through the theoretical framework of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and expansive learning. I conclude with an evaluation of learning outcomes influenced by the design and limitations that warrant additional research and possible future iterations of the model.
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No scholarship of any great significance is done without the steadfast support of others. Labors of love, after all, need to be reinvigorated with the care and concern of family, mentors, and friends, especially when the laborer has seemingly exhausted his reserves and finds him unable to forge ahead. That has certainly been the case for me, and I want to acknowledge the sources of my inspiration and energy when I had little of my own.

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Some might say that my 2011 employment as the Director of School and Community Experiences for the College of Education marked the beginning of my precipitous decline of progress toward my degree; however, I prefer to see it as the single most significant professional experience to shape and guide my thinking about my work and my profession. The contact that I
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As an obsessive fan of entertainment award shows, I know that any written acknowledgements are full of gaps where poor memory and inexcusable exclusions leave influential people nameless and absent. To all of those who have become the latest victims of human fallibility in this exercise of best intentions, I offer my most sincere apologies. I hope they will excuse the weakness of my mind and not underestimate the capacity of my heart to keep them on the pedestals where they all rightly belong.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The student teaching experience sets the stage for a beginning teacher’s entry to the profession and can have powerful, residual effects throughout his or her career. Traditional student teaching, a multi-week apprenticeship in the classroom of a professional educator, is the capstone experience for pre-service candidates in nearly every teacher preparation program in the United States. Most teachers acknowledge student teaching as the most significant element of their pre-service preparation (Lortie, 2002). On average, it accounts for roughly one-third of a pre-service teachers’ total professional preparation (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1999). While differences in the length of experience, participant expectations, and supervision exist across programs, student teaching routinely occurs under a traditional clinical model that transcends most institutional variations. This model includes at least one extended field placement in a classroom; a period of instructional takeover, whereby the student teacher assumes professional responsibility for the classroom; and frequent observation and evaluation of student teacher performance by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.

With countless schools and classrooms hosting student teachers from hundreds of preparation programs, one would expect vastly different experiences as recounted by those who have student taught. In actuality, educators have a strikingly similar narrative of their student teaching experiences, usually a tale of apprenticeship marked by intense yet inconsistent professional development, power struggles between student teachers and cooperating teachers, and challenges for student teachers to assert themselves as active decision-makers in their experiences (Pittard, 2003; Preskill, 1998). What elements of the traditional student teaching model account for such similarities across seemingly dissimilar experiences? Comparing my
own student teaching narrative to the common characteristics of most clinical experience programs should illustrate these.

In January of 2000, I began my student teaching semester. For four months, I would student teach in two classrooms—one at the high school level and the other at a middle school in separate communities. Over the previous year and a half, I had journeyed from college student to novice teacher, but, by that winter, my travels were far from complete. Armed with theory and an increasingly nuanced vision of what good teaching might look like, I found myself thrust into two classrooms where I would put my ideas to the test. All the while the very students I was being invited to serve tested me. Like it or not, these young men and women were vetting me—deciding whether or not I deserved their attention, their creative energy, and their respect.

I was judged alone, isolated from my peers, with only my cooperating teachers to support me daily and occasionally by my clinical supervisors during their infrequent visits, all of which were evaluative in nature. Granted, while I had some communication with my fellow student teachers, both informally through casual conversation, and formally in periodic seminars, my experiences were wholly my own. No other student teacher lived in my world, was asked to play by the rules set before me, or did so with the players with whom I was engaged. For as much as our student teaching was similar in scope and sequence, it vastly differed in lived experience.

One characteristic was true of us all and can be said of most student teachers—we were raw, professionally underdeveloped novices with little formal teaching experience to call up as we were thrust into new situations daily. Still, raw as I might have been, I was never a blank slate. I had much to learn, and, luckily, I had the support of cooperating teachers and university supervisors to guide me along the way to becoming a professional educator. They had willingly agreed to serve me in my growth and development. For them, they had welcomed an
opportunity to induct another into their chosen profession and, I argue, in almost godlike fashion, to create another in their images.

I also came to student teaching with a unique set of experiences that shaped the kind of person I was, the student I had been, and teacher I aspired to be. To this classroom I brought memories of my own teachers, good and otherwise. I recalled vividly moments of great success and significant disappointment as a student, both influenced by the personal and historical events that shaped my identity, in school and out. My student teaching was never really about finding myself in unchartered territory, but rather about continuing to stake new claims by asserting myself along the storied landscape of my life. Unfortunately, my story didn’t seem to matter much. I was, after all, the subject of scrutiny of my cooperating teachers and supervisors. They held the proverbial keys to my future classroom as a licensed teacher. I was their apprentice, destined to rise or fall in their assessment of me and my performance which played out against the background of each of their individual philosophies and their broader professional communities.

The formal relationships that characterize student teaching experiences remain fundamentally unchanged in most teacher education programs. A student teacher typically serves a single classroom teacher for the duration of the experience at a single school, or alternatively might serve two teachers in two schools for separate placements of shorter duration, as was the case for my own experience. In either case, a significant professional relationship emerges between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, be it functional or not. This one-to-one (1:1) relationship positions a cooperating teacher to shape the experiential learning of his or her student teacher. Cooperating teachers routinely identify their own purpose and function in this pairing. Unfortunately, the self-identified roles, previous learning, and current
demands of cooperating teachers can diminish the learning of student teachers, especially when cooperating teachers choose to promote a sort of professional reproduction that privileges their own philosophies and experiences in the final preparation of the teacher candidate (Weasmer & Woods, 2003). A professional urgency for the student teacher grows around the maintenance of the relationship with the cooperating teacher; the preservation of peace and order prevails. Consequently, the lived experiences of student teaching in a particular classroom with a given teacher may devalue previous learning from university classes (McNally, Cope, Inglis, & Stronach, 1997) and, due to scheduling restraints and program design, may limit interactions with fellow teacher candidates.

Of course, in traditional student teaching models, the cooperating teacher and student teacher do not operate wholly independent of a “university presence.” Each forges an equally complex relationship with the university clinical supervisor, thereby extending the dyadic relationship to a complicated triad. Student teachers and cooperating teachers have both individual and shared needs, and the supervisor ultimately negotiates his or her relationship with both, while also considering his or her role in the school and at the university (Cole & Knowles, 1995). University supervisors have the daunting task of assessing student teachers’ performance in light of the dynamics of a particular classroom, while also considering the transferability of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to any number of other classroom settings.

Looking back, as a student teacher, I co-existed in another’s world. My journey in learning to become a teacher intersected with the stories and activities of my cooperating teachers, and, for a brief moment, our storylines, theirs and mine, converged. Like most student teachers, I was dropped awkwardly into the plot of a tale in progress. My place in his story and her story never seemed as pivotal as their respective roles in mine. I was the sole outsider asked
to gain entry, forge relationships, and find my stride alone and unaided, guided mostly by educators far more experienced than I. Still, we shared a common goal—to prepare me for success as a classroom teacher while advancing student learning in the classroom.

Nevertheless, my solo convergence in their worlds was both imbalanced and incomplete. As student teacher and cooperating teacher, we met each other “in progress” and had neither a vehicle nor a sense of how to systematically trace, for each other, where we had been and consider where we might go together. Instead, as is the case in most traditional student teaching experiences, my story was often muted, while I learned to perform in the roles of my cooperating teachers. While I still recall fondly my relationship with my cooperating teachers, I also recognize that we never really knew each other, professionally or personally. We were both playing programmatically legitimized roles, one as “master” and the other as “novice.” They shared their classrooms and small pieces of themselves; I absorbed both in an effort to earn a space, a voice, of my own. My emerging voice echoed back each of theirs as my performance was routinely evaluated on my ability to model their teaching behaviors. Were their voices that compelling, or were they the only ones I had the chance to hear? When I felt a tension between their perspectives and my own or questioned why we engaged in certain practices, I had few outlets to reflect without concern of disapproval.

When we finished our contractual obligation with each other and I had earned my rite of passage, our paths again diverged. We moved forward with traces of our interactions with one another. After all, no contact with another leaves us completely unchanged. Nevertheless, we went off again with little to no obligation to each other, no connection that would necessarily transcend time or distance. I became a licensed teacher; they each provided a service to the profession. Mission accomplished. Or was it? Has anything changed from then to now?
From within my own classroom, I became the master and apprenticed dozens of early field experience students and two of my own full-time student teachers. Did I also thrust them into my world unaided by others who might have guided their journeys? Did I ask them to teach as I taught and to gain entry into the profession by demonstrating to me that they could, in isolation, do as I did? What networking and collaboration opportunities did I extend to them? How did I assist them to assert themselves as professionals in a community of practice beyond the walls of my classroom? In an odd and completely unforeseen turn of events, I married my first student teacher, ten years after she worked with me and eight years after she took my classroom teaching position when I left the school to become a high school administrator. I often think about her career now, as successful as it is, and I wonder how I supported her as a cooperating teacher and also how I might have limited her unnecessarily a decade ago. She says I was an effective cooperating teacher, firm but fair. Sometimes, when she is particularly transparent, she notes that I was often intimidating, leaving her always wondering if she was doing things the way I would want them done. This reinforces my genuine concern that I might not have done enough for any student teacher with whom I worked. However, I wonder what of that is due to me and what can be attributed to the traditional student teaching experience that has persisted through generations of newly licensed educators.

Now, I am in a far different position to explore and to challenge that traditional system and to better understand how student teaching impacts the growth and development of teacher licensure candidates. As the director of school and community experiences for a Research One college of education in a major Midwestern university, I have the distinct privilege to shape the clinical experiences of pre-service teachers in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education programs. Developing, implementing, and evaluating early field experiences and
long-term student teaching placements are at the core of my professional portfolio. Armed with my own experiences as student teacher, cooperating teacher, and also a routinely assigned instructor of secondary social studies methods courses, I can turn a critical eye toward the clinical preparation of students and consider my own experiences in light of what I consider as the benefits, obstacles, and missed opportunities in student teaching. Are we doing enough for the student teachers I now serve? With all the best intentioned cooperating teachers and clinical supervisors in our programs, are we ushering our pre-service teachers into a system that best meets their developmental needs, or are we victims of the same rites of passage that challenged me in my own student teaching and made me doubt the effectiveness of my service as a cooperating teacher? Are we not only considering but purposely using the lived experiences of student teachers and cooperating teachers as a means to mutually enhance the learning during clinical field experiences?

In 2010 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) published the report of a blue ribbon panel charged with making recommendations to advance the preparation of teachers in the United States. Specifically, this panel was asked to consider how school-based clinical experiences could improve pre-service teachers’ learning. Numerous problems routinely plague clinical placements for pre-service educators, including challenging relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers, isolation of student teachers from their peers, and unwelcome reinforcement of traditional teaching practices in environments that stifle student teachers’ creativity. Sadly, these same poor clinical experiences are repeated yearly out of convenience to the university and with little regard to the developmental needs of teacher candidates (Johnson & Templeton, 2011).
In the dramatic opening line of its executive summary, the NCATE committee asserted, “The education of teachers in the United States needs to be turned upside down” (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010). The panel then recommended ten design principles that should undergird clinical experience-based teacher preparation:

1. Student learning is the focus.
2. Clinical preparation is integrated through every facet of teacher education in a dynamic way.
3. A candidate’s progress and the elements of a preparation program are continuously judged on the basis of data.
4. Programs prepare teachers who are experts in content and how to teach it and are also innovators, collaborators, and problem solvers.
5. Candidates learn in an interactive professional community.
6. Clinical educators and coaches are rigorously selected and prepared and drawn from both higher education and the P-12 sector.
7. Specific sites are designed and funded to support embedded clinical preparation.
8. Technology applications foster high-impact preparation.
10. Strategic partnerships are imperative for powerful clinical preparation (pp. 5-6).

Two of these principles (#4 and #5) highlight the importance of candidates working in collaborative, nurturing environments where they learn to interact regularly in a professional community of cooperating teachers and fellow pre-service candidates. A third (#8) speaks to the role of technology to enhance productivity, efficiency, and collaboration. Such recommendations can dramatically alter “business as usual” in most student teaching placements.

Very few teacher education programs have moved beyond the traditional design elements of student teaching. In an effort to meet the call of the NCATE panel to turn clinical experiences
upside down, this study introduces a new model of student teaching that radically alters the relationships that characterize traditional field experiences. In particular, the model expands the professional interactions of student teachers and cooperating teachers across multiple classrooms and among their peers in shared placement activities. Instead of the student teacher-cooperating teacher dyad, the proposed model supports communities of practice whereby a small group of student teachers learn and develop in a collaborative environment extending beyond a single classroom.

In the end, we know that one’s identity as a teacher is shaped by many experiences, personal and professional, yet student teaching has the potential to be the most impactful formal learning event in the myriad requirements for educator licensure. The sheer enormity of the daily learning opportunities and application of knowledge, skills, and values developed and refined in courses and clinical field experiences is staggering. The complexity of learning to teach is not to be underestimated. It occurs at the intersection of several complimentary and sometimes competing social realities. As a licensed secondary educator, P-12 administrator, and teacher educator, my sixteen year career has been indelibly marked by my own evolving roles in the student teaching process, from student teacher to clinical experiences administrator. My own experiences from student teaching in the spring of 2000 have shaped each of the successive parts I have played in my profession. Frankly, student teaching makes and breaks many teacher candidates, and that reality makes the investigation of quality clinical programming of paramount importance to teacher education. It is with that perspective and acknowledged advocacy that I propose a new model for student teaching that may expand the learning opportunities for the next generation of pre-service teachers.
Research Questions

This study offers a potential design solution to issues in the structure and practice of traditional student teaching which limit candidates’ experiential learning and systematically prohibit collaborative communities of practice among pre-service educators. Borrowing from and extending recent placement structures alternative to the 1:1 apprenticeship model and informed by relevant theory and research literature, I implemented a model of shared student teaching that was piloted during a single case study at one secondary school. A limited number of cooperating teachers and student teachers participated, while all additional student teaching experiences in our college program remained unaltered and “traditional,” as described above. From classroom observations, interviews, planning and instructional artifacts, and questionnaire results, I examined the data to both determine how the model impacted the growth and development of the student teachers’ knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions and to recommend further research on the initial design of the shared student teaching model presented herein.

The following research questions guided my study:

1. How does a shared student teaching placement model impact the experiential learning of student teachers?

2. How do student teachers use collaborative relationships with multiple cooperating teachers and student teachers to support their work?

3. How does a shared student teaching model influence the educational practices of participants?

4. How can the present model of shared student teaching be further modified to enhance the learning opportunities for future participants?
Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to impact the practices of student teaching. This design expands the professional relationships of student teachers and cooperating teachers beyond the traditional 1:1 placements, and participants have the opportunity to build a community of practice that could improve instructional practices and foster collaborative dispositions. This design has the potential to subsequently transcend the traditional student teaching experience and strengthen the professional performance of candidates when they become practicing educators.

A shared student teaching model also has the potential to revolutionize the placement practices of teacher preparation programs. The 1:1 student teaching model requires a considerable number of cooperating teachers to host pre-service teacher candidates. In the constant search for available teachers, placement offices may accept applications from teachers who do not meet all of the desirable qualifications for program participation (Johnson & Templeton, 2011). Breaking from an expectation that each student teacher must be assigned to one or even two classrooms allows programs the freedom to invite a select number of teachers to participate in shared placements. With fewer teachers needed, placement offices can select highly accomplished educators who routinely demonstrate the professional ideals of the teacher education program and then better support them in their roles as cooperating personnel.

The design of this particular shared student teaching model is only an initial attempt to extend the student teaching experience beyond traditional 1:1 placements and triadic relationships between a single student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor. The results of this study will inform future iterations of the design and support future research of critical elements of the model. Larger scale pilots should follow, and richer empirical studies will be necessary to assess the extent to which shared student teaching placements impact the
professional development and performance of teacher education candidates and the work of cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

Following this introduction, I present an extensive literature review of scholarship related to the ongoing concerns in teacher education and student teaching experiences. I also discuss recent research on alternative structures and practices that have been implemented in response to the concerns, noting how these interventions informed my shared student teaching design. Then, I offer a theoretical framework by which to consider student teaching as a learning event. After a discussion of situated learning and communities of practice, both critical elements of my design, I suggest the use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and expansive learning as theoretical lenses by which to consider the complex interactions of student teachers as learners during their clinical field experience. In the final discussion I review the principles of design-based research as an approach to study the shared student teaching model. This model responds to the evident problems with traditional student teaching in order to provide interventions that expand student teachers’ practices and advance broader theories about how they learn to teach. I also discuss how the aforementioned theories guided my analysis and critique of the model, from inception through implementation.

In Chapter 3, I offer an overview of the shared student teaching model and the particular school where it was piloted during the spring semester of 2013. I highlight the fundamental principles of the basic design and then discuss the implications of site-specific implementation of the model. A detailed profile of the school, participants, and curriculum is included. In the same chapter, I discuss the method of the study, including the use of narrative in qualitative research, and my analysis of the resulting data.
Chapter 4 serves as a narrative account of some of the most significant findings from the pilot of the shared student teaching model. Using three critical incidents of student teacher learning, shaped by interactions within and across activity systems, I blend my own anecdotal experiences as a student teacher, cooperating teacher, and teacher educator with those of the participants in my study. I do so to illustrate how my professional narrative has influenced my role as a researcher committed to addressing problems associated with traditional student teaching experiences. Each episode identifies moments of mediation for the student teachers that impacted their learning and were a direct result of the design and implementation of the shared student teaching model.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, returns to my original research questions in light of the design-based nature of this study. I offer an analysis across the episodes presented in the findings by drawing on Engeström’s (2001) five principles of activity theory: the collective interplay of relational activity systems, multi-voicedness, historicity, contradictions, and expansive transformations of activity systems. Throughout the analysis, I support my claims for expanded, situated learning opportunities for the student teachers as a direct result of the model design. I also draw out concerns in design and implementation of the model that ultimately limited some of the participants’ learning outcomes during the shared placement and discuss potential recommendations for modifications of future design iterations. In accordance with the accepted characteristics of design-based research, I then turn to a discussion of the broader theoretical refinements and advancements supported by the local data. I conclude, in much the same way I began this chapter, with a return to my own professional narrative of learning to teach and my present role as a teacher educator and program administrator. I do this to position my work in lived experience, to acknowledge the related shortcomings of this first iteration.
design study, and to invite others to expand my work in order to answer the call of NCATE, to turn clinical experiences upside down.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Teacher education, both in concept and in practice, varies among the myriad institutions with accredited programs, yet many elements are similar and sustained over generations of teacher preparation. For example, an extended internship, usually referred to as student teaching, remains both commonplace but also a common subject of scrutiny. Scholars, practitioners, and participants alike have long questioned the educational value and intended outcomes of the student teaching experience (for example, see Calderhead, 1991; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). Attempts to systematically study student teaching as a universal practice prove challenging given the variation in programming, yet a number of common design elements do exist. As a result, researchers have contributed a significant amount of scholarship to addressing the goals of student teaching, the basic participatory structure, general practices and expectations, and learning outcomes. From these studies, researchers have identified a number of limitations to traditional student teaching, and many subsequently advanced possible variations in programming to address these concerns.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief analysis of literature related to concerns with the preparation of teachers, placing particular emphasis on those findings related to the challenges with clinical experiences. As the present study is design-based and focused on the study of a single iteration of a shared student teaching model, I consider the consistent concerns about traditional student teaching experiences as a practical problem which may be addressed through the model design. In the discussion that follows the review of literature on teacher education and clinical experiences, I argue that, when implemented in isolation, the suggested variations intended to improve traditional student teaching experiences are alone insufficient to address the
recurrent problems; however, I also acknowledge how each potential modification has influenced my own design.

From the identification of the research-supported concerns and modifications related to student teaching, I turn next to the underlying theoretical assumptions about the nature of learning for participants in a student teaching placement that informed my design study. Design-based research in education often considers how the learning of the subjects occurs. To consider the learning of student teachers, I employ the theory of *situated learning* and the concept of *communities of practice*. Each is important in considering the sociocultural learning of participants in traditional student teaching experiences and any potential enhancement through the enactment of the shared placement model. With situated learning and communities of practice scholarship to inform an interpersonal plane of sociocultural analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010), I turn to Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), in general, and *expansive learning*, more specifically, as a robust, complex theoretical framework by which to consider the general concept of “student teaching” as the culminating activity for participants’ structured, mediated meaning-making of the act of teaching, as well as regulated and symbolic entry into the profession. In addition to examining CHAT and expansive learning conceptually, I also review recent research in teacher education and clinical experience framed by each theory.

Next, I broadly discuss design-based research, a new and often misunderstood approach to naturalistic study, as an approach by which to apply these theories in context and advance a deeper understanding of how student teachers learn during their experiences (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007). Design experiments are fundamentally problem-based and invite the researcher to posit and then enact potential solutions to those issues that arise in social practice. However, more than just developing an intervention to address the problem, design-based research also demands
that the researcher explore the underlying theoretical framework that, when applied, may explain the success of the proposed solution. Therefore, I employ the foundational work of design-based research to further inform my study, both in implementation and analysis.

To conclude the chapter I consider how the relevant literature has both given cause for me to propose the shared student teaching model as a way to combat the pervasive and growing concerns with clinical experiences of pre-service educators and informed my design. I argue that the complexity of student teaching, as an activity system, warrants both a sophisticated theoretical framework in which to consider the experiences of the participants and a series of modifications and interventions to address concerns and hopefully expand participants’ learning.

**Recurrent Problems**

**Teacher Education**

Teacher education has a long and troubled history in higher education. David Labaree (2004) noted that a school of education was much like “the Rodney Dangerfield of higher education: it don’t get no respect” (pp. 2-3). Haphazard and essentially non-existent training of teachers marked much of the American colonial era and continued a few decades into the nineteenth century when female seminaries marked the first sustained formal training of teachers and gave rise to the early normal schools from 1830 onward (Fraser, 2007). The earliest normal schools focused on four aspects of teacher preparation: content, pedagogy, school governance, and, most important to this study, observation of and practice in good teaching (Fraser, 2007). The earliest normal schools in Massachusetts and Illinois both made clinical experience central to their programming. The director of the Normal School in Normal, Illinois, Richard Edwards, noted practice teaching was an experience unparalleled in the preparation of future educators and
that future teachers needed regular access to children in real school settings, where they could teach, receive immediate feedback and teach again (Fraser, 2007).

A 2005 American Education Research Association (AERA) panel concluded that there was no conclusive evidence to support a claim that teacher education made any significant difference in the practice of classroom teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Despite this apparent call to action for researchers and teacher educators alike, by 2009, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan flatly asserted that “revolutionary change” was still necessary in teacher education and noted that most schools of education continued to do a “mediocre job” of preparing future educators (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013). Linda Darling-Hammond (2000) had rightly noted earlier that teacher education programs “have been variously criticized as ineffective in preparing teachers for their work, unresponsive to new demands, remote from practice, and barriers to the recruitment of bright college students into teaching” (p. 166). In particular, Darling-Hammond (2000; 2014) and others (Anderson & Stillman, 2013a; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984) bemoaned the lack of adequate clinical training as a source of frustration within colleges of education and from others who demand better prepared teachers in their schools.

Clinical Preparation of Teachers

Little about student teaching has changed over the past century, yet every new generation of educators is charged with teaching children in evolving educational environments (Alger & Kopcha, 2009). Traditional models of student teaching are designed as a formal apprenticeship. Each student teacher, in essence, learns to teach by modeling the professional practices of a veteran educator in an experience that closely resembles vocational apprenticeships (Zeichner, 2002). While the concept of apprenticeship in educational environments is not itself problematic
(Lave, 1991), the design and execution of the traditional 1:1 apprenticeship model can be detrimental to the development of student teachers (Grossman, 1991).

The history of apprenticeship is wide and varied; however, some facets appear consistent across time and profession. Gospel (1995) defines apprenticeship as “a method of...on-the-job training which involves a set of reciprocal rights and duties between an employer and a trainee; the employer agrees to teach (or cause to be taught) a range of skills” (p. 32). Although not employers, cooperating teachers do appear to serve the same function in the traditional student teaching arrangement. The placement is in a functioning classroom. There are formal rights and agreed upon roles for the teacher and the student teacher with regard to teaching load, duties, division of labor, and processes of evaluation. The inherent expectation in all traditional student teaching experiences is that the cooperating teacher will assume responsibility for teaching or providing an environment conducive for learning skills related to the profession that are contextualized in the classroom. Lastly, as Gospel (1995) notes, apprenticeships are organized and financed, according to the author, “by the state and provided within schools and colleges” (p. 33). This is essentially the model of student teaching that has existed almost exclusively since the rise of the normal schools (Fraser, 2007).

The fundamental problems with designing student teaching in the same vein as vocational apprenticeships become the narrow conceptualization of the field as a routine set of skills that can be taught or honed under the tutelage of a single master teacher, as well as the undue authority accredited to a single teacher in said mentoring. Despite what we know about the complexity of teaching and the need for collaborative planning, instruction, and assessment, traditional 1:1 student teaching experiences do not readily incorporate opportunities for authentic sociocultural learning among similarly positioned peers who are pursuing their teacher licensure.
Instead, any collaboration with peers is across classrooms and experiences that may be very
different in context and in expectations because of the individual expectations of the cooperating
teacher and the climate and culture across schools and districts.

There is neither a definitive set of skills nor the regulated execution of teaching practices
that have universal application across all classrooms. Instead, the act of teaching is largely
dependent upon the context for learning where one must account for student backgrounds,
previous learning, community expectations, and general political and social realities in specific
schools and school districts. As a result, an apprenticeship model limits a student teacher’s
consideration of teaching from multiple perspectives and across multiple classrooms. It is
wrongly predicated on a belief that a set of teaching experiences/skills can be sufficiently
modeled, practiced, and adopted under the watchful eye of a single practitioner who serves as the
gatekeeper to the profession (Zeichner, 2002). It ignores what Lortie (2002) called the
apprenticeship of observation, whereby pre-service educators have been learning to teach and
formulating their own sense of practice by watching teachers almost their entire lives. These
experiences are undervalued in the traditional student teaching placement where the pre-service
educator is expected to perform according to the cooperating teacher’s conceptualization of
teaching; what the student teacher brings into the classroom from previous learning may or may
not align with these conceptualizations and may not be discussed between the student teacher
and cooperating teacher.

An apprenticeship is rooted in a strong power differential between the master and
apprentice. This is certainly the case in traditional 1:1 student teaching placements between the
cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Legitimacy of the student teacher’s work is granted
by the cooperating teacher and his or her position of authority with students, parents, staff, and
school administrators (Cuenca, 2011). There are implicit and explicit expectations that the student teacher earn the privilege of planning, teaching, and assessing the students in the teacher’s classroom, a privilege granted exclusively by the cooperating teacher and wholly dependent upon the cooperating teacher’s perception and self-collected evidence of the student teacher’s readiness to engage in these behaviors. One such example is in regard to planning for instruction. John (2006) lamented the continued reliance on isolated, linear models of lesson planning as markers of a student teacher’s readiness to teach. He specifically raised concerns with the way in which this type of planning encourages student teachers to conceptualize teaching in such a rigid format and consequently not plan more complex lessons that could be supported with richer dialogic processes. Inclusive of planning, much of a student teacher’s readiness to teach is judged, sometimes unfairly, against the ability to perform to the specifications of the cooperating teacher. These specifications are aligned to school policies and practices, in part, but also shaped by the cooperating teacher’s evaluation of the candidate’s ability to teach. This occurs in concert with the already established expectations and practices of the classroom or, at the very least, in a style that is germane to the cooperating teacher’s philosophies and preferred practices.

The current state of pre-service clinical experience is one of stagnation (Fraser & Watson, 2013). Institutionalization of ineffective practices sustains the same general concerns in nearly all clinical experiences, undergirded by elements of teacher education, in general, that have withstood criticism to become steady markers of a less than ideal system for preparing future teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Zeichner, 2010; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). These concerns are discussed below.
**Programmatic ambiguity.** Very little about student teaching appears to be systematized within or across teacher education programs; the similarities of participants’ narratives grow more out of similar dysfunction as opposed to standard practice. Alger and Kopcha (2009) discuss extensive research that shares an overarching theme, namely that researchers and practitioners have both routinely criticized the traditional student teaching model, noting concerns with inconsistent expectations (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Simpson, 2006).

Cooperating teachers routinely misunderstand their role in the student teaching dyad or the triad, with the inclusion of the clinical supervisor (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Gut, et al., 2014; Smith & Avetisian, 2011, Torrez & Krebs, 2012; Valencia, et al., 2009). This is not particularly surprising given that cooperating teachers receive little training and support from university program faculty (Bullough & Draper, 2004) about their roles and are often unable to communicate with other student teaching participants about their experiences (Alger & Kopcha, 2009). Unsure of how to be effective partners with student teachers and often misconstruing the intent of the takeover experience required of the traditional apprenticeship model, cooperating teachers often resent their role in the traditional dyad model, feeling displaced in their own classrooms by the student teachers (Koerner, 1992). This kind of attitude is just one of the many concerns that emerge between cooperating teachers and their student teachers in the traditional student teaching model.

**Cooperating teacher—Student teacher relationships.** A cooperating teacher may be the single most important figure in a student teacher’s transition from student of education to professional teacher (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Glickman & Bey, 1990; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996). This teacher will, in essence, establish the climate in which the student teacher will work and will guide the instructional practices of the student
teacher through his or her own teaching style and approach to mentoring (Weasmer & Woods, 2003). Unfortunately, the exclusive relationship between a single student teacher and his or her cooperating teacher may be problematic. In general, traditional student teaching placements are characterized by relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers that are restrictive and/or lack clarity of participants’ roles (Torrez & Krebs, 2012; Tudela, 2014). This has serious repercussions for the experiential learning of student teachers for a number of reasons. Pittard (2003) argues that “student teaching, as preservice teachers’ initial socialization into the professional world of teaching, has enduring and indelible effects on their present and future professional development. . . . Student teaching does not always enable student teachers to develop their teaching selves” (p. 4).

The relationship that student teachers have with their cooperating teacher has a direct impact on their identity development. It can be compromised in situations where their sense of power and voice are limited by an institutionally sanctioned “novice-expert” dynamic (Pittard, 2003). The apprenticeship model restricts the growth and development of a student teacher by limiting his or her professional interactions with others and privileging the philosophies and practices of a single classroom teacher. Cooperating teachers play a critical role in how student teachers come to think and to act in the classroom. Gonzalez and Carter (1996) interviewed members of student teacher-cooperating teacher dyads from 13 elementary schools over the course of an academic year to examine differences in student teachers’ and cooperating teachers’ perceptions of salient classroom events during the placement period. The authors identified some important themes across student teacher and cooperating teacher interviews. Of particular importance, they found that cooperating teachers identified more successful lessons as those which they had direct involvement in planning with their student teachers; no cooperating
teacher reported instances of problematic lessons when they discussed them in advance. Furthermore, a cooperating teacher who considered the teaching style of his or her student teacher to be aligned with his or her own considered the lessons and overall general performance of the student teacher to be more successful; those who observed discontinuity in philosophy and practice were more critical of student teachers’ performance.

Britzman (2003) describes the privileged voices of cooperating teachers in the traditional dyad of student teaching as sustained “regimes of discourse” in the tradition of Foucault. In traditional student teaching dyads, silenced student teachers are intended to be recipients of their cooperating teacher’s knowledge and experience as the primary experts in becoming a professional educator. This is counterintuitive to what we know about student teachers’ need for ongoing support and dialogue with others. Student teachers depend heavily on the support of others to help them throughout the student teaching experience (McNally et al., 1997). These support systems are based upon numerous relationships that include cooperating teachers, clinical supervisors, university faculty, peers, family, friends, and students (McNally et al., 1997). We know that student teachers need an opportunity to share their stories, both personal and professional, with practicing teachers and with their peers. Such a narrative exchange promotes increased knowledge of teaching, constructed individually and collaboratively (Schwarz, 2001). Yet, because such sharing is not a sanctioned element of all student teaching experiences, it rarely happens.

Unaware of the impact of their actions, cooperating teachers often restrict student teachers’ identity development by expecting them to mimic their beliefs and practices in strict adherence to a traditional apprenticeship model. This routinely results in weak partnerships between student teachers and cooperating teachers, reluctance of student teachers to question
their cooperating teachers, and tensions between the theory student teachers learned in their academic programs and the practices that cooperating teachers expect them to imitate (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1999). This unhealthy relationship impacts student teachers in numerous ways. First, because cooperating teachers can have a significant impact on student teachers’ enthusiasm and sense of efficacy, an unsupportive student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship prompts student teachers to begin to question their abilities to teach successfully. Consequently, many student teachers enter their first professional positions unsure of their abilities to teach effectively; worse yet, some exit the profession, fearful they are not able to manage their own classrooms (Rushton, 2001). Because student teachers are expected to show deference to their cooperating teachers who welcome them as guests in their classrooms, this can unfortunately carry over to first-year teachers who question their ability to assert themselves in professional dialogues with veteran colleagues (Conway, Micheel-Mays, & Micheel-Mays, 2005).

The issues surrounding student teacher and cooperating teacher relationships are not necessarily the fault of any participant. Instead, both student teachers and cooperating teachers suffer from the inconsistent clinical expectations and practices in teacher preparation. These practices should not continue if student teaching is to meet the challenges of preparing teacher candidates for their roles as educators in the 21st century.

**Potential Solutions**

The concerns with student teaching are numerous, and the recommendations to improve clinical practices are almost as plentiful. Despite variations in suggested reforms, there is a central theme among scholars, namely there must be an escape from the traditional 1:1 apprenticeship model that continues to sustain the problems described above. Many scholars recommend a move toward greater collaboration and communication between student teaching
participants. A discussion of recent research intended to move clinical experiences away from the problematic vestiges of the traditional apprenticeship model follows.

Some scholars support a lengthening of the student teaching experience to allow for more time for growth and development of candidates in the field, including the discussion of year-long placements to better imitate the professional work of a practicing teacher in a normal employment cycle (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Spooner, Flowers, Lambert, & Algozzine, 2008). Despite the prevalence of this notion, researchers have determined that altering the duration of student teaching seems to have little impact on the experiential education of teaching candidates. According to Ronfeldt and Reininger (2012) and their study of over 1,000 prospective teachers in a large urban district, the length of the student teaching experience had little bearing on candidates’ sense of preparedness, efficacy, or eventual career paths; rather, the quality of the placement, in particular the ability of the cooperating teacher to model effective teaching strategies and mentor student teachers through the experience made the most significant difference in candidates’ success. Simply adding more time to placements that operate on shaky foundations will not resolve the concerns discussed above. Genuine changes to the nature of student teaching placements and the roles of participants must be considered, starting with the mentoring of candidates.

Teacher education programs need to assume greater responsibility for the preparation and training of cooperating teachers (Hoffman, et al., 2015), especially with regard to mentoring processes. Quality mentoring of student teachers cannot rest upon cooperating teachers modeling their preferred teaching methods and holding student teachers accountable for imitating them. Rozelle and Wilson (2012) observed beginning student teachers immediately re-enact their cooperating teachers’ lessons and even appropriate their jokes, stories, and illustrative
examples. Then, as the semester progressed, they continued to mimic their cooperating teachers, even when struggling, and cited shifting their own beliefs to match those of their cooperating teachers as important to their perceived success. This clearly limited the learning of the student teachers.

Other models may provide better experiences for student teachers. Smith and Avetisian (2011) highlight one approach to successful mentoring of student teachers by cooperating teachers. They characterize two principle models of mentoring: apprenticeship and reflective coaching. The former involves a cooperating teacher directly modeling “expert” practice for the student teacher to imitate, while the latter is a relationship marked less by a perceived need to “teach” candidates but rather to provide professional guidance that is informed by student teachers’ developmental needs. Reflective coaching encourages exchanges between cooperating teachers and student teachers as colleagues.

In a single participant case study, Smith and Avetisian (2011) highlighted the mentoring experiences of Avril, a secondary English student teacher, committed to teaching in a constructivist classroom. Avril student-taught in a suburban public high school with two very different cooperating teachers. One cooperating teacher, Peggy, blended constructivist and traditional teaching methods and provided Avril with apprenticeship mentoring; the other cooperating teacher, Doug, relied on traditional instruction with little opportunity for students to shape their own learning. Despite the stark difference between Doug’s and Avril’s preferred teaching styles, Doug became a reflective coach to Avril, encouraging her to develop her own teaching style and supporting her as she reflected on her successes and frustrations. Peggy insisted that Avril become more authoritarian in managing the classroom and expected her to mimic her command of the students. This ultimately diminished Avril’s growth in that
classroom and weakened her relationship with Peggy. In the end, the authors suggest that pedagogical approaches may not be as significant in the placement pairings between student teachers as their cooperating teachers’ visions of mentoring:

We must support [student teachers] and [cooperating teachers] to engage in educative dialogues about diverse views of teaching…and prepare [cooperating teachers] to support [student teachers] to engage in pedagogical practices in which they are not experienced. (Smith & Avetisian, 2011, p. 350)

As a final note, Smith and Avetisian suggest that teacher preparation programs have an obligation to encourage student teachers and cooperating teachers to have rich professional dialogues with others, beyond just their pairing, so that they can assert their own beliefs and consider the beliefs of others while continuing to hone their professional relationship. Both student teachers and their cooperating teachers can benefit from additional professional development in this sort of collaborative exchange, between themselves and with other colleagues (Clarke, et al, 2014; de Lima, 2003).

Talvitie, Peltokallio, and Päivi (2000) echo the importance of dialogue between and among participants in student teaching in their study of the journaling of sixteen pre-service vocational educators during their student teaching placement. In their analysis, the authors recognized the importance of cooperating teachers and university clinical supervisors in the professional development of the student teachers, citing open dialogue that invited divergent views as a favorable condition by which the student teachers judged their satisfaction and learning during the placement. Of particular interest was the role that peers played in supporting their fellow student teachers. Despite some reported concerns with the division of labor and follow-through during planning and general nervousness in teaching alongside a peer, the student teachers wrote favorably about what they learned together—teamwork, co-teaching strategies, new ideas, helpful advice, and emotional support. The authors cautioned that peer collaboration
to improve mentoring “…presupposes that security is felt within the group and that communication is unconstrained” (p. 87).

Better mentoring through sustained dialogue among participants, including peers, may be challenging in traditional 1:1 student teaching models. Time to interact with others is not systematized. Cornu and Ewing (2008) call for clinical supervision models that promote collaborative learning alongside other student teachers and professional educators, ultimately breaking the traditional model of thinking about student teaching in a classroom alone with one cooperating teacher and one clinical supervisor guiding the reflection process. Howey and Zimpher (1999) add that “most fundamental to the improvement of teacher education is addressing how all teachers are prepared to work with one another” (p. 294). Collaboration among participants in the student teaching experience is essential to success for all. Dallmer (2004) notes:

Identity, for all teachers, is grounded in the daily work of learning and knowing. Teachers form their identity in the social context of schooling and in the ways those contexts enable and overpower meaning (Bullough, 1997). Britzman (2003) explains that teachers bring to their work with others a multiplicity of identities they use to create meaning to situations and that, in fact, are a result of their work. Identity can be characterized as a result of multiple social interactions. Certainly, these multiple social interactions occur within an effort to collaborate. (p. 32)

Collaboration with more than one cooperating teacher can advance the learning and confidence of student teachers in several ways. For example, student teachers’ sense of efficacy is essential to their success throughout the student teaching process (Brown, Lee, & Collins, 2015; Lee, et al., 2012; Moulding, Stewart, & Dunmeyer, 2014; Thomas & Mucherah, 2016). Knoblauch and Hoy (2008) administered the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy questionnaire to 102 student teachers in a variety of placement settings (rural, suburban, urban). Among their findings, the authors noted that efficacy among student teachers has a moderate and positive
correlation to their perceived sense of their cooperating teachers’ efficacy. Therefore, it is critical that student teachers are placed with successful cooperating teachers who demonstrate competence in and satisfaction with their professional performance and clearly understand their roles as mentors to student teachers (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Glenn, 2006; Sudzina, Giebelhaus, & Coolican, 1997). Because placements with a single cooperating teacher may limit access to this kind of teacher, Knoblauch and Hoy recommend that access to multiple cooperating teachers during the student teaching experience may be advantageous. “Multiple models…may be beneficial for the development of student teachers’ efficacy beliefs. If it ‘takes a village to raise a child,’ perhaps it takes a school-wide effort to prepare a teacher” (2008, p. 176).

Additional collaborative relationships among peer student teachers have also gained considerable attention. Many teacher education programs have implemented student teaching placements that assign a second student teacher to a cooperating teacher’s classroom. This is routinely called co-teaching or partnered student teaching. Partnered teaching may take many forms. Darragh, Picanco, Tully, and Henning (2011) adapted earlier work by Friend and Cook (1992) to offer seven co-teaching strategies for paired teachers/student teachers. Extending the work of Friend and Cook, which focused on co-teaching between a general educator and a special educator, the authors advocate that paired teachers/student teachers use the same essential instructional strategies. These appear in Figure 2.1 below.

The partnered student teaching experience, when well organized both in practice and in reflection, can enhance the collaborative dispositions of student teachers and their cooperating teacher (Bullough, et al., 2003; Nokes, Bullough, Egan, Birrell; & Hansen, 2008). Of course, there are also obvious advantages in additional opportunities for individualized, differentiated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>One Teach, One Observe</em></td>
<td>One teacher leads the lesson while the other watches specifically for either a teaching technique or student evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One Teach, One Assist</em></td>
<td>Assistant intentionally works with specific students or in a predetermined role while the teacher leads the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Station Teaching</em></td>
<td>Both teachers teach different but related content to the students in small groups in a rotating cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Parallel Teaching</em></td>
<td>Each co-teacher teaches the same lesson to a smaller group of students at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Supplemental Teaching</em></td>
<td>One teacher instructs the students at grade level while the other works with those who need extension or remediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alternative/Differentiated Teaching</em></td>
<td>Both teachers present the same information to a group of students, utilizing different instructional strategies to meet the same learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Team Teaching</em></td>
<td>Both teachers equally participate in all aspects of the lesson</td>
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*Figure 2.1. Co-teaching. Adapted from M. Friend and L. Cook (1992), The new mainstreaming. Instructor, 101(7), 30-36*

instruction for students in the classroom. However, partnered placements are not without difficulties, including but not limited to issues of dependency, role confusion, loss of individuality by student teachers, expanded workload for cooperating teachers to mentor more than one candidate, and competition between student teachers in the same class space; however, the same research repeatedly demonstrates the advantages to student teachers’ learning, especially with regard to developing collaborative dispositions and increased student support, when paired placements occur (Darragh et al., 2011; Gardiner, 2010; Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009; Nokes, et al., 2008)
Lemlech and Hertzog (1999) studied student teachers and cooperating teachers in southern California who participated in two separate pilots of a new paired student teaching model. In this model, pairs of student teachers were placed in the school for an entire school year. A more unique element of this study was that the pairs were then assigned to two different cooperating teachers, one teacher each semester, with candidates spending a full year at the school in two different classrooms. The program requirements, including collaborative curriculum planning, coaching one another (cooperating teacher to student teachers and vice versa), providing lesson feedback, and engaging in professional reflection and talking about teaching, invited extended dialogue between the student teaching participants and their cooperating teachers. The authors utilized observation data, questionnaires, journal entries, and interviews with student teachers and cooperating teachers to determine how the relationship between the parties developed and what, if any, reciprocal learning, occurred.

Lemlech and Hertzog assert that, as a result of this model, both cooperating teachers and student teachers learned how to better talk to their peers/partners about teaching and learning. Throughout both studies, the authors reported significant professional gains for both the student teachers and their cooperating teachers, gains grounded in open communication and an attitude of shared responsibility for teaching and learning. In one interview a veteran cooperating teacher noted how she experienced a shift in her own past practice because of her new relationship with two novice teacher candidates:

One thing is they (the student teachers) make me much more self-conscious which is a good thing. Something you do every day for the last twenty years you do without thinking and you are blind to areas that need improvement. The student teachers make me aware of what’s new in education and keep me on my toes. (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1999, p. 8)
Similarly, in considering the student teachers’ stories about their experiences, the authors cite one student teacher who commented that “our teacher wanted to learn from us” (p. 6). The most powerful exchanges between past practices and beliefs, ideas about teaching and learning, and goals for the student teaching experience happened when cooperating teachers moved away from teacher-dominated feedback for student teachers in order to facilitate conversations where student teachers shared their experiences, ideas, and aspirations. Ultimately, through ongoing reflection, cooperating teachers and student teachers considered their beliefs about teaching and learning from one another and the shared situations in which they both taught.

The demands of classroom teaching and the stress of the student teaching experience may complicate efforts to engage in routine reflection and collaboration with other student teachers and cooperating teachers, even in paired placements. To address this concern, Alger and Kopcha (2009) have introduced a technology-based instruction and supervision program that, in their pilot study, supported student teachers, cooperating teachers, and clinical supervisors through an online format. Their program, eSupervision, was created to enrich communication and foster a sense of professional community. The online features, such as discussion boards, instant messaging, and videoconferencing encouraged professional dialogue between, not only the traditional triad, but also a larger body of student teachers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors who were using the same system. Alger and Kopcha cite one cooperating teacher who, after participating in an online discussion forum, noted that they found “a really cool opportunity to bring the whole community of learners together. So we can get ideas from each other” (p. 42). Of the seven cooperating teachers and nine student teachers who participated in the field test of eSupervision, three student teachers and two cooperating teachers discussed their hopes for more face-to-face interactions among the newly forged community of learners, all feeling that some of
the potential of their exchanges were lost in cyberspace (Alger & Kopcha, 2009). Despite this legitimate concern, the authors demonstrated that electronic platforms can also be used to support collaboration during the student teaching experience.

Sometimes, however, the student teachers need a safe environment to collaborate and to reflect apart from their evaluators. Scherff and Singer (2012) studied a group of 33 student teachers who utilized a student teacher-only wikispace to grapple (see Sizer & Sizer, 1999) with problematic areas of practice that might have been previously ignored individually or not discussed in apprehension of judgment by their cooperating teachers. From their findings within the wikispace, the authors noted that “reflection is a necessary and integral part of teacher education…. and that “a wholly student-owned space [online] added a dimension that has a powerful and lasting potential…to tackle future hard questions through reflective practice” (p. 271).

Moving beyond online communities, some scholars outside of the United States are implementing broader collaborative student teaching models to expand potential benefits from peer support networks. Most notable are Belgian researchers, Marlies Baeten and Mathea Simons. Influenced by the Friend and Cook (1992) co-teaching models, Baeten and Simons (2014) first conducted a review of literature focused on five models of team teaching—observation, coaching, assistant teaching, equal status, and teaming. As more engagement in team teaching emerges, the authors found a number of advantages for student teachers. These included: increased support; increased dialogue about teaching and learning; professional growth in teaching, collaboration, and reflection; and personal growth. However, they also warned of potential concerns with compatibility of peers, comparisons between peers by their mentors, challenges in providing constructive feedback, increased workload, and less individual teaching.
They also noted that cooperating teachers may or may not experience an increased workload in a team teaching model but will most likely notice weaker relationships with individual student teachers. Despite the noted disadvantages, Baeten and Simons (2014) hoped their work would “inspire teacher educators to implement team teaching during field experiences in teacher education” (p. 100). At the time the authors published their review of team teaching literature, they only speculated about the design of an appropriate collaborative model. They referenced both pairs of student teachers and small groups of student teachers in the same classroom. Most of the literature they cited examined paired placements, but they saw the potential for expanded systematic collaborations among student teachers and cooperating teachers. Even before Baeten and Simons suggested moving beyond the paired placement model, I undertook this study with similar goals in mind.

**Discussion**

Modified student teaching placements certainly open up additional opportunities for systemic collaboration and stronger mentoring for student teachers. These efforts go a considerable way toward addressing the most pressing concerns associated with traditional 1:1 apprenticeships models. I question if, for example, through paired placements, the addition of a second student teacher in a single classroom is enough to address the issues of student teacher isolation from their peers, inconsistent mentoring by cooperating teachers, greater exposure to differing pedagogies, the disconnection between university coursework and school experiences, and the need for sustained dialogue and critical reflection. Activist researchers, like me, are eager to promote new models of student teaching that advance greater collegial collaboration among student teachers and enhance the service provided by cooperating teachers. In general, restrictive relationships have plagued traditional student teaching placements for far too long.
Paired placements simply may not be enough to fundamentally shift the learning of participants. Student teachers learn by doing. The implications of sociocultural learning on clinical experiences in teacher education are undeniable. Researchers must consider who student teachers are, where and with whom they learn about teaching, and what structures might aid them to maximize their potential during the student teaching experience.

**Theoretical Framework**

With a sense of the ongoing problems with student teaching and current attempts to reform these experiences, I next present a theoretical framework to consider current advancements in teacher education and to anchor the design for the shared student teaching model that is the focus of this study.

**Situated Learning**

Any model of student teaching that extends professional relationships beyond the traditional 1:1 student teacher-cooperating teacher apprenticeship presupposes greater exchanges between multiple participants in an effort to improve learning outcomes for all involved. This particular approach to the field experiences recognizes the importance of *situated learning*, learning that occurs through participation with others in social contexts (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). According to Barab and Duffy (2000), “situated perspectives suggest a reformulation of learning in which practice is not conceived of as independent of learning and in which meaning is not conceived of as separate from the practices and contexts in which it was negotiated” (p. 25).

Interactions with others are essential for student teachers to make meaning of their experiences and to translate knowledge about teaching to internalized practice (Lave, 1991). According to Korthagen (2010), “we should view student learning as being part of the process of
participation in social practice” (p. 99). Situated in schools, student teachers must make sense of their experiences. Lave (1991) discusses three theories of situated experience, namely cognition plus, interpretive, and situated social learning, advocating for the latter theory for understanding learning as it should be considered in school contexts. Cognition plus theories, grounded in psychology, recognize the important effects of social interactions on cognition but do not consider cognitive processes themselves as a matter of social conditions (see Vygotsky, 1978). Interpretive theories of situated learning focus on language and social interaction, and they consider the experiences of each individual to be unique. For interpretivists, meaning is negotiated, and language allows each person to convey his or her own meaning of the world and leaves others to consider this meaning through ongoing social interactions (see Bakhtin, 1981). Finally, the highly anthropological situated social learning, to which Lave herself subscribes, shares a number of similarities with interpretivists, including an emphasis on interconnectedness between the individual and the world. Situated learning theorists differ from interpretivists, however, in their insistence that “learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people engaged in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. This world is itself socially constructed” (p. 67). People together generate the world as they generate knowledge and meaning within it. In an attempt to integrate these multiple theoretical perspectives on situated experiences, Barab and Duffy (2000) consider a blending of psychological and anthropological interpretations of situativity to account for participants’ learning in an ecology of learning, where individuals construct both meaning and identity in a specific context.

Schools are particularly problematic sites for situational experiences, given the sharp divide that can exist between what constitutes formal learning. Barab and Duffy (2000) note that
“dissatisfaction with schooling practices...is a major factor in the development of situativity theories” (p. 26). Lave (1991) explains the dissatisfaction with schools as learning organizations:

Schools and school-like workplace educational enterprises accord knowledgeable skill a reified existence, turning it into something to be ‘acquired’ and its transmission into an institutional motive.... The result is a widespread generation of negative identities and misrecognized or institutionally disapproved interstitial communities of practice. (p. 79)

Instead, Lave advocates for “curricula of practice” built around two fundamental principles: (1) newcomers to a community should move toward full participation in the work of the community, thereby allowing a changing of the understanding of the community itself, and (2) transformations of understanding depend on near-peer relations to allow the sharing of knowledgeable skills in route to full participation within a community of practice.

**Communities of Practice**

Essential then to situated learning within a professional school setting is the creation and maintenance of a *community of practice*. These communities of practice, be they formal or informal, support sustained opportunities for situated learning. Barab and Duffy (2000) suggest that communities of practice have three critical components: (a) shared cultural goals, understandings, and practices, (b) the integration of individuals into an interdependent system, and (c) reproduction of the community through the interactions of new members working alongside competent others. They note, “A community is not simply bringing a lot of people together to work on a task” (p. 50).

Entry into a community of practice is both slow and methodical. Experts welcome newcomers only after they have demonstrated the requisite knowledge and skill to advance the community generationally. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to the ways in which newcomers become part of communities of practice as legitimate peripheral participation. This is a dynamic
concept that suggests a “way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement” (p. 37). This notion may guide teacher preparation as student teachers experience gradual transition from the periphery of a community to full participation. As part of new communities of practice, pre-service teachers need to be supported, through both formal and informal structures, to further negotiate meaning and learning with all members of a community of practice, to develop an understanding of the goals of the community, and to adopt and contribute to the shared repertoire of teaching.

Reformers insist that teachers must learn to work across classrooms, grade levels, and disciplines and that this should begin during student teaching. Kahne and Westheimer (2000) recognize the important potential for learning when student teachers consider their field experiences from within communities of practice:

By collectively exploring the relationship between theory and experience, student teachers can learn not only to challenge privately held theories but to carefully consider public ones. They also learn to work together in establishing deep and meaningful principles of collective practice. (p. 381)

Jean Lave (1991) uses an anthropological perspective to consider learning in communities of practice. From this perspective, learners are apprenticed to others who have a command of the sociocultural world in which they live and work. The objective becomes for the apprentice to gain legitimacy to participate independently within the community. In considering learning from an individual or shared process, Lave offers the following definition:

Learning, it seems to me, is neither wholly subjective nor fully encompassed in social interaction, and it is not constituted separately from the social world (with its own structures and meanings) of which it is a part…. Learning is recognized as a social phenomenon constituted in the experienced, lived-in world, through legitimate peripheral participation in ongoing social practice; the process of changing knowledgeable skill is subsumed in processes of changing identity in and through membership in a community of practitioners; and mastery is an organizational, relational characteristic of communities of practice. (1991, p. 64)
Still essential to Lave’s sense of apprenticeship is the situated learning of novices from within the community as a whole, not merely from the perspective of a single member. This stands in sharp contrast to the current 1:1 student teaching apprenticeship model and supports the theoretical foundations of collaborative models like partnered teaching.

Educational communities of practice are complex and challenging, unlike many other professional communities. This stems from what Little (2002) calls the “face” of practice versus the “transparency” of practice. The face of practice is easily “described, demonstrated, or otherwise rendered in the public exchanges among teacher” (p. 934). This could include planning documents, classroom artifacts, and evidence of student performance. However, these sources do not capture the full meaning of teaching. According to Little, there is minimal transparency in teaching practice, and this complicates the formation and transmission of communities of practice. Teachers can perform most job functions without a dependency upon other teachers. Levels of success are hard to measure from one classroom to the next, especially since the very notion of success (i.e., good teaching) is debatable among educators. When teachers do engage more readily in deliberative communities of professional practice, they may struggle to maintain an orientation of the community toward improving practice and instead sustain negative attributes through accepted but ineffective norms of interaction among community participants.

Collaboration among teachers must be systematically introduced and cannot be assumed to just happen. Educational scholars (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Palincsar, Magnusson, Marano, Ford, & Brown, 1998; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008) support the creation of communities of practice/professional learning communities, suggesting that they can be designed to maximize the benefit of such interactions among school participants. By engaging
teachers as learners of curricular objectives, drawing connections between learning and teaching, encouraging collaborative planning and teaching, and implementing shared teaching models across classrooms, Palincsar, et al. (1998) grew a community of practice among teachers committed to shared objectives. They noted:

Communities of practice, as described in the traditional literature, are typically characterized as emerging of their own accord and are not subject to creation…[but] given that the contexts in which teachers generally work are not conductive to the natural flourishing of community of practice,…we believe that our professional development efforts to promote a community of practice are well founded. (p. 17)

It is exactly this creation of communities of practice that most student teaching reforms emulate, but they remain small in scope and are often not site-specific; still traditional student teaching experiences did little to support communities of practice that might have otherwise emerged on their own, so this is, nevertheless, a step in the right direction.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory

CHAT grew from the Russian sociocultural learning theories of Vygotsky, Rubinshtein, Luria and Leontiev (the Kharkovites), and others, designed to combat behaviorist dualistic interpretations of learning. At its theoretical core, CHAT examines what Vygotsky called mediated actions, which enable “human consciousness development through interaction with artifacts, tools, and social others in an environment” allowing individuals to make meaning of their experiences (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). In the Vygotskian process of mediation, there is interplay between the subject or individual actor, the object or intended outcome/goal, and the mediating artifacts/tools or the influences of people, things, and previous experiences on the subject’s mediated actions within the activity designed to achieve a specific object. This process has been routinely illustrated in the shape of a triangle to reflect the interplay between these
components in the activity, as well as the dialectic relationship between each. Figure 2.2 represents Vygotsky’s original conception and its common representation today.

*Figure 2.2 Vygotsky’s Individual Mediatinal (First Generation) Activity Theory. (Engström, 2001). [S- subject; X- mediating artifact; R- result]*

CHAT is commonly characterized by three generations of scholarship, beginning with Vygotsky’s concept of mediated action at the level of the individual, illustrated above. The second generation, influenced by the Kharkovites and expanded upon by generations of future theorists, introduced the notion of *activity systems*, which extend meaning making to the collective level and introduce the influences of socially constructed rules, community, and division of labor on mediation processes. American scholar Michael Cole and Scandinavian theorist Yrjö Engeström have been the most prominent and influential Western scholars in this second generation activity systems theory. They have each explored the influences of society, culture, and institutions on individual learning, thereby extending the first generation triangle and dialectic relationships to include these other influences. Second generation activity theory is represented in Figure 2.3 below.

*Figure 2.3 Second Generation Activity Theory. (Engeström, 2001).*
It is Engeström himself who is also credited with the transition to the most recent third generation of CHAT scholarship. The third generation scholarship, according to Engeström (2001), addresses the need to “develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems” (p. 135). His work considers the intersection of multiple activity systems and uses the second generation model to consider how two separate activity systems (triangles) experience confluence to either produce a potentially shared object or possibly to expand the intended object through the interactions of the separate activity systems. This most recent theoretical expansion appears in Figure 2.4.

*Figure 2.4* Third Generation Activity Theory. (Engeström, 2001).

As with each successive generation of activity theory, the complexity of the theory has grown with new considerations of sociocultural and sociopolitical forces that have extended Vygotsky’s original concept of mediated action (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Consequently, when employing third generation CHAT, theorists have cautioned that analysis of both individual activity systems and their interplay with other systems simply may be too much to reasonably consider. For that reason, Rogoff (1995, 1998) recommends that researchers attempt to zoom into one plane of analysis, considering the effects of the activities on the personal plane, the
interpersonal plane, or the institutional/community plane, while blurring out the other two to focus only on those elements essential to their study (in Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

CHAT continues to be the theoretical basis for a number of studies in education (for a recent overview, see Nussbaumer, 2012). In particular, many researchers are using CHAT to think about teacher education and student teaching (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999, Grossman, et al., 2000; Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky, & Fry, 2003; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002). One such example is the work by Anderson and Stillman (2013b) who examined the situated learning of a single student teacher in an urban, high-needs school. With CHAT as a framework to analyze an excerpt of the student teacher’s interview during a larger qualitative study, the authors considered the contextual factors that influenced her practice and how she thought about teaching. From their analysis of accounts of interactions between the subject, mediating artifacts, and object, in addition to the influences of the student teaching policies, school climate, and cooperating teachers, the authors suggested that student teaching programs establish learning goals and corresponding support to reflect contextual realities of the student teacher in a particular school setting while striving for coherence between the university and school systems. Among their recommendations, Anderson and Stillman argue that cooperating teachers should be an integral part of the goal-setting processes, and program designers must consider the interplay of varied activity systems (methods courses, student teaching) to support student teachers. They conclude:

Given [the] cultural and contextual conditions, which an activity system lens renders more visible, we can begin to ask ourselves a number of questions—questions that are different and, we think, more productive than those we might have posed in the past. …[A] CHAT perspective alternatively compels us to ask questions about the organization and potential reorganization of student teacher learning in relation to whatever classroom context they find themselves in…. (Anderson & Stillman, 2013b, p. 25)
In another study, Valencia, et al. (2009) considered the interrelation of activity systems between student teachers, cooperating teacher, and university clinical supervisors. Through their multi-year longitudinal study of beginning language arts teachers from student teaching to their first three years of professional practice, the authors considered the student teaching experience from all three relational perspectives. From interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of evaluative conferences, Valencia and her fellow researchers (2009) identified what they called a number of “lost opportunities for learning to teach” (p. 318). Among them were limited development of a community of reflective practice among participants, lack of experimentation and inquiry by the student teachers, few observations of student teachers and subsequent debriefings by their cooperating teachers and university supervisors, limited subject-specific feedback and links to methods courses, and minimal development of student teachers’ professional identity. The authors, while acknowledging the limited scope of their study, urge teacher education programs to consider the entire activity system and broader mediatational forces. One in particular was interaction with student teaching peers. According to Valencia, et al. (2009), “Teacher education programs that foster strong collaborative cohort programs…might consider a role for peers in the student teaching experience. Although student teachers are often placed in schools with peers, there are few formal structures to engage them in comentoring experiences” (p. 320). This may be one step to ultimately maximize the learning potential in student teaching.

Finally, with collaboration as a central focus on analysis, Dang (2013) applied Engeström’s third generation CHAT theory to examine a paired student teaching placement in Vietnam. Like others, she acknowledged the concerns with traditional student teaching, whereby candidates are isolated from their peers, have limited support, minimal knowledge of their
students, and remain survival-oriented. While she believed that paired student teaching could address many of these concerns, she also recognized the challenges. Focusing specifically on elements of contradiction between the two student teachers and their differing levels of professional development, Dang considered how their respective individual activity systems served to support and to challenge their shared object, namely improved practice in student teaching. She concluded that collaboration, while difficult and not immediate, enhanced the student teachers’ planning, instruction, and conceptualizations of teaching and encouraged additional research on collaborative processes of student teachers to increase their learning during the placement process.

**Expansive Learning**

In each of the studies outlined above, the researchers assumed a position of advocacy for improved student teaching experiences. In scholarship influenced by CHAT, especially the current third generational model, researchers often take “a participatory and interventionist role in the participants’ activity to help participants experience change” (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 23). One such intervention for researchers occurs when they strategically work with the subjects of activity systems to expand their learning beyond the initial shared object that binds their two activity systems. Engeström calls this process *expansive learning*. Expansive learning is initiated when some individuals involved in a collective activity transform an activity system through reconceptualization of the object and the motive of the activity by embracing a radically wider horizon of possibilities than previously anticipated (Engeström, 2001). Engeström (1999) identified an expansive learning cycle that includes: (a) questioning; (b) historical and empirical analysis; (c) modeling the new solution; (d) examining the new model; (e) implementing the new model; (f) reflecting on the process; and (g) consolidating the new process. The end object may
then be expanded, and the cycle may begin as new artifacts are introduced. In formal research studies framed around expansive learning, it is often the researcher who considers the wider possibilities and suggests the additional artifacts/tools and potential shifts in the sociocultural planes, particularly the interpersonal and cultural/institutional, which may support the expansion of the object. “The object of expansive learning activity is the entire activity system in which the learners are engaged. Expansive learning activity produces new patterns of cultural activity. Expansive learning at work produces new forms of work activity” (Engeström, 2001, p. 139).

Scholars have consequently used expansive learning through CHAT to advance design-based research that fundamentally alter activity systems. When Ann Brown (1992) first proposed design experiments she argued for “a methodology that would simultaneously generate elements toward a general theory of learning and facilitate practical formation of intentional learning environments…” (Engeström, 2006, p. 20). Brown (1992) pointed out, in describing one of her first design experiments that “we intervene in all aspects of the environment. Our interventions are deliberately designed to be multiply confounded. Although I was taught to avoid such messy things like the plague, I do not see an alternative” (p. 166-167).

Much of the messiness that Brown (1992) referred to above has to do with what Engestöm (2001) called the five principles of expansive learning. These are:

1. Prime unit of analysis: “A collective, artifact-mediated and object-oriented activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems, is taken as the prime unit of analysis.”

2. Multi-voicedness: “An activity system is always a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests.”

3. Historicity: “Activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time. Their problems and potentials can only be understood against their own history.”
4. Contradictions: Contradictions play a central role as “sources of change and development… [They] are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems.”

5. Possibility of expansive transformations: “An expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualized to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of activity. (pp. 136-137)

As two activity systems interact around a shared object, each subject encounters the forces of polyvocality, historicity, and contradiction as he or she continues to operate within the original activity system (personally and interpersonally) and simultaneously work toward an outcome shared by engaging those in another activity system with its own set of personal and social influences and artifacts (tools, signs, rules, community, division of labor). These complex inactions can produce an expanded object, shared by actors in both activity systems.

Expansive learning has provided a theoretical framework for some recent research on teacher education and both paired and multiple student teaching placements. Sorensen (2014) studied a collection of collaborative student teaching cases in England during a post-graduate program in education. The student teaching experiences he studied included paired placements in the classroom (n=17), a placement of three student teachers (n=2) in the classroom, and a single instance of four student teachers in the same classroom (n=1). The design of the study did not dictate any particular collaborative processes, though the student teachers and their cooperating teachers received information about various team teaching strategies; nevertheless, they were free to collaborate as they saw fit. Through field notes, teaching portfolio analysis, and semi-structured interviews, the author examined characteristics of the placements, their collaborative processes, the nature of their dialogue, the role of the cooperating teacher, the reciprocity of learning, and the evidence of expansive learning. Among his findings, Sorensen observed evidence of all stages of Engeström’s expansive learning cycle during the case studies.
Of particular interest was the way in which peer dialogue and collaboration encouraged questioning and historical and empirical analysis (Stages 1 and 2) during episodes of student teachers’ learning when official discourse, from cooperating teachers, local perspectives, and national policies, and traditional apprenticeship power dynamics had previously stifled the expansive learning opportunities of student teachers. This is all the more reason, as Sorensen notes, to continue to explore new and better ways to structure the student teaching experience to maximize the expansion of learning that is possible. To design a new model of student teaching that addresses the concerns identified in the literature and that is informed by the sociocultural learning theories discussed above requires a careful examination of a progressive form of study in the learning sciences, design-based research, to which I next turn.

**Design-Based Research**

Changing the structures of the typical student teaching placement is a complex undertaking that impacts multiple participants in the clinical education of pre-service teachers. With a new design, a researcher can essentially alter the experiences of student teachers, cooperating teachers, school-age children and their families, clinical supervisors, and teacher educators in fundamental ways. Because so much about the student teaching experience remains steeped in tradition, any changes are likely to draw curiosity from some and even ire from others. While the experiences of student teachers involved in a new model of student teaching are worthy of their own careful study, a design researcher instead studies how elements of the design impact the experiential learning of the specific participants in order to develop and extend theories of learning through the experiment. Gaining considerable interest and popularity over the past twenty years, educational design-based research (DBR) challenges a number of the epistemological tenets of longstanding research practices yet ultimately depends on similar
conventions to gather evidence to support reasoned claims about human learning in social contexts. While design experiments over the past twenty-five years have examined several interventions in teacher education, including how particular instructional strategies are taught to and then implemented by pre-service teachers (see Anderson & Shattuck, 2012, for an analysis of DBR scholarship between 2002-2011), I found no formal design-based research studies that examine the problems with and subsequent interventions for pre-service clinical experiences, particularly student teaching. This should not discredit the use of design experiments in this endeavor.

Origins of Design-Based Research

Ann Brown (1992) and Allan Collins (1990) are both credited with the earliest proposals for design experiments, though conducting studies of pedagogical designs were not uncommon before their work (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003). While Collins focused early on design-science in fields like aeronautics, it was Brown who quickly envisioned design-based research in the learning sciences. According to Sandoval and Bell (2004), Brown saw:

…an evolving approach to ‘design experimentation’ as an effort to bridge laboratory studies of learning with studies of complex instructional interventions....The challenge, as she saw it, was to develop a methodology of experimenting with intervention design in situ to develop theories of learning (and teaching) that accounted for the multiple interactions of people acting in a complex social setting. (p. 199)

This definition makes clear two key elements of design-research that have persisted since that time. First, the work of design-based researchers is messy and done in context in complex environments, like classrooms. Second, there is a need for a unique methodology to support this work. After Brown’s work, design-based research grew in popularity and offered a new means to study interventions in educational settings. New design studies/experiments considered theoretical questions about learning and related practical interventions in context, yet, despite
their promise, they were met with skepticism by the research community for their lack of experimental control, large data sets, and concerns over generalizability (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004).

**Characteristics of Design-Based Research**

Design-based research has evolved over time, in response to expanding scholarship and continued criticism. Still with considerable variation between individual studies, some features of design experiments are more cross-cutting. Cobb et al. (2003) identified five such features:

1. The purpose of design-based experiments is to develop a class of theories about the process of learning and means to support it.
2. They support highly interventionist methodology.
3. Design-based experiments create conditions for theory development but also challenge those theories.
4. They are iterative in design.
5. Theories developed are humble and concerned with domain-specific learning processes within the activities of the design.

These same features are echoed by The Design-Based Research Collective (2003) who identified five characteristics of good design-based research which include:

1. Design goals that combine the creation of learning environments with developing theories of learning.
2. Research and development occur throughout cycles of designs and redesigns.
3. Research must lead to theory developments that inform practitioners.
4. Research must demonstrate how the designs function in natural settings, noting successes and failures and corresponding interactions that support understanding.
5. The research must rely on methods that generate data to trace the processes of participants in the design, from enactment to outcomes.
Examining these characteristics in more detail further elaborates the possibilities and challenges inherent in design-based research.

**Developing theories of learning.** At the heart of any design-based research is the intent to develop learning theories. These are not grand theories but rather humble and pragmatic; the research is “conducted to develop theories, not merely to empirically tune ‘what works’” (Cobb, et al., 2003, p. 9). Even though domain-specific and focused on the activities within the model of study (Cobb, et al., 2003), design-based research finds validation of theory beyond the specific intervention. There is broader value in the theory produced so that it extends beyond immediate relevance for the researchers in an initial design study (Barab & Squire, 2004). According to Barab and Squire (2004), “Design-based research strives to generate and advance a particular set of theoretical constructs that transcends the environmental particulars of the contexts in which they were generated, selected, or refined” (p. 5). Therefore, there are simultaneous goals of refining more global theory and the local practice influenced by the design research (Collins, et al., 2004).

**Iterative design.** Design experiments are intended to be iterative; researchers should learn from the enactment of design elements and they modify the models through cycles of revision and study (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). This is not to say that design elements are not carefully constructed and plans for implementation well-established at the outset of a design experiment. “When the conjectured starting points, elements of trajectory, and prospective endpoints have been specified, the challenge is to formulate a design that embodies testable conjectures about both significant shifts in [student learning] and the specific means of supporting those shifts” (Cobb et al., 2003, p. 11). Throughout studying the design, researchers then should improve the initial design “by testing and revising conjectures as informed by
ongoing analysis of both the students’ [learning] and the learning environment” (Cobb, et al., 2003, p. 11). “This approach of progressive refinement in design involves putting a first version of a design into the world to see how it works” (Collins, et al., 2004, p. 18). In most design-based research this happens through a series of model iterations that are tested over time and with varying pools of participants. The time, cost, and complexity of these processes make design experiments difficult, if not impossible, under certain circumstances. Some scholars have argued consequently that studies of first iterations designs are appropriate in scope for scholarship, such as a doctoral dissertation, where time and resources are limited and there remains a commitment by the researcher to recommend future research and modifications to the initial design (Ma & Harmon, 2009).

**Practical theoretical application.** Whether based upon assertions from a single iteration design study or multiple cycles of design modification, the initial support and resultant theories of learning should have significance in practice. Design experiments are a form of applied research intended to support individuals or groups with specific needs (Stokes, 1997). The theories advanced from design-based research should have a purposeful impact on the work of teachers and/or their students and should make possible a richer understanding of how they learn. As a result, design studies are highly contextualized and consider a number of critical variables specific to the research setting. Cobb, et al. (2003) suggested that “design experiments ideally result in greater understanding of a learning ecology—a complex, interacting system involving multiple elements of different types and levels—by designing its elements and by anticipating how these elements function together to support learning” (p. 9). In general, this learning occurs in the daily practices of teachers and students in schools.
Citing Rogoff (1995), Collins, et al. (2004) advocated for careful analysis of learning environments through personal, interpersonal, and community interactions. The authors identify at least three types of dependent variables, in context, that are important to assess:

1. Climate variables such as engagement, cooperation, risk taking, student control.
2. Learning variables, such as content knowledge, skills, dispositions, metacognitive strategies, learning strategies.
3. Systemic variables, such as sustainability, spread, scalability, ease of adoption, and costs (p. 36).

Researchers must consider these variables as they implement their designed interventions. As they manipulate dependent variables, researchers shape practice and develop theory in situ. “The design of innovations enables us to create learning conditions that learning theory suggests are productive, but that are not commonly practiced or are not well understood” (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 5). Therefore, there is a desire to bring value-added practices to the contexts where researchers study design models:

Most classroom design experiments are conceptualized as cases of the process of supporting groups of students’ learning in a particular content domain. The theoretical intent, therefore, is to identify and account for successive patterns in student thinking by relating these patterns to the means by which their development was supported and organized. (Cobb et al., 2003, p. 11)

With attention to a specific problem in a particular setting, researchers can “…consider the role of social context and have better potential for influencing educational practice, tangible products, and programs that can be adopted elsewhere…,” and they can produce “…research results that are validated through the consequences of their use…” (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 2).

**Design function.** The functionality of a model or intervention, as a whole, as well as its component elements, should be at the center of any design experiment. Researchers have a responsibility to report both successes and failures of the design as implemented, prompting
modifications and future study. The heart of design-based research is in the enactment of the models of learning in natural settings to gauge its functionality, essentially “…‘engineering’ particular forms of learning and systematically studying those forms of learning within the context defined by the means of supporting them” (Cobb, et al., 2003, p. 9). The outcomes of design-based research are process-oriented and informed by context:

We view educational interventions holistically—we see interventions as enacted through the interactions between materials, teachers, and learners. Because the intervention as enacted is a product of the context in which it is implemented, the intervention is the outcome (or at least an outcome) in an important sense. (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 5)

Successful interventions function to enhance learning of participants and warrant future implementation and further study.

Because context and practical application are critical considerations in design experiments, researchers must also examine their interventions with a critical eye and an awareness of ineffective design elements:

Programs that DBR researchers/designers construct are put into practice in settings that support the achievement of their goals in some ways and inhibit them in others, and explanations of their accomplishments and limitations need to take their institutional settings into account. (Greeno, 2016, p. 636)

Then, with a goal of broader theoretical relevance and transfer beyond the particularities of the current study, researchers must consider design limitations to inform successive iterations. Weaknesses in design, demonstrated through issues of transfer, warrant discussion, modification, and future study. Lobato (2003) cautions researchers to specifically consider how unexpected outcomes from participants can inform this process:

Issues of transfer should contribute to design decisions in the iterative cycles of design experiments. However, the assumptions underlying one’s model of transfer will affect how the design experiment evolves. Traditional models rely too heavily on the determination of transfer from an expert’s point of view and, as a result, can lead to design decisions that are not informed by the specific generalizations that students have
formed. In contrast, the actor-oriented transfer approach focuses on the processes by which learners form personal relations of similarities across situations, whether or not those connections are correct or normative, and on the specific ways in which the instructional environment affords and constrains learners’ generalizations. This information can, in turn, inform design decisions. Thus, even when things go wrong, as they often do in the initial stages of design experiments, the actor-oriented approach provides a principled method for profiting from an investigation of students’ ‘incorrect’ generalizations. (p. 20)

In this regard, for design-based research to function successfully, both theoretically and pragmatically, researchers should engage participants meaningfully as contributors to the research process, allowing the “actors” to make important contributions to the modification of designs as well as inform richer theoretical understanding through their participation in the study (Reinking & Bradley, 2007).

**Methods and reporting.** Design-based research breaks the boundaries of any single methodology or research tradition in the field of education and learning sciences. In their discussion of the validity of design experiments, Barab and Squire (2004) push design-based research beyond claims of truth to suggest that “such a system of inquiry might draw less from traditional positivist science or ethnographic traditions of inquiry, and more from pragmatic lines of inquiry where theories are judged…by their ability to do work in the world (Dewey, 1938)” (p. 6). The authors add that “design-based research is not so much an approach as it is a series of approaches, with the intent of producing new theories, artifacts, and practices that account for and potentially impact learning and teaching in naturalistic settings” (Barab & Squire, 2004). To that extent, design experiments do not fit neatly in any particular methodology (Hoadley, 2004; Sandoval & Bell, 2004; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003), instead borrowing those methods necessary and recognized as credible in other forms in inquiry:

- Ethnography provides qualitative methods for looking carefully at how a design plays out in practice, and how social and contextual variables interact with cognitive variables.
- Large-scale studies provide quantitative methods for evaluating the effects of
independent variables on the dependent variables. Design experiments are contextualized in educational settings, but with a focus on generalizing from those settings to guide the design process. They fill a niche in the array of experimental methods that is needed to improve educational practices. (Collins, et al., 2004, p. 21)

Progressive as they might be, design-based researchers still acknowledge that the triangulation of multiple data sources is critical (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). Despite this, because of an absence of shared language and significant variations in scholarship, there have been procedural and epistemological challenges to design-based research (Desforges, 2000; Kelly, 2004). Still, the design-research community persists and refines its work through continued conceptualization and further enacted studies (see van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006, for a collection of essays by design-based researchers).

There is an inherent complexity to design experiments. With rigorous goals to develop theory and offer practical support to learners, researchers spend considerable time designing and implementing their interventions in naturalistic settings. The methods they employ to study their designs generate tremendous amounts of data. Researchers collect voluminous data about participants’ learning and consider specific artifacts, as well as less concrete aspects, like activity systems and curricula (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003).

Because educational design research occurs in complex environments like schools, there is a challenge to take such large amounts of data and use them purposefully to advance the goals of the research. Ultimately, reporting on design experiments should include: goals and elements of design, setting, description of each phase, outcomes, and lesson learned (Collins, et al., 2004). Data are chosen carefully in reporting findings from each iterative design, recognizing that “design-based research generates large amounts of data that ultimately go unanalyzed (Collins, et al., 2004). This is not to the detriment of any particular study or to design experiments
holistically when considering how specific data from pivotal moments of the design implementation can be selected and used purposefully to advance broader claims:

…Each event being complex, enduring multiple transformations, having multiple antecedents, and resulting in a myriad of consequences (Isaac, 1997)…led Abbott (1992) to discuss a case as a sequence of major turning points (kernels) and sets of situational consequences flowing from these kernels. As such, a fundamental challenge in presenting design narratives lies in uncovering these events so that the reader understands their complexity but doing so in a way that lends itself global relevance while at the same time meaningfully capturing the dynamic unfolding of the phenomena (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 9).

Barab and Squire (2004) promote researchers extracting these kernels from the data of the design experiment and shaping narratives that demonstrate both the local impact and theoretical understanding that can be revealed through participants’ experiences within the intervention. This is exactly what Hoadley (2004) did through narratives to demonstrate how research participants learned to collaborate online through the gradual development of tools and practices during his study of successive design iterations. Echoing the selection of pivotal data, Hoadley argued that “narrative is a structure for conveying a series of related events, a plot. Narrative may omit details, but important agents, events, causes, and results are relayed” (p. 454). Regardless of whether a researcher reports findings using narrative or another structure, “a primary aim when conducting a retrospective analysis is to place the design experiment in a broader theoretical context, thereby framing it as a paradigm case of the more encompassing phenomena specified at the outset” (Cobb, et al., 2003, p. 13). This supports the use of a single case to advance theories with wider implications for learning in other circumstances.

Equally as challenging as the reporting of design experiment data is acknowledging the role of the researcher in the intervention. Barab and Squire (2004) discuss the challenges for researchers who are also designers of educational interventions and must be transparent with regard to their own influence in the particular context being studied. “Design-based researchers
are not simply observing interactions but are actually “causing” the very same interactions they are making claims about” (Barab & Squire, 2004, p. 9). In this sense, design-based researchers must negotiate the tension between their roles as advocates and critics (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003).

**Summary of Literature Review**

Deeming traditional student teaching as a flawed learning experience for pre-service educators and for those who have attempted to mentor them is often evidenced in the relevant research literature (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007; Fraser & Watson, 2013). It is equally easy to latch on to any number of reform efforts that are providing much needed structures to advance richer situated learning in the field through sustained communities of practice among student teachers. These models, representative of the complexity of the activity systems at play in educational clinical experiences, go quite a long way in answering the call for more collaborative field experiences for future teachers (NCATE, 2010).

Still, I cannot help but wonder if more engaged, inquiry-oriented coaching by a cooperating teacher and student teachers assigned in dyadic or perhaps triadic arrangements are truly sufficient to advance the complex learning process of student teachers who continue to negotiate multiple activity systems and must expand their learning in light of the rules, communities, and divisions of labor that are commonplace in schools. Are the presently reported modifications to student teaching enough? Does adding a second or a third student teacher to a single classroom significantly alter the otherwise unequal relationship between novice and expert? Does a micro-community of practice that grows from within a single classroom support
ample identity development for student teachers who are eager to forge new partnerships, use new tools/artifacts, and expand what and how they learn with and from others?

Returning to the identified, real and practical problems with traditional student teaching experiences, as supported by research, I fear that current collaborative designs, namely paired placements, are insufficient to expand student teachers’ learning in an environment that reflects the complexity of classroom teaching and professional dispositions of collaboration. I remain unconvinced that, in pairs, student teachers have access to the tools they need to best mediate their learning. Furthermore, in a single classroom, working with just one cooperating teacher, I am skeptical that they have the necessary exposure to contradictions in practice they need to broaden their understanding of teaching or the space to process their learning through broad, systematic peer support. As a result, I propose a model of shared student teaching placements, where a small number of secondary student teachers are assigned to a select group of teachers in a single academic department. Instead of spending a semester in a single classroom, perhaps with one other student teacher, the student teachers rotate consistently across classrooms, in varying instructional groups, to create a vibrant professional community that promotes learning for all participants in accordance with the theoretical underpinnings of situated learning and communities of practice. This particular model is unlike any other previously studied, and it provides a chance to investigate a unique clinical experience that turns teacher education “upside down.” The model itself must be studied on the principles of its design and its ability to meet the intended outcomes for which it was created, utilizing the characteristics and features of design-based research in a first iteration study (Cobb, et al., 2003; Ma & Harmon, 2009; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). It, like the simpler paired models that preceded it, must be researched in context.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN, SETTING, AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is an attempt to address the ever-present and mounting concerns over traditional student teaching practices; it is an attempt to investigate more innovative, collaborative field placements to enhance student teachers’ learning and advance resultant theory. My interest in this work is not surprising. As a licensed teacher and current teacher educator, I want to make certain that teacher preparation programs are supporting the growth and development of pre-service educators in the richest, most complete clinical experiences possible. However, my interest is more than just out of respect for my chosen profession. Perhaps most important is my current role as the primary administrator in the college of education where I am responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of candidates’ clinical experiences in three distinct licensure programs. In that way, I am constantly concerned with the quality of student teaching experiences for multiple stakeholders—cooperating teachers, university supervisors, public school students, and, most obviously, our teacher candidates.

Informed by my past experiences and my present position, I designed and implemented the first iteration of a shared student teaching model to essentially disrupt the 1:1 traditional, vocational apprenticeship that has been shown to limit the growth and development of student teachers through structures and practices that unnecessarily isolate the candidates from their peers and limit their learning opportunities. The shared student teaching model is marked by a collaborative team of student teachers working collectively, in varying configurations, across a select number of high school classrooms. This shared experience integrates many central tenets of situated learning and communities of practice. Because of the highly social nature of student teaching, I used activity theory to shape my understanding of the student teachers’ learning.
during this shared placement and consider to what extent the model supported and detracted from their growth and development.

I describe the shared student teaching model in the next section. Then, to best understand this study as a unique case in which to consider a collaborative student teaching experience, I describe the research setting and participants. Following those descriptions, I review the methods of my study, as well as data analysis techniques. I conclude with a discussion of the ethical implications of my research and my positionality as a researcher, with particular emphasis on my identity as an educator and my current professional role.

The Shared Student Teaching Model

Traditional student teaching mimics vocational apprenticeships. Discordance exists between the basic tenets of apprenticeship and the complex nature of learning to teach. Traditional 1:1 apprenticeship in student teaching unnecessarily restricts candidates’ access to mediating artifacts and sustained interactions within and across communities that have the potential to expand their learning. Traditional student teaching inhibits a student teacher’s investigation of divergent teaching practices and philosophies, as well as limits opportunities for purposeful collaboration and shared reflection between teaching candidates who have similar developmental needs (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Grossman, 1991; Zeichner, 2002). The isolation of the traditional 1:1 student teaching likely diminishes the learning of student teachers, especially given the limited training most cooperating teacher receive in mentoring future educators and the time they are willing to invest in being a learning partner alongside their student teachers (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Butler & Cuenca, 2012). Ultimately, the situational power granted to a single cooperating teacher to shape the development of a pre-service educator
should be challenged to respond to the demands of the profession for those about to enter the field (Smith & Avetisian, 2011; Torrez & Krebs, 2012).

My model includes the following key design elements:

1. An imbalanced ratio of student teachers to cooperating teachers, requiring student teachers to routinely work in the same classroom with one or more peers while still encouraging some episodes of independent teaching.

2. A set schedule for each student teacher whereby he or she teaches in three or more classrooms for the duration of the experience.

3. Pre-determined roles for the student teachers each class period. These include: primary instructor, secondary/supporting instructor, and floating/flexible. [Primary instructors are responsible for instructional oversight. Secondary/supporting instructors provide support as arranged with the primary instructor. Floating/flexible instructors move “vertically” across the course schedule to support instruction in multiple classrooms, over time, as requested or arranged.]

4. Appointment of one (1) cooperating teacher as the official record-keeper and evaluator for each student teacher.

5. Regular encouragement for co-planning and co-teaching among student teachers (and cooperating teachers) with resources available for assistance.

6. An exclusive online forum for student teacher peer-only planning, discussion, and reflection.

These key elements, as simple and unrefined as they may be, force dramatic changes in the “business as usual” of traditional student teaching. Moving student teachers between classrooms and reshuffling teaching groups repeatedly throughout the day pushes beyond previous reconfigurations of traditional placements, like paired student teaching described in the last chapter. Extending the student teachers greater access to their peers and more classrooms, encouraging co-planning and co-teaching, and disrupting the apprentice-master relationship systemically legitimates the utility and the complexity of tools to support collaboration and community practices among student teachers.
When I implemented this model at Scott High School, I believed I had the start of a new and better way to support student teachers’ learning. I fully recognized though, as with any first iteration, the model would require revision and future study. Although each student teacher was officially assigned to a single cooperating teacher, for record-keeping purposes, they worked across three or more classrooms and with several peer teacher candidates during the student teaching semester. Based upon the student teachers’ previous clinical experiences, academic preparation, interests communicated in résumés and cover letters, and the “matchmaking” recommendations of the on-site clinical supervisor, I made the initial schedules for each student teacher. I assigned them to classrooms to teach independently, in pairs, and in small group and to have one instructional period a day for flexible participation across classrooms, as desired. Prior to the beginning of the experience, I provided them with this structured student teaching schedule and recommended roles for classroom participation as they worked in multiple classrooms and with their peers and various cooperating teachers. The schedule remained subject to change, in consultation with the cooperating teachers and student teachers were active participants in its evolving design and implementation. This was to allow for changes based upon experience and the personal dynamics among participants. The full initial schedule for each student teacher appears in Appendix A.

Throughout the study, I worked closely with participants to make minor modifications to the model, generally clarifying roles and responsibilities and offering adjustments to practices with which the cooperating teachers were more familiar from traditional placements. My intention was to allow the model to be enacted as designed until the experiences of participants could inform more substantive revisions. Through the present iteration, I am convinced that the results of this first pilot study provide an understanding of how student teachers learn and how a
new shared model of student teaching may address the concerns with traditional student teaching arrangements.

**Research Setting**

**The Community and the School**

My selection of the community and the school in which I conducted my study was purposeful. First, the site was conveniently located for me to make routine visits and to have frequent contact with the participants. Second, the school and the social studies department were familiar to me, well regarded by former student teachers, and had sufficient requests from prospective cooperating teachers in the social studies department as to not warrant additional recruitment efforts. Third, I had consistent working relationships with the school’s dedicated clinical supervisor, the principal, and three of the four cooperating teachers. I used these relationships to gain entry into the field and maintain close working relationships with the cooperating teachers throughout my fieldwork. This pilot study could have been reasonably conducted in any secondary school setting, though it is important to note that the model design and implementation should reflect certain particularities in the school where it is to be implemented.

**The community.** This study took place in a small urban community in the Midwest. The population of the city at the time was approximately 81,000, and there were over 200,000 people within the county. The city boasted ample opportunities for professional, highly skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled employment; the largest regional employer was a four-year university in the community. The unemployment rate in the community was on par with the 8% national average in the spring of 2013 and was lower than surrounding cities of comparable size. The
median household income was $39,354.00, and approximately 22% of the population lived below the poverty level.

With a rich, historical downtown and significant retail shopping in newer city developments, the community embraced both its heritage and its future. The university hosted numerous cultural, professional, and sporting events, and community members frequently had access to university activities and facilities. The city was also located relatively near to three urban cities.

**The school.** Scott High School (SHS) is a mid-sized comprehensive high school and served as the host site for the shared student teaching pilot during the spring semester of the 2012-2013 academic year, between January and May. With a student population of approximately 1,300, it was one of four high schools to serve the community described above. The average class size at SHS was between 24 and 25 students. All classes were taught by teachers who were highly qualified according to federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations.

The student population, at the time of this study, was 44% White, 37% African-American, 9% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 3% other or mixed races. Over half the student population (52%) came from low-income households, and the school reported a challenging 90% attendance rate with a 17% chronic truancy rate. In 2012 the school’s four-year graduation rate was just above 80%, with only 88% of White students, 70% of African-American students, and 66% of students with disabilities graduating. The five-year graduation rate saw these same percentages stay relatively constant or even drop in the case of White students.

Collectively, the Class of 2012, those who graduated a year before I conducted my research, performed above state averages in all subparts of the ACT; however, noticeable
concerns in reading and mathematics performance appeared in the disaggregated data for African-American and Hispanic students and for student with disabilities. In particular, of the Grade 11 students who completed the state’s mandated achievement examination, of which the ACT is a critical part, 83% of African-American students performed below standards in reading; similar low performance for Hispanic students and students with disabilities was reported at 73% and 85% respectively. Performance in mathematics was equally troubling with 88% of African American, 80% of Hispanic, and 90% of students with disabilities performances below state standards. In the state, social studies is not a component of the required achievement exams, so no standardized student performance data was available.

By 2013, Scott High School did not demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by NCLB, and the school was on the sixth year of Academic Watch Status. At the time of the study, the school was not subject to a federal School Improvement plan, as per NCLB guidelines.

Despite ongoing concerns with students’ academic performance as measured by the state achievement tests, Scott High School was a vibrant school community with a rich history and strong culture. A collective pride and general school spirit resonated through the hallways. Students and staff alike took care of the school building and grounds; such efforts masked the fact that parts of the school are over 75 years old. The glass cases and walls throughout the building displayed athletic and co-curricular awards and activity postings. By all accounts, SHS was a typical public comprehensive high school in basic form and function.

**The social studies department.** Nine teachers comprised the Social Studies department at Scott High School. The department members taught 21 courses that include Academic Level (general education), Accelerated (honors), and Advanced Placement (college-level) offerings.
Teachers taught both semester- and year-long courses, and students were required to take three total credits of social studies courses, at least one-half credit per year. Although students had some variety of course selection, required course topics included ancient world history (freshman), world history (sophomore), United States history from colonization to Cold War (junior), and modern United States history (senior). All students also had to pass a departmental examination that covered the United States Constitution, the state constitution, Declaration of Independence, the Pledge of Allegiance, proper handling of the flag, and voting methods.

Participants

The student teachers and cooperating teachers who consented to participate in this study expressed initial interest in being a part of the traditional student teaching program which was already established in the geographic area where Scott High School is located. Based upon their initial interests, I actively sought their consent to participate in the shared student teaching model. I met with prospective participants collectively—one gathering for student teachers and another for cooperating teachers—to present the proposed research study. After the presentation, I invited interested attendees to complete consent forms and return them to me and/or my academic advisor for further consideration as possible participants in the study. These consent forms are included in Appendix B.

The student teachers. Seven pre-service secondary social studies student teachers were participants in the study. Each of them requested a student teaching placement in the geographic area that encompasses Scott High School. A concurrent selection process between the candidates themselves and the school’s clinical supervisor occurred. I invited 10 total candidates who had similar geographic placement requests to be potential participants in the study; nine self-selected to participate. At the same time, the on-site clinical supervisor at the school
identified seven candidates, of the 10, who she felt had desirable qualifications (e.g., clarity of written expression, record of strong academic performance, course histories which reflect similar content to high school courses taught, similar professional interests to cooperating personnel) and requested they be paired with the available social studies cooperating teachers at SHS; she made her recommendations on the initial assumption that a traditional 1:1 placement would follow and that only four of the seven would eventually be placed at the school. The seven selected by the clinical supervisor were among the nine who expressed interest in participating, and they were all subsequently placed at SHS under the design of the shared student teaching model that is the focus of the study. The two students who requested to participate but were not selected by the supervisor, as well as the one who opted not to be considered for participation, were assigned to traditional student teaching placements in other high schools in the same geographic area. I again presented the seven students to both the on-site clinical supervisor to seek her approval for placements, this time outlining the expectations of the shared student teaching placement model; she was amenable to the concept as described. In addition, I presented each candidate to the school’s principal for review and approval, under the preliminary design of the shared model. He, in consultation with the clinical supervisor, approved the final placements. While they had some hesitance in the change, they were not immediately concerned; if anything, their response was one of neutrality.

Although each student teacher was officially assigned to a single cooperating teacher, for record-keeping purposes, they worked across three or more classrooms and with several peer teacher candidates during the student teaching semester. Based upon the student teachers’ previous clinical experiences, academic preparation, interests communicated in résumés and cover letters, and the “matchmaking” recommendations of the on-site clinical supervisor, I made
the initial schedules for each student teacher. I assigned them to classrooms to teach independently, in pairs, and in small group and to have one instructional period a day for flexible participation across classrooms, as desired. Prior to the beginning of the experience, I provided them with this structured student teaching schedule and recommended roles for classroom participation as they worked in multiple classrooms and with their peers and various cooperating teachers. The schedule remained subject to change, in consultation with the cooperating teachers and student teachers were active participants in its evolving design and implementation. This was to allow for changes based upon experience and the personal dynamics among participants. The full initial schedule for each student teacher appears in Appendix B.

All seven student teachers, five males and two females, were Social Science: History Teaching majors. This academic program results in a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and includes 36 hours of United States, European, and Global History, in addition to 41 hours of courses in the separate social science disciplines (Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology). The major is mostly prescriptive, but students do have flexibility in selecting the topics of study for their advanced history courses.

The student teachers also completed three of four semesters of a 37-hour professional education sequence that is part of a minor in secondary education at the time of the study. Prior to student teaching, the candidates finished courses in subject-specific methods, educational applications of technology, content-area literacy, educational psychology, educational organization and leadership, social foundations of education, and special education. During the student teaching semester, the student teachers concurrently enrolled in a final subject-specific methods course that related closely to their student teaching experiences.
Prior to student teaching, all participants completed three short-term early field experiences in middle schools and high schools near the university campus. The placements coincided with a methods course offered each semester. Each placement was in a single classroom, and candidates attended the placement classroom in pairs or groups of three for approximately ten weeks, three hours per day. A placement timeline appears in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1. Social studies pre-service teacher field experiences, 2011-2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Major assignments</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Introduction to Teaching in a Diverse Society</td>
<td>MS or HS</td>
<td>Teach one (1) partial lesson prepared by cooperating teacher</td>
<td>Cooperating teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teach or co-teach two (2) additional lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>Introduction to Teaching Diverse Middle Level Students</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Teach/co-teach three (3) lessons</td>
<td>Cooperating teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>Introduction to Teaching Diverse High School Students</td>
<td>Scott HS</td>
<td>Teach one (1) lesson prepared by cooperating teacher</td>
<td>Cooperating Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teach at least one (1) lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate a peer’s teaching of a lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>Teaching and Assessing Diverse Secondary Students</td>
<td>Scott HS</td>
<td>Gradual takeover of classroom duties of cooperating teachers</td>
<td>On-site clinical supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum 4-6 week takeover experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During these early field experiences, students were participant-observers, working closely with individual students and small groups of students, in addition to teaching three lessons per semester. Because of their interest in participating in the shared student teaching pilot, I did place each participating student teacher at Scott High School during the fall semester
of 2012; however, they were assigned in pairs or groups of three to just one classroom, in accordance with standard early field experience practices. The lessons they taught were in sequence with the adopted district and/or classroom curriculum. The cooperating teacher observed and evaluated each candidate’s teaching performance. Early on, field placement lessons were created by the cooperating teacher; soon, the teacher candidates created and delivered lessons individually or with their peers also assigned to the classroom. These lessons were vetted by the cooperating teacher and often included materials selected by the cooperating teacher himself or herself. In all, the student teachers who participated in this study taught a minimum of nine partial or complete lessons in a live classroom prior to student teaching.

Before the student teaching semester, cooperating teachers from the first three early field experiences were charged with the task of evaluating the performance of teacher candidates and recommending their continuation in the program. While university faculty members who teach social studies methods monitored placement activity through classroom discussions and student journals, they did not conduct site observations of the candidates. Therefore, there was little previous commonality in the experiential learning of secondary education student teachers in the social studies program. While they may have been in a common classroom for one semester, they had other experiences with other teachers and no uniform supervision to draw connections across their placements or corresponding coursework.

**The cooperating teachers.** Four cooperating teachers agreed to participate in this study. They were the only four cooperating teachers who submitted requests to host social studies student teachers at Scott High School during the spring of 2013. Their pseudonyms and course assignments for the semester appear in Table 3.2 below.
Table 3.2. Scott High School Cooperating Social Studies Teachers, Spring 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperating Teachers</th>
<th>Courses Taught</th>
<th>Supervisor Placement Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Wes Conlon</td>
<td>Accelerated Ancient Civilizations</td>
<td>Brian McKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accelerated Ancient World History</td>
<td>Eric Cohoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Megan Swartzbaugh</td>
<td>Modern United States History</td>
<td>Nathan Rhine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World History</td>
<td>David Joag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Matthew Walsh</td>
<td>Accelerated Ancient Civilizations</td>
<td>Christie Trimble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accelerated United States History</td>
<td>Jared Tulin*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Holly Neal</td>
<td>Accelerated Ancient Civilizations</td>
<td>Sara Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accelerated Ancient World History</td>
<td>Jared Tulin*b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern United States History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All names are pseudonyms.

*aCollege-readiness seminar

*bJared Tulin was originally recommended for placement in either Mr. Walsh’s or Ms. Neal’s classroom, based on the assumption that a traditional 1:1 placement would occur.

I contacted each of the teachers individually about participating in this pilot and met with them before any student teachers were assigned by the university placement office. Their participation was in no way impacted by the normal screening process of student teaching applicants by the university’s on-site clinical supervisor, and the cooperating teacher had no part in the final assignment of student teachers from the available applicants. The supervisor’s initial recommendations for potential student teacher assignments also appear in Table 3.2.

While each of the cooperating teachers participated fully in the study and shared very similar perspectives on the design, two of them, Mr. Walsh, and Ms. Neal, offered extended
responses during interviews, raised concerns as self-identified “spokespeople” for the four cooperating teachers, became the focus of many of the student teachers’ anecdotes, and were participants in more than one of the critical incidents I report in the next chapter. Ms. Swartzaugh, a veteran teacher, was consistently brief in her responses during interviews, not permitting much extended analysis of her reflections as a participant. Mr. Conlon, on the other hand, spoke at length and was a brand-new cooperating teacher with just five years teaching experience. This was his first time to be a cooperating teacher. While he offered more extended comments about his experience, the responses often mirrored much of what Mr. Walsh shared and were without the additional perspective of having been a cooperating teacher in a traditional 1:1 placement. I chose to present more data from interactions with Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal as illustrative of the experience for the cooperating teachers in the study.

**The university placement office and the researcher.** As both the researcher conducting this study and the full-time director of the university student teaching placement office, I must position myself in the balance between architect of the present study and manager of the traditional student teaching placements for the program in which the student teachers are enrolled and the cooperating teachers volunteer. One of my chief professional responsibilities is to recruit cooperating teachers for student teaching and to then assign teacher candidates to these classrooms. I assign student teachers based upon recommendations from clinical supervisors, upon review of placement files by teachers and administrators, and upon my evaluation of their previous experiences and their subsequent professional development goals and needs. My work is influenced by program mission and vision, availability and interest of cooperating teachers, support of schools and school districts, and the regulations of the state licensing agency for educators. One of those regulations requires the university placement office to assign a
cooperating teacher to each student teacher for recordkeeping purposes, including the completion of midterm and final examinations required for program compliance with state accreditation policies. Despite the design of the shared placement model, each student teacher had to have a single designated cooperating teacher. For that reason, I returned to the clinical supervisor’s initial “matchmaking” recommendations (see Table 3.2) for what she anticipated to be 1:1 placements and assigned student teachers to a selected cooperating teacher, per campus policy. These placement assignments consequently influenced how I established the teaching schedule for each student teacher, assuring they were working with their designated record-keeper/evaluator, but it did not limit student teacher’s engagement with other cooperating teachers or vice versa.

The high school students. Though they are not direct participants in the study, the high school students assigned to these four classrooms assumed a critical role in the research process. They were the recipients of the collaborative efforts of the student teachers and cooperating teachers who planned, taught, and evaluated lessons intended for them. Much of the experience of student teachers is shaped by interactions with the students they serve. To understand how the shared student teaching experience influenced the experiential learning of pre-service teacher candidates, I collected data to study their teaching in each classroom and how the student teachers and cooperating teachers reflected on their experiences with their students. To that extent, the high school students, mirroring the school demographics presented above, were critical participants in this study. I obtained passive parental permission and student assent in order to document observed classroom behaviors and to review student-generated assignments and assessments. I did not video or audio record the high school students in the classroom, conduct high school student interviews, or include any interactions that would identify a
particular student in my evidence and analysis. The parental permission letter also appears in Appendix B.

**Data Collection**

This study was grounded in the fundamental elements of first iteration design-based research (DBR) (Cobb, et al. 2003; Ma & Harmon, 2009; The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). I collected qualitative data to better understand participants’ learning during the shared student teaching experience with a second focus on how this experience can refine and extend theories about student teachers’ learning in general. In addition to this qualitative data, I gathered survey data from the student teachers four times during the study using the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). I collected survey data on efficacy to support the discussion of the student teachers’ “processes” of learning to teach (qualitative) and not to measure specific “outcomes” on the individual elements of efficacy measured by the quantitative survey instrument (Yin, 2006). The data collection and analysis did occasionally necessitate/result in alterations to the initial design. Participants’ interaction, experiences, and awareness of professional practice encouraged adjustments to schedules, to teaching teams, and to duties in the classroom. These changes were made, as necessary, by participants and by me; any changes were made in consultation with the student teachers, cooperating teachers, and me—each acknowledging our roles as active collaborators in the design research process (van den Akker, et al., 2006). Changes to the original design suggest recommendations for future iterations of the model, all consistent with the overarching purpose of DBR studies.

I employed standard qualitative design for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erickson, 1986). In particular, I used three of the six possible sources of qualitative data in case study methodology proposed by Yin (2009): classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and
artifacts. Through these methods, I hoped to identify the emerging understandings that student teachers had about teaching and how they and their cooperating teachers made sense of this learning through the design experiment (Hatch, 2002). As active participants, student teachers and their cooperating teachers constructed and altered their own realities, and that is what this study attempts to detail. While this is a case study of one iteration of a new student teaching model in a single school, Stake (2005) notes that such an endeavor should be measured/evaluated/assessed by how well one gains a richer perspective on more general issues. Ma and Harmon (2009) also recognize the importance of such research in the early phases of design studies, both to encourage manageable research agendas for a single investigator and to generate robust data to inform future iterations of the design. A summary of my choice of methods to address each of my research questions appears in Table 3.3 below. A detailed description of each method follows.

**Ethnographic classroom observations.** Observations of student teacher classroom instruction served as the primary mode of data collection on student teacher performance throughout the study. Student teachers began their placements in late January of 2013 and continued, in accordance with the school district calendar, for 14 weeks, ending in early May. During that time, I observed each student teacher between 10 and 12 times while he or she was actively teaching, alone and with others, fellow student teachers and cooperating teachers alike. My role in these observations was strictly one of observer. I did not engage in the classroom activities or interact with classroom participants. Because the focus of these observations was on active instruction conducted by one or more student teachers, I scheduled my observations to avoid days where classroom activities were limited to testing or other non-instructional periods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Student Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey (SES)</th>
<th>Artifact analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does a shared student teaching placement model impact the experiential learning of STs?</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>ST Interviews</td>
<td>ST SES</td>
<td>Examine ST lesson plans, supervisor and CT evaluations, and field journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify classroom behaviors that reflect changes in ST beliefs and practices</td>
<td>Identify STs’ related learning experiences attributed to elements of the model</td>
<td>Determine impact of teacher efficacy over placement period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do STs use collaborative relationships with multiple CTs and STs to support their work?</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>ST Interviews</td>
<td>ST SES</td>
<td>Examine co-planned lessons and individual field journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observe shared teaching practices and classroom roles</td>
<td>Identify STs’ views and strategies on working with cooperating teachers and their peers</td>
<td>Determine the impact of shared interactions on ST sense of efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does a shared student teaching model influence the educational practices of participants?</td>
<td>Classroom Observation</td>
<td>CT Interviews</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Examine lesson plans, course assignments/ projects/ assessments, and supervisor/CT evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine changes in CTs’ and STs’ teaching behaviors and interactions with students over time</td>
<td>Identify CTs’ perceived changes to practice</td>
<td>ST Interviews</td>
<td>Identify STs’ perceived changes to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the present model of shared student teaching be further modified to enhance the learning opportunities for future participants?</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>CT Interviews</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Examine the body of STs’ lessons plans, supporting instructional documents, and field journal entries against program expectations and goals of the shared model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify elements of the model that CTs perceived as effective or ineffective</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, my observations were distinct and separate from those completed by the assigned clinical supervisor. I did use the supervisors’ observations and evaluations to inform my sense of candidates’ performance to support my own independent observations. In addition, I shared my observation notes with the student teachers to establish a process of member checking and to continually evaluate my perspective on their practices and interactions with their own (Merriam, 1998).

**Participant interviews.** I conducted semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 1998) with all participating student teachers and cooperating teachers. I created the initial protocols to elicit responses from participants pertaining to key design elements of the model, including working with multiple cooperating teachers, co-planning, and co-teaching. I also included questions that asked participants to consider how this experience was or might have been different from their expectations of a traditional student teaching placement. The design of the interview protocols allowed for the triangulation of data from the classroom observations and artifact analysis, in addition to further drawing out participants’ understandings of their experiences in the shared student teaching model (Erickson, 1986). While I used this protocol at each interview, the interactions were more conversational than perhaps the protocol suggests, thus allowing us to construct knowledge through dialogue (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I asked additional questions dependent upon prior interview responses, field notes, and informal conversations with participants, in addition to asking the same questions from the original protocol. The student teacher and cooperating teacher interview protocols can be found in Appendix C and D respectively.

I scheduled four, one-hour interviews with each participant—student teachers and cooperating teachers. These interviews occurred approximately once every three weeks of the
student teaching experience, beginning in late January, approximately two weeks after beginning the placement. The first and fourth interviews were individual interviews. The second and third interviews involved a combination of multiple student teachers and/or cooperating teachers, meeting together for a group interview. During those group interviews, the same interview protocol guided my questioning, but I also encouraged group participants to engage in open response and dialogue as they heard the answers of others. Each interview took place in a private location at the school where only the participant(s) and I were present. All interviews were audio-recorded. At the conclusion of each interview, I recorded my initial reactions to the dialogue in extended field notes. I followed this with a careful listening of the interview recording, where I took additional notes as I identified central themes of the interview and made comparisons to the content of other interviews and classroom observations. These reactions and extended summaries were also shared with study participants, through conversation and at subsequent interviews, for the purpose of member checking. After that, I returned to the audio recordings, so I could directly transcribe significant excerpts of interviews for deeper analysis. I elected not to fully transcribe each interview. I made this decision when confronted with the voluminous data generated during my fieldwork, much of which was often unrelated to the design itself. I chose instead to transcribe only those portions of interviews that were more relevant to the study.

**Artifacts.** Participants in a student teaching experience produced a number of artifacts which were useful to better understand their experiences during the placement period. With the permission of the participants, I analyzed a number of these artifacts throughout the student teaching semester.
As a program requirement, student teachers routinely produce written lesson plans. In some cases, these plans are minimal and include objectives, materials, procedures, and methods of assessment in short form; during formal clinical observations, student teachers expand their plans with rich detail of elements like questioning/discussion techniques, student accommodations, and evidence of higher-order thinking operations for students. Appendix E contains a full formal lesson plan format for student teaching, as recommended by the university placement office, and used by the student teachers during the placement.

Throughout the shared placement model, student teachers planned with their various cooperating teachers and with their peers. Because student teachers prepared lesson plans daily, I examined their plans over time for evidence of learning during the experience and for changes in lesson preparation/role assignment as their partnerships with cooperating teachers and other student teachers changed over the semester. Furthermore, I examined the supporting documents, assignments, and assessments they created/adapted to support their instructional objectives.

During the semester, both cooperating teachers and the university’s on-site clinical supervisor conducted observations of the student teachers. This is another program requirement from the university’s placement office. Cooperating teachers provided regular written feedback of the student teachers with whom they were working. Sometimes, this feedback was a collection of observations over the week, whereas at other times it was based upon a single classroom observation conducted by the teacher. In addition to feedback from the cooperating teacher, the university clinical supervisor conducted six formal observations of each student teacher. These observations included pre-conferencing and post-conferencing components, in addition to the observation of a full-length classroom period. Each formal clinical observation was scheduled between the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and supervisor. The supervisor
feedback from the observations served as the basis for ongoing progress monitoring and as
evidence for the university-mandated summative evaluations conducted at the seventh and
fourteenth weeks of the placement. During the study, with the student teachers’ permission, I
had access to cooperating teacher feedback and university clinical supervisor observation reports
and evaluations and included each of these in my document analysis.

Finally, with the permission of the student teachers, I was granted access to their private
Facebook group page, where they communicated with each other asynchronously. I was able to
follow discussions about planning, teaching, and assessment, including the review of draft
documents that they shared with each other through the semester via the Facebook group thread.
All student teachers (n=7) participated in the Facebook group, and it was closed to cooperating
teachers, the clinical supervisor, and other program staff and students.

**Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale.** The *Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale* is an
instrument first developed at The Ohio State University and available in open-access in its most
recent version as designed by Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The
24-item instrument measures teachers’ self-reported efficacy in performing core instructional
responsibilities in their classrooms and has been used previously with prospective teachers
(Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). For each question, respondents are able to choose a numeric response
on a 9-point Likert scale that describes their ability to control the various demands of a
classroom, ranging between Nothing (1) and A Great Deal (9) (see Duffin, French, & Patrick,
2012; Fives and Buehl, 2009, for discussion of the validity of Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy
Scale). Components are clustered to provide a sense of efficacy in three core areas of teachers’
work: student engagement, classroom management, and instruction (Tschannen-Moran &
Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The questionnaire appears in Appendix F.
The student teachers completed this instrument on four separate occasions during the placement period; the pseudonym of each participant was recorded on response sets to allow for the analysis of individual respondent’s responses, as well as measures of collective efficacy across the group. I introduced the questionnaire to the student teachers during the fourth week of the placement and asked them to complete it every three weeks thereafter. These intervals corresponded with significant transitions in the student teaching placement marked by additional responsibilities for student teachers in the classrooms where they were teaching and should have reflected any changes in their sense of self-efficacy over the placement cycle.

In analyzing responses to the instrument, I noted changes in each individual student teacher’s responses and evaluated these changes in an attempt to draw connections to classroom observations, interviews, and artifact review. In addition, I calculated the mean response and standard deviation for each question during the four separate periods in which I administered the questionnaire. I also examined individual student teacher’s self-reported ratings in each instructional component from the beginning of the placement to its conclusion, as well his or her average rating in the clustered components designed to measure student engagement, instruction, and management.

**Field journal.** My fieldwork spanned almost an entire academic semester (late January to early May). I spent many hours and days at Scott High School, interacting with participants and observing many classes. Each visit was unique and ultimately influenced by my own personal and professional experiences, past and present; extenuating circumstances that impacted my participation and the engagement of others; and the evolving nature of the design study itself. Consequently, I maintained a personal field journal in order to reflect on my reactions to data and how I began to consider the data against my own involvement, attitude, and my expectations.
for this model. This field journal then became another source of data in my ongoing interpretation of the sources described above.

**Data Analysis**

Regardless of the complex methodologies through which they are generated, data alone cannot meaningfully support the claims of a researcher. Data will not speak for themselves. Rather, the researcher must judiciously select specific data in order to draw conclusions by inferences. Dependent upon empirical warrants and carefully constructed arguments, strong inferences promote the deep engagement of data as evidence in substantiating descriptive or explanatory claims. Generated through qualitative sources, the data that I gathered is used to support my intentions to find meaning in the actions of the study participants, as there is meaning in all human action (Schwandt, 2007).

Ultimately, my inferences from the data generated during the study allowed me to construct a chain of evidence with strong links. The forging of links in the chain of evidence did not depend merely upon a selected methodology. While the qualitative methods employed throughout this study are particularly suited to describing and examining the associations between various phenomena during the shared student teaching experience, the method was not chosen as a matter of convenience, comfort, or popularity (Hammersley, 2007; Ritchie, 2003). Instead, I chose these methods in order to generate rich, purposeful data that might permit me to connect my assertions about the model to evidence I gathered, allowing the data to support or refute my initial claims. This process was not unidirectional; it required a model of constant comparison, whereby I considered and reconsidered the concepts, such as situated learning, communities of practice, expansive learning, and my subsequent inferences against the evidence. While my research questions framed this pursuit, I also considered those other events that
occurred through the period of data collection that also had implications for a shared student teaching experience (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This included my own experiences, as a practitioner, administrator, and researcher, as well as the informal conversations I had with study participants and other educational professionals. In addition, I maintained a dialogue with members of my committee about my ongoing interpretations of data and utilized member checking procedures (Stake, 2005) with study participants to allow them to provide me feedback on my interpretations of their experiences and understandings. For the latter, I shared field observation notes, interview summaries, and my early writing with participants, so that they could offer their reactions and so I might gauge the palatability of my accounts and subsequent interpretations. I amended my interpretations of the data when appropriate to reflect their feedback and clarify subsequent findings.

During the research period, as I gathered data through the various methods described above, my first responsibility was to attempt to triangulate that data (Erickson, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and make some initial interpretations. Comparing my field notes from classroom observations with data gathered from interviews, artifact analysis, and responses to the self-efficacy questionnaire, I identified emerging patterns in an attempt to strengthen the validity of my early interpretations. Of equal importance, I concurrently considered those data that contradicted my interpretations or raised elements of inconsistency (Maxwell, 2005). This process continued throughout the study and at its conclusion.

With early patterns identified, I began a more rigorous process of data analysis marked by the inductive coding of the field notes from classroom observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) and subsequent critical incident narratives. Patterns were compared against my research questions, as well as with the broad theoretical framework of Cultural Activity Historical Theory.
(CHAT) that informed the study. Doing this allowed me to consider the participants’ experiences as they pertained to the theory and to the contemporary context of student teaching reform that shaped the initial shared student teaching model.

With my focus on the experiential learning of my participants, I have elected to present my finding from this study of the first iteration of the shared student teaching model in a narrative format. My goal was to generate extended stories of student teachers, their cooperating teachers, and the learning that occurred during the study and transcend single moments or events. Stories represent a kind of knowing about the world that is distinct from purely scientific/logical pursuits (Bruner, 1986; 2004). For narrative inquirers the whole of human experience cannot be dissected in pursuit of some empirical truth, but rather “the inseparability of character, setting, and action must be deeply rooted in the nature of narrative thought” (p. 39). “People live stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxvi). With this in mind, in an effort to retain the complexity of the interactions between participants and the many variables that influenced their learning throughout the experience, I narrate my findings in three critical incidents below.

According to Sandelowski (1991), “narrative as an interactive and interpretive product is the focus even before it becomes subject to the researcher’s purposes. The interview and the research report need to be rescued from efforts to standardize and scientize them and be reclaimed as occasions for storytelling” (p. 162). The participants, both student teachers and cooperating teachers, are actors in these stories; who they are and what they did and said, individually and collectively, deserve to be recounted with sufficient detail and attention to their robust lived experiences and to make them central to the design study (Lobato, 2003). “This (re)conceptualization of human beings as narrators and of their products as texts to be interpreted constitutes a potentially critical moment…because it reveals, and suggests solutions for, analytic
problems that have typically been disguised in conventional theory-and-method debates about objectivity and validity” (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 161).

Equally important to the narrative experience of the participants is the impact of my own personal and professional stories on my interpretation of the data. No scholar can undertake a narrative project without sharing and reflecting upon his or her own stories while collecting those of others. Such an endeavor requires the researcher to move inside and outside of the research setting, consider the past and present of the participants, and situation experiences in the broader sociocultural landscape. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that narrative research occurs along a three-dimensional space marked by temporality, the personal and the social, and place.

Because our stories are ongoing and evolving, even threads that begin with new experience are shaped by remnants of the past and by the time and location in which they begin to unfold. As a result, researchers always enter narrative inquiry space in the midst of storylines in progress. Here the authors illustrate a central concept to quality narrative research—the expected interaction between the stories of researchers and those being researched. “We come to each new inquiry field living our stories. The stories we bring as researchers are also set within the institutions within which we work, the social narratives of which we are a part, the landscape on which we live (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 63-64). Consequently, I begin each narrative from my findings with a story from my own life as an educator. From student teaching to my own current work in teacher education, I use the stories to inform my interpretation of the data and wish that to be clear to my readers.

The analysis of data pertains only to this single study of one iteration of the shared student teaching model I designed. Ultimately, even with the merit inherent in this single site case study (Stake, 2005), this research is rooted in a design-based methodology intended to
inform future iterations of the shared student teaching model and to invite future empirical research on critical elements of the design. As part of this construction my intent was to systematically consider the meaning-making of these participants through their lived experiences, which I was privy to throughout my research. The specific, intimate data that are generated from the various methods of data collection should speak to the integrity of the design as a whole, especially to the extent to which it addressed many of the concerns researchers have raised about the current state of student teaching experiences in traditional placement models. I could not begin to understand the impact of the model on student teachers’ learning without using the experiences, the stories, of this specific group of participants in this particular site to draw out generalized claims that warrant future study. Therefore, in my concluding chapter, I offer an analysis of the student teachers’ learning episodes, supported theoretically by CHAT and expansive learning principles (Engeström, 2001), to consider the impact and the limitations on the learning of the student teachers as participants in this design study.

Ethical Considerations and Research Positionality

Researchers face ethical dilemmas at every step of the research process. This reality demands consistently wise judgment. It begins with the research questions asked, continues with the methods selected in the attempt to answer these questions, remains through the ongoing interactions with those in the field, and resurfaces during data analysis. Ethically responsible research requires wisdom on the part of researchers, including the ability to reason between the principles in which they believe and the specific case in which they are trying to apply them.

As an initial step toward the consideration of ethical issues, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study with human subjects. The process of creating and revising the application permitted me ample opportunity to consider the benefits and
risks of subjects’ participation and to devise appropriate plans to request participants’ consent and subsequently to protect their rights of privacy and confidentiality (Sieber, 1992). Doing this alone is not enough to capture the complexity of ethics in research. Bosk & DeVries (2004) observe, “The ethical problems that we meet in the field are so complex and the situations are so fraught with the moral and existential dilemmas of leading a life that consent does little to assure our subjects or ourselves that we will do the right thing when the situation presents itself” (p. 260). Therefore, I frequently engaged in dialogue with other researchers, as well as with the participants, to consider my ethical practices throughout the study.

My own professional and personal experiences and beliefs required special consideration as I undertook this particular study. Ethical issues of detachment between the research and the researched have consistently plagued social scientists. The dilemma over positioning oneself as an impartial researcher while at the same time considering both one’s identity and sense of social/professional responsibility lies at the heart of great ethical debates in communities of research (Schwandt, 2007). While every attempt can be made to analytically separate these facets of human nature, practicality dictates that the act of assessing good research cannot be removed from one’s political commitments. Along the spectrum of detached and partisan scholarship lies a host of possibilities to avoid falsely dichotomous ends. How one chooses to negotiate these dilemmas warrants a particular degree of transparency and acknowledged fallibility.

As an experienced secondary educator, someone who has participated in student teaching as a student teacher and as a cooperating teacher, I have been an active member of student teaching experiences in a variety of roles. While I did not teach in the school or in the district where this study take places, nor was I an instructor or supervisor for any of the research.
participants, I have been a secondary social studies method instructor responsible, in part, for the preparation of teacher candidates for their student teaching experiences. Furthermore, at the time of the study, I was and remain an administrator in the university placement office responsible for coordinating student teaching placements for, among others, all secondary education candidates in the core content areas (English, mathematics, sciences, and social studies). This included the seven students in the present study. Although I removed myself from any oversight of the candidates’ student teaching experience, including any management of candidates, their cooperating teachers, or the university clinical supervisor, I was involved in separate clinical experiences where each participant previously participated; I also previously developed professional relationships with each of the cooperating teachers and student teachers.

Clearly, the above experiences affected the perspective from which I considered the participants of this study. The same experiences also influenced how I thought about traditional clinical experiences for pre-service candidates from which this model breaks away. I recognize how my perspective informs my work and ultimately embrace it. I chose a stance of engagement with my subjects, allowing my own experiences and understandings of student teaching to be in a state of constant interplay with the evolving understanding of participants in the shared model of student teaching. In the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics, which advocates for a construction of meaning that recognizes the important engagement between an inquirer and the object of inquiry, I believe that meaning-making is a dialogic process in which I, as a researcher, actively considered my own experiences to reach an understanding of the object being studied (Schwandt, 2007). To that extent I have used my own professional narrative purposely to inform my analysis of the data to follow. My varied background as a teacher, teacher educator, and clinical experiences administrator supported my efforts to find a familiarity with the student
teachers and cooperating teachers. We worked together to understand the experiences of participants in the new shared student teaching model and consider future iterations of the design.

Obviously, I hope this study yields findings that support future iterations of a shared student teaching model. As a professional teacher educator, I would not advance a model that I believed to be inferior to traditional 1:1 placement practices. Based upon my research, I remain an advocate for the potential of this model to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of student teaching experiences for student teachers, cooperating teachers, and clinical experiences staff; my professional experiences afforded me the chance to consider the model from multiple perspectives. I acknowledge this strong position. In considering my strong advocacy for collaborative placement opportunities as a potential means to combat many of the ineffectual elements of traditional student teaching, I was obliged, as a researcher, to gather and to evaluate data with integrity. As a result, the findings from this study are not without tensions and notable areas for improvement in the shared student teaching model. Revision is a mark of early design-based research in education (van den Akker, et al., 2006). Still, I acknowledge my bias, and I have attempted, to the best of my ability, to reflect on my positionality as I interpreted and used data to warrant my claims.

**Summary**

This study was intended to investigate the first iteration of a design for a shared student teaching model intended to alter the 1:1 student teacher-cooperating teacher ratio in traditional clinical placements. Engaging participants in the pilot of my shared placement model was the most appropriate way to consider the design and to recommend future iterations should the model prove beneficial to candidates’ learning. To this end, the model finds life through those
who participated in its implementation. In this case, a group of seven student teachers and four cooperating teachers in the Scott High School social studies department consented to be a part of systematic research to discover how participants make meaning of their experiences in such a model and to what extent their learning is subsequently expanded.

Through classroom observations, participant interviews, artifact analysis, and survey responses, I triangulated the data from this single case study to make warranted claims about the model. What follows are three distinct learning episodes, narratively presented, which were reflective of elements of the design that directly impacted how the student teachers learned about teaching within and across activity systems. These incidents were possible because of the design structure; how they were enacted speaks to both the benefits and the limitations of their shared student teaching model on their learning. Informed by CHAT and expansive learning theory, I consider the student teachers as the subjects of each critical incident. I examine the artifacts/tools they used, as well as the mediational forces of socio-historical structures and relationships, to better understand their mediated actions as they learned to teach.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Student teaching is complex. The learning that occurs for student teachers likely rivals any other single academic or pre-professional experience. Student teachers must navigate new environments, develop working relationships with veteran educators, and adhere to policies and procedures that are unique to their placement sites. For as much as their university preparation—methods courses and early field experiences alike—supported their growth and development as teachers, the sheer enormity of the student teaching experience, with its many moving pieces and increasing responsibilities, makes the experience challenging for any participant. Given all of this, it is no wonder that the student teaching experience is equally demanding to study.

The student teachers and their cooperating teachers remain at the heart of this study. Despite the focus on the design of the shared student teaching model, the real understanding of the structures, policies, and practices of the model can only come meaningfully from drawing out some of the significant learning episodes between the participants. After all, at the center of the design, is the claim that sustained collaboration and access to multiple classrooms, teachers, and peers could expand student teachers’ learning about teaching. Because of deeply sociocultural, interpersonal nature of the data, I advance these claims and consider the design of the shared student teaching model through my narrative recounting of three critical episodes during the semester.

Each narrative is significant to the learning of the student teachers and is influenced by design elements of the shared student teaching model. The first explores student teachers’ learning when working across multiple teachers’ classrooms. The second recounts an episode of co-planning among a group of student teachers who were all preparing a similar lesson to be
taught in different classrooms. The final narrative details the way in which the student teachers implemented co-teaching in the classrooms where they were assigned together.

**Critical Incident #1: Learning From Multiple Cooperating Teachers**

I designed and implemented the shared student teaching model in response to my own experiences, both as a student teacher and now as a director of school experiences. I student taught in two classrooms. I consider myself fortunate to learn from two outstanding but markedly different cooperating teachers. This was the direct result of a teacher education program where I was required to complete two separate eight-week placements, one at the middle level and one at the secondary level. Consequently, I worked in two classrooms, in two schools, in two very different school districts. I was not the only student teacher in either building, but I was not a part of any peer collaboration formally at either site.

In each eight-week placement, I was like a sponge, absorbing as much as I could from my cooperating teachers. I wanted to know their thoughts, their past experiences, the “tricks” they had learned along the way. I feverishly devoured any morsel of wisdom they placed before me. While I did not accept it all or adopt it as my own, I did learn from each of them. I could see the varied practices of two professionals, differences that were reflective of more than just the ages of the students they served or the schools where they taught.

The biggest challenge in my own student teaching, however, was the steep learning curve in a very short amount of time. Eight weeks afforded me little time to acclimate myself to the school, to build a relationship with my cooperating teacher and with the students, to learn from observing my cooperating teacher’s practice, and to implement my own lessons under his/her supervision. I remember finding a sense of stability and comfort just in time to move on.
By the time I returned to the university in my capacity as the Director of School and Community Experiences 11 years later, the two eight-week placements in the secondary teacher education program had been replaced with a single fourteen-week placement. This experience was touted for the extended time in the classroom, whereby student teachers could build stronger relationships with students, teach multiple lessons and units over time, and work closely with a cooperating teacher who would mentor them and guide them through the experience in a much less harried pace. Student teachers were electing to spend their time in either a middle school or a high school for the duration of the semester. Most of them worked with a single teacher; a few had split assignments across two classrooms, but they were the only student teacher in each.

Because I still lamented the frantic rush of the eight-week experience. I was a vocal proponent of fourteen-week placements. I wanted the student teachers under my watch to gain the depth of experience that I never had, to firmly establish themselves in a classroom. I was certain the fourteen-week single placement would afford them that chance.

What I did not consider fully was what was lost by not moving to another classroom where they could be mentored by a second teacher and gain new perspective on the work of classroom teaching. I had that as a result of my two placements, but how would they have the same opportunity in a semester-long experience with a single educator?

Some cooperating teacher-student teacher pairings are unsuccessful. The relationship never solidifies, and the vision of professional teaching does not quite align (Smith & Avetisian, 2011). While one can argue for learning from classroom experiences that challenge beliefs and practices (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984), discordance can limit potential gains. Yet, even when the match is better and a stronger professional relationship grows, the exposure to knowledge,
pedagogy, and collegial support is restricted primarily to the assigned cooperating teacher (Grossman, 1991).

As I considered the need for student teachers to have meaningful engagement with multiple professional educators and the desire to provide them with extended field experiences where they would have ample time to build relationships and integrate themselves in the school community, I asked many questions. Was learning from two teachers significant to my own professional growth and development? To what extent did two different placements, separated both by location and by time, impact my learning? How might my learning have been enriched if the two teachers were at the same school, teaching some of the same courses? If I learned more from two teachers, would three or more even further enhance new student teachers’ experience or unnecessarily complicate it? How would student teachers process multiple professional perspectives and practices and mediate those experiences for their own performance? Would contextualized peer support in the same classrooms assist with this mediation and ultimately improve teaching and learning and deepen professional growth and development?

I attempted to answer these questions in the first iteration of the shared student teaching model in the social studies department at Scott High School. I assigned the seven student teacher participants to a daily teaching schedule whereby they worked with at least three different cooperating teachers. In addition, they were assigned to classrooms with a combination of peers. As they moved from classroom to classroom, teacher to teacher, the combinations of peers changed, but they all had regular teaching assignments with three different teachers.

The most frequently taught course that semester was a freshmen required course in Ancient World History, or, as the participants called it, Ancient Civ. (Civilizations). There were
two separate course levels, “academic” and “accelerated,” essentially tracking the course with the accelerated sections specifically reserved for high-achieving students. While there was some differentiation for the accelerated sections, the primary difference was only in the pace of instruction and not the content or course requirements. The course covered broad themes in history and examined the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, Greece, and Rome.

Six of the seven student teachers were assigned to primary or secondary roles in the course (academic or accelerated) during their school day. Of these, five student teachers taught the course with at least two different cooperating teachers. One, Christie, taught the course with three different teachers.

Under these conditions, I began to examine my questions above as they pertained to the shared student teaching model—its potential and its limitations—and recommended revisions as future iterations proved beneficial. What follows is an extended account of a unique learning episode that occurred as part of the Ancient Civilizations curriculum, enacted in two of the classrooms, just four days into the student teaching experience. I present distinct but interrelated moments from my original field notes, interviews with the student teachers and cooperating teachers, segments of the ongoing Facebook group dialogue, and related artifacts to substantiate the account and extend the discussion. This critical incident demonstrates one of the principal design features of the shared student teaching model, namely the impact on student teachers’ learning when working across classrooms with multiple cooperating teachers. It illustrates how the student teachers mediated meaning from contradictions and multiple voices (Engeström, 2001) while observing classroom instruction which, though developed collaboratively by the cooperating teachers, was delivered in distinctly different ways.
(Un)common Assessment

Matthew Walsh (hereafter Mr. Walsh) and Holly Neal (hereafter Ms. Neal) teach three different sections of the same Accelerated Ancient Civilizations course for freshmen. Mr. Walsh, teaching Periods 6 and 8, works with Sara (primary) and David (secondary/supporting) and then Christie (primary) and David (secondary/supporting) respectively. Ms. Neal taught with Sara (primary) and Eric (floating). Their teaching assignments appear in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Observation Schedule for January 25, 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Period</th>
<th>Cooperating Teacher</th>
<th>Primary ST</th>
<th>Secondary/Supporting ST</th>
<th>Floating ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>Mr. Walsh</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 7</td>
<td>Ms. Neal</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Eric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 8</td>
<td>Mr. Walsh</td>
<td>Christie</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the afternoon of January 25, before the student teachers had officially assumed any instructional responsibilities in the classroom, both cooperating teachers, Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal, assigned a standards-based grading (SBG) summative assessment activity for their classes. This was a district-wide assessment, designed by a team of social studies teachers, of which they were both members. The assessment was to be given to all high school students enrolled in the course. To address themes of culture and historical influence and to consider the concept of ethnocentrism, students were expected to create an essay on the major cultural traditions articulated by the father of a Native American child who writes a letter to a White teacher to beseech the educator to try to better understand his son and his heritage. The summative assessment is included in Appendix G.
I had the opportunity to watch all three class periods, back-to-back, that afternoon. I observed Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal both introduce the summative assessment to their students and then proceed to guide the students’ preparation according to their instructions. In each class, the student teachers, in supporting roles, observed the classroom teachers, assisted individual students, and completed other duties as assigned by their mentors. Three distinct experiences occurred for the student teachers in the different classrooms, giving them a glimpse into the instructional practices of the cooperating teachers and each teacher’s relationships with students. I describe each class period below before analyzing the experiences and drawing from additional data to support my analysis of the narrative.

“That’s not what this is all about:” Mr. Walsh, Sara, and David. Mr. Walsh’s 6th hour class began with him announcing the summative assessment on culture and ethnocentrism. As he handed out the summative assessment and the corresponding rubric, David arrived in class a little over a minute late. At the same time, Sara interacted casually with a few of the students. From my earlier observations of Mr. Walsh, it struck me that Sara appeared to be mimicking his casual yet compassionate exchanges with students.

“What's up buddy?" Before the student could answer Sara, another interrupted, "He's in a bad mood today."

As the last assessments and rubrics were handed out, Mr. Walsh observed, "It's Friday. I know you're excited. My job is to stifle that excitement." He smiled coyly as he looked around the room.

With that, he began a review of the previous day's lesson. As he discussed ethnocentrism, the videos of children they had watched, and the popular NACIREMA cultural bias/relevance
activity (American, spelled backwards), David and Sara stood at the side of the room reviewing the photo seating chart.

After the discussion, Mr. Walsh instructed the students to turn to page 2 of the summative assessment handout. This prompted David and Sara to pick up a copy of the assessment and follow along. By the time they glanced at the second page, Mr. Walsh realized that he had photocopied an incorrect version of the assessment. "I must have printed the wrong one." He asked students to make corrections and to add additional information to the prompt.

The summative assessment itself described a final product in essay format. When Mr. Walsh alerted the students to the fact that they would have the remainder of the class to work, he suggested, “You could put your head on your desk today, watch TV all weekend, and come in on Monday and hurry to write it all out. That's up to you."

Facing the reality of weekend work on an important assessment, the students began to ask questions. Most of these were about format, and after Mr. Walsh had answered a few, he checked, both formally and informally, to see that the students are still on task.

Just as it appeared that the students would begin to draft their essays during the class, Mr. Walsh asked them to wait, noting that he had not "…taught [them] what essay writing in social science looks like.” Without missing a beat, he instructed the students to look at the rubric and think about what the description of a Level 4 (Excellent) performance on a standards-based graded assessment might look like. He asked them what made a response a Level 4. With few volunteers, Mr. Walsh turned to a real-life example to illustrate, citing an example of school violence and what that might look like in the local news. He crafted a story that would be deemed a Level 3 performance and contrasted it with what would constitute a Level 4.
Soon after, Mr. Walsh gave his students time to read the father’s letter. They had about 20-25 minutes to do so. As they read, Mr. Walsh, having opened the windows and commented to Sara and David about the heat, sat at his desk and stamped dance passes for Saturday evening. Sara and David both began to read the letter of the Native American father; neither of them had seen it previously. Approximately ten minutes into the silent reading time, Mr. Walsh asked Sara to circulate around the room to see how the students were doing. As she passed by David, she asked him something that I could not hear, but he responded, “Maybe five more minutes?” My assumption was that she wanted his opinion on how much longer to let them read.

Mr. Walsh soon called the group back together. “You know what? Even if you aren’t done, I think we can have this conversation about what a Level 4 looks like and what the format should be.”

A lengthy discussion ensued, focused on the key criteria for each level of performance on the rubric. When finished, Mr. Walsh asked, “Does that help? If it doesn’t say no, and we’ll talk about it in another way.”

Without concerns, Mr. Walsh continued by presenting them with just a few options for conveying their understanding and encouraged them to generate others. He reminded them that an essay was not the only option, especially since he had not taught them how to write one with a historical argument. Some of the alternative formats he suggested included: a stream of consciousness, a poster, a PowerPoint presentation. “With enough work, I could get all of you to repeat me, but that’s not what I want. That’s not what this is all about.”

The product the students ultimately chose would be due at the beginning of the next week. Mr. Walsh told them they would need to turn in their “body of work” on Monday, even if the final product wasn’t quite finished at the beginning of the class period. He then pressed them
again to offer alternative formats to demonstrate their learning. When a few students volunteered new ideas, he even went so far as to suggest that they might want to consider writing a song. "I love educational rap!"

Before Mr. Walsh gave them time to work, a student asked, “How long should the essay be? Are you going to say ‘as long as it takes to answer the question?’” Mr. Walsh replied dryly, “Probably.”

A few students asked shortly thereafter to work with peers. Mr. Walsh considered the request before asking them to remain working individually for then. As the students worked, Mr. Walsh took the dance passes to the back of the room to continue stamping, and Sara and David circulated briefly around parts of the room.

Mr. Walsh finally looked over at Sara and said, “Anyone who likes copying probably likes stamping. Do you?”

With that, Sara took the passes and the stamp and left the classroom.

Mr. Walsh started to circulate around the room, while David continued as well. David, however, did not interact with students during his movement around the classroom until several minutes in, finally asking one student, “Are you just trying to figure out what you’re going to do?”

Sara reentered the classroom a few minutes later, much to the surprise of Mr. Walsh and just after he allowed the students to talk with each other about the assessment. She had already finished the stamping. Realizing the class must be nearly over Mr. Walsh asked the students how many would be writing essays. Over half the class raised their hands. To this he responded, “Oh, man! You’re only fourteen! You’ve been corrupted by the establishment!” Upon that comment, Sara chimed in, "give us something interesting!"
“Write down...my expectations:” Ms. Neal, Sara, and Eric. As the bell rang to signal the end of 6th hour, I moved down the hallway, accompanied by Sara, to Ms. Neal’s Period 7 class. When the next class began, Ms. Neal gained the students’ attention and began by reviewing the discussion from the previous day. As the students shared their thoughts and questions on ethnocentrism, cultural identity, and the NACIREMA activity, Neal facilitated the conversation while making references to SpongeBob, cockroaches, old McDonald’s hamburgers, and other seemingly unrelated topics. Then, she realized that she had not copied the summative assessment rubric, so she asked Eric, the floating student teacher that hour, to do so.

Ms. Neal explained the general theme of the letter of the Native American father to the students. Without discussion she offered the following directions, “Read the letter, list the GRAPES (geography, religion, arts, politics, economics, and social systems) of culture, and then, in your essay, you will explain how this letter is an example of ethnocentrism.”

She continued, “You can annotate the text as you read. When you write your essay on Monday, in class, you’ll have everything you need to back up your work. Today should a reading, note-taking day. Read, analyze, and take some notes.”

Before the students began their independent work, Ms. Neal verbalized a formatted essay outline on the chalkboard: Intro., GRAPES, and ethnocentrism. As Ms. Neal discussed the outline, Sara took attendance with Eric’s help.

As the students began to work, Ms. Neal joined Sara, the primary student teacher, and Eric near the computer and shared a document with them that detailed the class make-up work policy. There has been a request from the guidance office for a suspended student’s make-up work, so Sara left to take the packet downstairs. When she left, Eric asked why the student was suspended, and he and Ms. Neal discussed the situation briefly.
As Sara reentered the room, she found Ms. Neal helping individual students and Eric standing at the side of the room, reading the letter. After talking with a student who had raised his hand, Ms. Neal said to the whole class, “It might be helpful if you use a new sheet of paper to annotate and record your ideas.” She then went to the chalkboard in the back of the room to add the following:

1. Introduction—should include GRAPES and ethnocentrism in your thesis statement.

2. A. Six small body paragraphs—1 for each GRAPE—and an example how each is an example of ethnocentrism with specific examples and analysis OR B. Two large paragraphs—1 for example of GRAPES and discussion of each as an example of culture—and then a large paragraph explaining how this essay is an example of ethnocentrism with analysis and specifics.

3. Conclusion—Side note: add experiences w/ ethnocentrism and connections

As soon as she finished writing, Ms. Neal asked Eric, in a sudden moment of reconsideration, if Mr. Walsh let the students take the essay prompts home for the weekend. When she learned that he did, not realizing the difference in the approach to the final product, she announced, “Another teacher was nice and let the students take this home over the weekend, so I will let you too, even though they will still be written in class on Monday.”

Eric and Ms. Neal both noticed hands go up, so they went to assist students. I overheard Neal say, “You can write it from either perspective—how the father is ethnocentric or how the school is. Good question.”

Eventually, Ms. Neal, Sara, and Eric were talking while the students worked silently. Then, a student specifically asked Sara for help, so she left the group. Ms. Neal had already started talking to another student when Sara left, so when she heard conversation, she thought it was a student. When she realized it was Sara, she said, “Oh, she’s helping someone.”
The side chatter did pick up a bit to which Ms. Neal addressed the whole class, “Are we devolving?” She looked at them sternly and asked them to get back to work.

With a few minutes before the bell rang, Ms. Neal brought the class back together. She commended students for a good start on their ideas for the essay and for taking the time to write those ideas down. She reviewed the notes on the chalkboard, while Sara and Eric looked on.

As Ms. Neal finished with the material on the board, she commented, “I should have typed this [the outline] out, but I was going to let you go free-for-all. I think this will help you more.” Looking at her watch, she continued, “We have four minutes left because my silly clock is silly.”

Ms. Neal immediately ripped up paper and gave a slip to each student. “Write down one question about the paper, my expectations, GRAPES, ethnocentrism—one question. Put your name on it. The content we’ve been covering or the content we just read of the process of what I am asking you to write, the expectations, what I’m asking you to write.”

As they did this, she asked her class, “Will you please read the article for Monday?”

A student replied, “I got you girl!”

To that Ms. Neal corrected her, “Ms. Neal or Ms. N.”

The student replied, “I got you, Ms. N.”

“I get paid to be here and teach you:” Mr. Walsh, Christie, and David. I remained in Mr. Walsh’s room for the next class period. David was in a supporting role, and Christie was the primary student teacher, having just taught the same class the previous period in Wes Conlon’s (hereafter Mr. Conlon’s) classroom. Like Period 5, the student teachers were both in secondary roles to the cooperating teacher as Mr. Walsh introduced the summative assessment of culture and ethnocentrism.
Walsh again began by handing out the rubric and the summative essay prompt. This time, however, he started by asking the students to read it and the rubric silently. As they began, he checked with Christie to see if she has taken attendance; she had.

The student teachers stood in the corner of the room talking with Mr. Walsh as the students read. Then, he left to get a drink, prompting Christie and David to circulate around the room but not to interact directly with any of the students.

When Walsh returned, he stopped the class to ask, “How do I get a 4, Mr. Walsh? For example, how do I get a 4 in math?”

Almost immediately, a student asked a question unrelated to the rubric or scoring. To this, Mr. Walsh scolded him for not being “on topic,” resulting in other students laughing and the admonished student deflating almost immediately.

After this brief exchange, hands began to pop up, and Mr. Walsh commended them for participating. He spent some time discussing the qualities of a Level 4 performance before telling this class, as he did Period 6, that he didn’t feel he should make them write an essay because he hadn’t taught them to do so. And, then, he turned them loose to brainstorm how they might demonstrate their learning.

Christie and David both started to talk with individual students about ideas, and Mr. Walsh made it a point to compliment the same deflated student from earlier on thinking carefully about his project submission format.

After a few minutes, Walsh asked students what they would be doing. Seemingly satisfied, he allowed them to work with others for the rest of the class period, much earlier than he allowed the Period 5 class.
During the group work time, Christie circulated around the room. She carried the seating chart, practiced names, chatted with students casually, and asked about their summative assessment ideas. At the same time, David sat in the back of the room watching the interactions but not directly working with any students at this point.

Mr. Walsh approached Christie, having heard her casual exchange with a student, and joined in. They were talking about recent movies they have seen. Walsh, who also participated, eventually steered the conversation back to the task at hand. One of the student involved asked if he could e-mail him over the weekend with any questions. “There is a big debate,” Walsh said, “about whether or not teachers and students should engage in those communications. I get paid to be here and teach you, right here, right now.” Christie and David both witnessed this exchange.

The students continued to work and to chat for the rest of the class, and the student teachers and Mr. Walsh readily participated in many of the conversations.

**Afterward.** Just two school days after Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal introduced the culture/ethnocentrism summative assessment to their students, Mr. Conlon needed to provide the same prompt and rubric to a student who had been absent during his Period 7 Ancient Civilizations course when it was assigned. In that particular class period, Christie was the primary student teacher. There was no other student teacher assigned to support her when Mr. Conlon asked Christie to provide one-on-one support for the previously absent student.

When Christie began to explain the task to the student, I was immediately struck by the blending of approaches she had seen from Ms. Neal (during her Period 5 class, not observed but like the Period 6 class described above) and Mr. Walsh (during his Period 7 class) the week before. From Ms. Neal she recommended annotation strategies, encouraging the student to
“underline and label them” as she found elements of the GRAPES cultural characteristics. She continued, “Then, you can consider what is ethnocentric in the conclusion of your essay.” While she maintained the intended essay format of the assessment, like Ms. Neal, she echoed Mr. Walsh when she asked the student to review the rubric and consider what a Level 4 performance would look like, how to distinguish a Level 3 from a Level 4. Before moving on to work with other students, Christie urged the student not to worry so much about the format of the essay (“That’s not the most important thing.”), but instead to focus on conveying understanding of culture with specific examples from the reading.

**Moments for Mediation**

In this particular instance, Ms. Neal and Mr. Walsh introduced the summative assessment and guided student participation in dramatically different ways. Ms. Neal introduced the assessment as a structured essay, as it was originally designed. Mr. Walsh, although equally interested in evaluating the students’ learning about culture and ethnocentrism, did not stress the essay as the intended product to convey understanding, noting that, because he did not teach the students how to write a compelling historical/social scientific essay, he would not hold them accountable for demonstrating what they had learned in that rigid format. From these differing perspectives, both teachers approached their instruction related to the summative assessment differently. As they taught, they revealed their differing relationships with students, their dissimilar communication styles, and their unique early integration of the student teachers in their classrooms.

The student teachers had the opportunity to consider each teacher’s professional performance; they were able to consider what they saw, heard, and did in each classroom against their past experiences, present experiences, and future goals. A single instructional goal, the
administration of a common summative assessment, enacted in very distinct ways, over three class periods, by a pair of teachers, became a powerful learning experience for the four student teachers involved as they mediated these experiences supported by design of the shared student teaching model. In the following I draw from additional evidence and relevant research literature to discuss how working with multiple cooperating teachers influenced the pre-service teachers’ learning.

**Assessment of student learning.** Both teachers committed to measuring students’ learning with the district-adopted summative assessment but executed the mandated tool to their own specifications. David, Sara, Eric, and Christie observed both teachers as they introduced the task, set expectations for performance, and supported the students’ work.

The teachers modeled two very different sets of expectations for assessing student learning. Perhaps the most extreme example of this contrasting professional practice is in the final product students were asked to complete as a demonstration of their learning. Not only did Ms. Neal ask for an essay, as the assessment was originally designed, she required the students to follow a specific format for its content and structure. After she wrote this format on the back chalkboard and asked students to copy it down, she reflected, “I should have typed this [the outline] out, but I was going to let you go free-for-all. I think this will help you more.” She expected the students to follow her prescribed format to demonstrate their learning. Even toward the end of the class period, as she provided students with an opportunity to self-assess their learning about the source (the father’s letter) and its relationship to course themes, she also focused some of her exit slip prompts on issues of formatting. She invited them to discuss “the content we’ve been covering or the content we just read or the process of what I am asking you to write, the expectations, what I’m asking you to write.”
As important as format and structure was to Ms. Neal, Mr. Walsh rejected the essay as the preferred product of the district assessment and offered little to no structure for the students to decide how they would convey their learning. “With enough work, I could get all of you to repeat me, but that’s not what I want. That’s not what this is all about.” He proposed that students demonstrate their understanding in a format, through a medium, that they valued. From multimedia presentations to song, Walsh focused the support of his students during the class period on choosing an engaging vehicle by which to share with him and with the student teachers what they had learned. Picking up on this, at the end of the class, Sara even implored the students, in the tenor of Mr. Walsh’s pleas, to give them something “interesting.”

The approach that each teacher took appeared directly related to their professional judgment on essay writing as an appropriate display of learning. Ms. Neal used the class period as a time to provide structured support for students to write an essay with balanced evidence and elaboration, as well as opportunity to share relevant personal experiences. This scaffolding was necessary, in her opinion, to help the students. On the other hand, Mr. Walsh admitted that he had not taught students to write an essay in the appropriate style, so insisting on that format might distort his intended goal—measuring their learning about ethnocentrism and culture by analyzing a primary source. Despite his and the student teachers’ ongoing prodding of students to push beyond that format, many still acknowledged that they would write an essay. To that, Walsh suggested that they had all been “corrupted by the establishment.”

Also interesting was the attention that each teacher paid to the corresponding rubric for the assessment. Mr. Walsh invested a considerable amount of class time on a discussion of the rubric, asking students to read it and to characterize elements of the top (Level 4) performance rating. He used a relevant example from local current events to model a Level 4 product and to
distinguish it from another at the lesser Level 3. After that, concerned that the students might still not know the criteria by which their final products would be evaluated, he asked, “Does that help? If it doesn’t say no, and we’ll talk about it in another way.” In contrast, Ms. Neal never mentioned the scoring rubric to her students nor did she reference it explicitly during her instruction. Instead, she designed the template she asked students to use in such a way that their performance would hopefully meet the key evaluative criteria in the adopted rubric.

The student teachers observed and participated in Ms. Neal’s structured essay support and Mr. Walsh’s exercise in creative expression. Had any one of these student teachers been working with just one of these teachers, they would not have seen such a dramatic difference in assessing student learning in this instance. In that case, their experience would have been limited to the decisions made by their sole cooperating teacher.

**Student engagement.** As Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal set different expectations for the students’ assessment products, they also enacted contrasting strategies to engage students in learning. How each teacher expected students to use their class time is reflective of their teaching styles. Mr. Walsh afforded his students the freedom to use the time as they deemed appropriate. He suggested, “You could put your head on your desk today, watch TV all weekend, and come in on Monday and hurry to write it [the summative assessment] all out. That's up to you.” With the time they had in class, after reading the letter and discussing the rubric, the students vacillated from reading the source materials, identifying examples from the reading, drafting arguments, choosing a format, and having numerous conversations unrelated to the task assigned. Mr. Walsh and the student teachers spent the majority of their time supporting students in their collaborative brainstorming to select a format for their assessment product but also working on unrelated tasks, like the dance passes.
In contrast, like the rigid structure of the essay itself, the independent work time in Ms. Neal’s classroom was carefully managed. Ms. Neal expected the students to work independently and silently during the entire class. She and the student teachers provided support for the tasks to be completed (reading, analyzing, note-taking), but the students were expected to spend the time preparing for writing their essay on Monday. When there was an aside with the student teachers, Ms. Neal was discussing make-up work, attendance, and other school/classroom policies and procedures.

So, like the two approaches surrounding the assessment itself, the decisions about student activities and interactions during the classes reflect the teachers’ differences in engaging students in learning. Ms. Neal established expectations for all students and monitored their compliance for the duration of the class, whereas Mr. Walsh offered his students autonomy and the opportunity to determine how best to use their time. The student teachers in each room followed the lead of the cooperating teachers, attempting to support the students and to model each teacher’s engagement strategies.

**Teacher-student communication.** Because of their differing expectations and plans for their students that day, Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal demonstrated different communication styles and exchanges with students. While it is inappropriate to generalize from either teacher’s relationship with the students or their regular interactions, these exchanges do show a difference in communication styles, insofar as it relates to the same task as modeled on this particular day.

I observed how Sara immediately interacted with a student at the beginning of Mr. Walsh’s class by casually asking him, “What’s up, buddy?” This is reflective of the usual casual posturing that Mr. Walsh had with his students throughout the placement. He regularly used light extemporaneous exchanges, often about personal matters, outside the scope of the course
content. Many of these exchanges began when he approached a group of students working and chatting together, both of which he permitted. The student teachers saw this and did the same. For example, when Mr. Walsh overheard Christie’s casual exchange about movies, he joined in before eventually moving the conversation back to the assessment task.

Mr. Walsh’s discourse reflected a congenial back-and-forth that was repeatedly laced with humor (“I love educational rap!”), sarcasm (“My job is to stifle that excitement.”), and gentle chiding (his reaction to the student’s question that wasn’t “on-topic”). The students expected these kinds of exchanges with their teacher as evidenced when one student asked, “How long should the essay be? Are you going to say ‘as long as it takes to answer the question?’” Still, the students seemed to know that Mr. Walsh would help them when asked. However, Mr. Walsh himself reminded the students that his communication with them did have a professional boundary. In his own casual, laid-back way, he declined to support a student with the assessment through e-mail communication over the weekend.

Ms. Neal’s interactions with students were positive, supportive, and entirely focused on the work to be done. Despite the odd tangents at the beginning of her discussion during Period 7, she maintained a professional, authoritative tone in all of her exchanges with the students. She expected her student teachers to do the same.

Discussion

Through my observation across the four classrooms in this study, I witnessed a variety of instructional practices. Each cooperating teacher had his or her own belief system, skill set, and routines. They were largely consistent in their individual instructional approaches and maintained classroom environments to support their own professional objectives and preferences. The incidents described above are unique in that they demonstrated the independent
practices of two of the cooperating teachers during a task that was collaboratively designed as a standardized summative assessment and evaluated by a common scoring rubric. The culture of learning in each classroom reflected the professional beliefs of each teacher, and the four student teachers involved in the class periods I saw had the chance to observe the teachers, immerse themselves in each space, and reflect upon their experiences prior to their own approaching takeover of those classrooms. While none of the students saw all three class sessions on this particular day, as I did, over time they worked with all three of the cooperating teachers and experienced the differences between them.

When I interviewed Ms. Neal and Mr. Walsh, I asked them about the differences in their approaches to the summative assessment. Each teacher commented that they did not realize the other had taken such a different approach, except for Ms. Neal who knew Mr. Walsh had let the students take the letter home over the weekend. Both went on to respond broadly about the gains and perceived problems that come from student teachers working with not just a single teacher but also with their other colleagues:

Mr. Walsh: Teaching with multiple teachers, with multiple styles, seeing how collaboration looks on a daily basis with teachers and colleagues, trying to figure out standard based grading, manage all the different courses…I think that will serve them well. As a result, it serves me well. They will have a better sense of the diversity in the profession. They will get access to a lot more pedagogical skills, instructional techniques, types of lessons to do. Their bag of tricks will be much greater because of the experiences. There are a lot of different ways to shell a nut.

Ms. Neal: I like that they see other people because we’re all different, but it tends to work for us. You don’t have to be me. You don’t have to do things like I do. Here’s all the stuff I do and I’ll talk rationale. This is just the way I feel comfortable with it. You can try it, but you have to find what works for you.

During the time I interviewed the cooperating teachers, I also interviewed each student teacher after this summative assessment incident. I asked them specifically about their reactions
to working with different cooperating teachers in different classrooms each day. Below are
salient excerpts from their interviews:

Sara: I love the working with different teachers. I was really nervous about it and felt
really juggled around at first, but they all have such different teaching styles that it’s kind
of confusing sometimes, but so nice to see how they interact with students. You’re so
shaped by your cooperating teacher, so I feel like I get to say, ‘I like this from her. I like
this from him,’ and I combine them into my own teaching style.

Christie: This experience is teaching me so much of like…I do one lesson in this
classroom and then, if I do it with…Mr. Conlon and Mr. Walsh…I can be like, “Oh, I
like what Mr. Conlon did there, but I might have done something differently here. But I
really like how Mr. Walsh did it, so I’ll put it here. So it’s like taking different teaching
styles in different environments.

David: When I reflect on it…I think I’m starting to model my instruction unconsciously
on what I’ve been seeing, kind of on a class by class basis because it’s what the kids are
used to. I see how specific classes respond to stuff, and I pull that into what I’ve
done before.

Eric: I’m trying to find out what’s expected, so I can figure out how to get there. At the
same time, I need to keep in mind the different ways that I can vary the instruction
because right now I’ve only seen a couple….

Any concern I might have had about the student teachers drawing distinctions between
practices of their cooperating teacher was quickly alleviated during these interviews. Not only
were they able to acknowledge the differences, but they were able to consider how the
experiences were shaping their own practice. David discovered early on that he was tailoring his
instruction to meet the differing expectations of each cooperating teacher, motivated by
maintaining consistency for the students in each classroom (Weasmer & Woods, 2003).

Nonetheless, he also credited previous experiences with informing his practice, affirming the
fundamental tenets of the apprenticeship of practice (Lortie, 2002).

Ultimately, each of them considered the demonstrated practices of the cooperating
teachers against their own beliefs, experiences, and performance goals. Christie made it clear
that, even while comparing and adapting the styles and strategies of two of her cooperating
teachers, she would inject her own practices in addition to theirs. For Sara, it was this combination that would eventually give rise to her “own teaching style.”

Negotiating the different expectations of at least three cooperating teachers was challenging for the students, as they often struggled to live in others’ worlds. As guests in the classroom, this is not uncommon for student teachers, even in a traditional placement (Conway, et al., 2005). However, these student teachers had to integrate themselves in multiple classrooms, leading Sara to feel “juggled around” and confused. Eric suggested that it was not always easy to meet the differing expectations. He also noted that the strategies he was seeing, even across more than one room, were still limited, so he needed to be sure to consider additional instructional practices. Fortunately, by default, he was exposed to some variation as a result of the shared placement structure, something that would not have been the case had he been assigned to just one teacher.

The student teachers continued to appropriate the different tools of their cooperating teachers while adhering to the rules they were expected to honor in each classroom. They integrated what they learned from each teacher into their own emerging professional identities throughout. By the time I sat with them for their final interviews, over three months after the incident described above and their first interview, they again commented on both the benefits and the challenges of working with multiple cooperating teachers.

For Christie, different teaching styles also led to different feedback from each teacher. “Ms. Neal gave me different feedback than Mr. Conlon would have given, so it makes you a more well-rounded person because you’re getting [different] feedback.” David knew that his previous teaching had changed as a result of the interactions with so many teachers. “If you
compare a lesson I taught now to one I taught a year ago, it would look vastly different, mostly because of what I’ve been seeing from all the teachers here.”

The most common tension, expressed by the student teachers, resulted from some cooperating teachers being better able to clarify their expectations, explain their practices, and give the student teachers freedom to use, modify, or reject some practices. This is common concern in student teaching as cooperating teachers struggle to explain and to justify their practice beyond just demonstrating it (Glenn, 2006; Weasmer & Woods, 2003). Eric noted:

When I’m working with [name withheld], he’s very good at working with us, and I feel like he’s very good at figuring out what to do with us and his expectations. The other coops that I’m with don’t do as good a job. They’re still doing a great job, and I’m still learning a lot from them. There are some coops that are more beneficial for this experience than others.

The teachers themselves rarely knew about or saw the differences in their peers’ teaching, let alone their mentoring. In my ongoing conversations with Ms. Neal and Mr. Walsh both spoke to the differences they assumed to exist between their colleagues, though, on separate occasions, they each commented that they could not really tell when the student teachers were integrating performance aspects or advice of their colleagues in their own classrooms. This, they said, was because they do not ever see others teach. Nonetheless, in his final interview, Mr. Walsh was certain that he learned about his colleagues and their practices through his student teachers:

I’ve enjoyed sharing, I guess, what it is I think I know about education with more than one person and see how that might be interpreted and how it might play out in different classrooms. I’ve enjoyed seeing how my colleagues view their role in instruction and taking that in myself through the student teachers, as well and seeing the different ways that young people approach their job.

Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal both believed the exposure to difference was valued-added for the student teachers. The experience positioned them for greater success in the future, according
to Mr. Walsh, with a fuller “bag of tricks.” Ms. Neal reiterated that it wasn’t about copying her; instead she wanted them to feel comfortable, to experiment, and to find their own identities.

Summary

This incident, coupled with the reflections of the student teachers and cooperating teachers during the interviews that followed, demonstrated the enormous influence that a cooperating teacher has on his or her student teacher, in both word and action. Cooperating teachers model their teaching for the expected benefit of their student teachers. This is a common and critical expectation of experiential clinical learning (Clarke, et al., 2014). Student teachers regularly reflect on the influence of their cooperating teachers while forming their own beliefs and practices (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1999). Because of the present design, they mediated their learning in light of the forces of multiple voices (Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal) and contradictions (structured essay or student-selected product) from multiple cooperating teachers. In accordance with Engeström’s (2001) principles of expansive learning, these forces from within the activity system of the cooperating teachers intersected with the emerging activity system of the student teachers. The result was an expansion of learning made possible for the student teachers who witnessed two enactments of the same summative assessment. This is illustrated by the instructional decisions that Christie made as she appropriated the voice and practices of both teachers in her own independent delivery of instruction.

This daunting task is not a common feature of traditional student teaching. Reflecting upon and using these forces to expand learning is powerful yet difficult for anyone, especially student teachers. Fortunately, they were not mediating contrasting experiences with their cooperating teachers in isolation from a critical source of support, their peers. It was Christie, when asked about her work with multiple teachers, who also keenly observed that “another great
experience was picking up different techniques from the other student teachers.” It is to the interactions between student teachers, specifically in planning instruction, that I turn next.

Critical Incident #2: Learning to Plan

One of the true highlights of my own teacher preparation was the cohort structure that the my program established to support students throughout their studies. I began the minor in secondary education during the junior year of my undergraduate education. The four-semester professional education course sequence was a new program that year; my peers and I would be the first to complete the minor in conjunction with our bachelor’s degrees in content. As a history major, I knew the names and faces of some of my peers, but our interactions had been limited. However, beginning in the fall of 1998, we were joined together. That day in August I joined twenty-nine fellow students as the first cohort of pre-service secondary social studies education students. We would spend the next three semesters taking many of the same education courses, many with the same professors for multiple semesters. Because of collaborative learning tasks and shared interests, we very quickly became more than just students in the same field of study. We became a community. We studied together, attended early practicum field placements in the same schools, even the same classrooms, and many of us became friends outside of class. We designed lessons in small teams then taught them in pairs and triads during our field placements. The cohort structure allowed us to learn and to grow together. We became teachers in tandem—almost.

As quickly as we found ourselves together in the fall of 1998, we scattered to the wind by spring of 2000 for our semester-long student teaching experience. We had just one week on campus at the beginning of the semester and a partial week at the end to continue the regular collaboration that had become routine for us. Our clinical experiences office offered student
teaching in three general locations—the local campus area, a major urban center, and the suburban areas outside that large city. Nearly half of our cohort left the campus area that spring; those of us who stayed began placements in numerous schools, middle and secondary. Some of us were in the same districts, and occasionally there were two of us in the same social studies department. Even when that was the case, we often taught different courses and had little interaction during the school day. We had no regular, formal communication with our peers placed at a distance from campus, and the only formal programmatic interactions consisted of intermittent seminars with our social studies methods instructor or supervisors, depending upon our placement. Of course we had communication by phone and by e-mail with our closest friends within the cohort, but the structured community of practice we developed while still students in classes on campus dissolved in that final pivotal semester of clinical preparation.

The seminars in which we participated were powerful learning experiences with noticeable limitations. Regardless of who participated or who coordinated the seminars, the topics discussed included job searches, interviewing, professional development opportunities, and sometimes additional instruction in methods of teaching. Time in seminar also consistently included sharing about our experiences, presenting both successes and challenges and supporting dialogue among peers and advice from seminar facilitators. Each time the conversation turned this direction, I remember very distinctly feeling how difficult it was to understand the contexts in which my peers were teaching, to quickly absorb sufficient background about students, cooperating teachers, curricula, etc. to offer informed feedback, and to focus my attention on their stories when I was mostly anxious to talk about my own experience. I recall many of my peers commenting on how long those conversations lasted and how little we gained from them. We all wanted to be supportive of our peers, but we rarely knew how in a meaningful way.
In May of 2000 my cohort reunited for the celebration of our graduation. We recounted our experiences and waxed nostalgic about our time together. From there, we set out on our own career paths, taking our next professional steps independently. Many of us, seventeen years later, still communicate. Our professional lives are considerably varied, but we remain linked by the cohort system that first brought us together.

When I returned to my alma mater in 2011, after nine years as a teacher and school administrator and two years of full-time doctoral study, I continued to place pre-service candidates locally and in the same urban and suburban locations where my own cohort members were assigned. Like us before them, these cohort members in the secondary education cohorts were separated in their final semester, linked only by a week and a half of campus classes and a handful of seminars, covering most of the same topics and still trying to sustain a dialogue about each student teacher’s experience and a peer support system for their ongoing learning.

Watching this play out from a different perspective and continually thinking about my own student teaching, I repeatedly asked if there was a better way, a way to keep these communities of practice intact during the culminating student teaching experience.

Informed by my both my past experience and present professional duties, I proposed a new design. I wanted to know whether student teachers could better mediate their student teaching experiences with support from other student teachers. How might peer collaboration and support, in placement-specific communities of practice, expand the learning of the participants? I examine these questions in the following critical incident about collaborative planning that began among peer student teachers and then expanded to some of the cooperating teachers.
Planning with Others, Planning for Others

“They don’t know what it’s like to start fresh, not knowing anything about it.”

I visited Scott High School on a Tuesday afternoon in late March. My intention had been to continue my observations in classrooms, watching the various combinations of student teachers in their ongoing efforts to co-teach. Instead, on this particular morning, the first day back after a weeklong spring vacation and an emergency snow day on Monday, I found Megan Swartzbaugh’s (hereafter Ms. Swartzbaugh) Period 2 class in the library where they were attending a special presentation. Little did I know how fortuitous this deviation from normal class time would be as I made my way to Mr. Walsh’s classroom to observe, for the first time, the social studies team planning time.

The 2nd hour social studies team planning time was shared by a number of cooperating teachers and student teachers in the study. According to the class schedule, student teachers, David, Sara, Christie, Nathan, and Jared, and cooperating teachers, Mr. Conlon, Ms. Neal, and Mr. Walsh, all had this time for planning. Throughout the study, the participants commented that, although not always the case, most conversations about planning focused on the Ancient Civilizations, both academic and accelerated sections, because all of those present taught at least one section of the course.

On the day I visited, student teachers, Sara and Nathan and cooperating teachers, Mr. Conlon, Ms. Neal, and Mr. Walsh were present for at least part of the planning time. When I arrived, Sara and Mr. Conlon were discussing their upcoming plans for the week in Sociology. Nathan and Ms. Neal were talking about the plans for Ancient Civilizations. These conversations were timely as Sara had just finished teaching Sociology, and Nathan had his Accelerated Ancient Civilizations with Ms. Neal the next class hour.
Not long after I arrived, Ms. Neal left a room. I took this opportunity to talk to Nathan briefly about the Indian caste system simulation that the group had planned using their Facebook group over the last couple of days. Nathan felt the simulation had gone well during his first hour lesson in Mr. Walsh’s classroom, and he noted how much stronger the final product was after lots of tweaking from the group prior to his first delivery of their shared efforts. He wanted to talk more with Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal about the simulation and future plans while they were all together that morning.

I was very familiar with the group’s planning over the two previous days (Sunday and the Monday emergency weather day) as Nathan, Sara, and Christie (not present during this team planning period) worked together over Facebook group messaging to plan the simulation and sketch out other activities for the India unit plan. Below are extended excerpts from their two-day planning dialogue, focused on the caste simulation:

**March 24—**

Nathan: Yeah, if you wanted to help that would be great. Sara is probably just going to jump right in with the intro to India tomorrow, but I think giving the kids this buffer day might work well. How can we simulate the caste system in about 30 minutes? I was planning on incorporating the idea that you can move up in castes. I think it could as simple as assigning numbers as kids walk in. like first 3 are 1’s (which will be the brahmins but they don't know that yet) and so on with a few not receiving numbers and being shunned to a group of desks in the corner of the room. Maybe every group/caste/social class gets a script or a description of their group and they have to act a certain way towards the other groups.

Christie: I thought you couldn't move up. I like the script and description and we should come up with scenarios and they have to act in their own class.

Nathan: sorry. You really can't move between classes in life but you can be reborn into a lower/higher class.

Christie: oh yeah! sorry I forgot about that!

Sara: i want to simulate too!!
Christie: ok! So how do we want to split it up?

Sara: i honestly have no idea! but i can help anyway you want!

Christie: haha ok i'll brainstorm

Nathan: I'd say just customize it to your classroom. Small percentage 1's, 25% 2,3,4 each and small percentage of no number (Untouchables)

Sara: i get the idea but what are we actually going to do for the class period?

Nathan: That's the question. I don't know. I'll think about it when I'm done with the [plan] for Tuesday.

Sara: i[s] that document you e-mailed Christie the one you sent me this weekend with your week plan?

Nathan: yeah.

Christie: what if we had a normal everyday life scenario and each group had either restrictions or privileges. Like going to the market to get food or finding a job or even marrying someone. Each teacher could play like the vendor or the employer or something else and we could either deny or accept people based on their class. As well as say you have x amount of money to buy things. we could have "higher" quality food or clothes and "lower" quality. I feel that this could show that depending on which class you are in the access you have to things. then we can de-brief about what the caste system is and explain how it works.

Nathan: I'm not going to debrief on the caste system yet because I'm going to spend a day on it in the future. I'm just going to use this activity to get my students thinking about social systems in general.

Christie: thoughts?

Nathan: But I like the idea of giving out money and having the teachers be a vender/employer type role.

Christie: ok! we can ask them where they would see things like this i.e. the school, movies, our society, other societies etc. we can just use this as a way to connect to things they see today and then later tie it to the caste system kind of like the power thing for the 1st day of Egypt

Nathan: yeah. You guys can move a bit faster if you want to, but I'm going to try and break it down for my 458ers [academic level ancient civilizations students].
Christie: I will probably do only this for tomorrow due to the fact that I'll spend quite a bit of time going over the last summative.

Nathan: right sounds good.

Sara: hmm, so are we going to give them a worksheet to do or are they going to be moving around talking? I guess I'm still confused about the actual simulation part.

Nathan: what do you think would work Sara? I'm not sure how to format the actual simulation either, but I don't [think] any of us are that's ok! Does everybody have another student teacher in the room when they are going to be doing this?

Sara: yes, I do in both of my periods.

Nathan: maybe we should plan something cool that uses both teachers and splits up the class?

Christie: I have [David] for 8th but just myself for 7th so if anyone is open and could help I would appreciate it!

Nathan: I haven't done stations yet, but maybe having students move around the room to different stations that put you in a different class.

Sara: I like the idea of stations.

Christie: agreed! Maybe have them separated into groups and have at least 1 of each tier in a group and they can see how each group is treated at each station.

[The group continued to plan the simulation. Sara found a sample simulation online and shared it with the group. The group decided to modify it for their purposes. Christie suggested a rewording of the questions from the sample and the creation of a teacher script to guide the activity. Sara began to reword the questions, Christie made individual directions sheets for students, and, with support from Christie, Nathan began to create directions and rules on a Prezi. As the group worked, the snow day was announced. The group stopped its collective work until the next afternoon.]

March 25—

Sara: okay so I read the directions that you e-mailed out. I get where the activity is going but what exactly are we having them do for 5 minutes? Okay, so idea, since I seem to be confused I did a little more research on some simulations and I found this one. Basically students are assigned a role in society and their task is to get as many signatures from their classmates but since they have their defined roles there are restrictions on how they can interact. It's not really focusing on content like the other idea was but it still gets the point across. Then maybe if we have time after we can debrief (using the same questions?)
and then start the map activity or something that Nathan was planning on doing on day 2. thoughts? comments? check out this powerpoint i found, it explains it well

Nathan: Just looked at both activities. I like the roles and interactions in the one you sent out Christie.

Sara: I like that that activity is simpler for kids to navigate through, but how can we make sure that people aren't signing across castes? In other words, how should we structure the activity to make sure it runs smoothly? Also, I agree that we should remove all the India content from the activity and just have kids think about their place in society.

Nathan: I just think throwing the complicated caste names at them will confuse them.

Christie: We can come up with colors and each color can correspond to a specific caste. Like make all of the highest castes slips of paper on green paper and then the next lowest in yellow etc. Just have Green Group, Pink Group, White Group, Yellow Group, etc

Sara: we could maybe give them all some money too and have the upper castes get more and so on and we can see if they try to buy signatures or bribe people to help them and stuff like that?

Christie: true true

Sara: do we think that can work? i think this might be what i do for my classes

Nathan: I think it could work. Anybody want to shoot an email to Wes [Mr. Conlon] and Matthew [Mr. Walsh]? See what they think?

Christie: I can
Nathan: maybe they've done something similar in the past but neither has emailed me back yet.

Sara: Wes [Mr. Conlon] hasn't emailed me back over break but he texted me yesterday, maybe try that? if you really need an answer

Christie: email sent and you all were CC in it

Sara: got it, thanks

Christie: welcome!

Sara: i like where this is going. 2nd hour we can really nail down the goals for the unit. i know we are going to plan a little more independently but i think having common goals and similar activities might help

Christie: definitely! Questions where exactly are we going with the India unit?
Sara: i was thinking that they need to understand the links between social systems and religion in india and how they as people play a role in a social system

Nathan: I was going to focus on social systems and religion (maybe economics with modern India) to begin to talk about modern day India. I think I want them to start building some critical skills for the modern day in this unit

Sara: yes, i left out the modern day aspect but i'm going to focus a lot on that

Christie: That sounds great! I definitely was along the lines of the same thing.

[The final simulation materials are included in Appendix H.]

Back in the planning meeting, my conversation with Nathan about the Facebook group planning was brief, but I could not help but wonder to what extent he believed the group planning had impacted the lesson he had already taught.

As I contemplated this, rather abruptly, Ms. Neal reentered the room and addressed Nathan on her way to her seat, “Have you planned for the week?” Nathan said, “What I sent you is my plan; I’m not sure about the others.”

Then, for the first time during the team planning time, Mr. Walsh entered the room and immediately announced to the group, “I thought that went pretty well [the introduction lesson on India and the caste system simulation]. So, I’m assuming that you are going to make the connection tomorrow.”

From there, prompted by Mr. Walsh’s question, Nathan proposed that the GRAPES (Geography, Religion, Arts, Politics, Economics, and Social Systems) acronym would be used to introduce the unit the next day, and the first formal lesson on India would be about geography.

Instead of speaking directly to this plan, Mr. Walsh reminded Nathan his job should be to answer the question, “Why India?” Pushing him again, Walsh asked Nathan to tell him why the students were studying India.
Nathan began to explain the caste system and how it is supported by some of the major religious tenets of Hinduism. He continued with a discussion of the impact that the social system had on the Indian economy, both positive and negative. While Nathan attempted to answer the question, Mr. Walsh played with his phone. Finally, he chided Nathan, “You’re going to tell them all of that?” You need to tell them about India then and now. Why are we looking at this now?”

Ms. Neal suddenly chimed in, further pushing Nathan to consider the “Why India?” question, asking, “Why does this matter to them?” She asked and waited for him to answer.

Mr. Walsh then asked Nathan to pull up the students teachers’ newly created India unit materials on Dropbox.

“I want you to pull up geography. I want to see what you’re going to do tomorrow. Pull it up on Dropbox.”

Nathan opened to his e-mail. “It’s not on Dropbox. It’s only on the e-mail that I sent you.”

As Mr. Walsh began to read the lesson plans and the Prezi slideshow on Indian geography the group created, he asked Nathan, “Why would you live like that?” Before Nathan could respond, Walsh answered his own question. “Well, it sets up isolationism.”

Soon after, he added, “Hint: Dharma is not about doing good. It’s about being a good Sutra.”

Nathan asked, “What’s the difference between karma and dharma?” Mr. Walsh offered a brief explanation to Nathan and then returned to reviewing the lesson plans.

Walsh critiqued the central theme of the next lesson on Indian geography and religion and asked Nathan to simplify it. “This is too much. They need this to be broken down for
them.” Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal, who was, by then, also looking at the plan, both recommended turning the lesson’s “big idea” into a question—something that the students had to be able to answer.

While Nathan worked to revise the Prezi, Mr. Walsh interjected: “This is a hard thing to do. You can ask, ‘What’s the relationship between geography and religion?’”

Then, with that, Mr. Walsh noted that he needed to work on his statistics homework for a University course he was currently taking and began to work away from the group.

Nathan began independently modifying the India unit plan. Occasionally, Mr. Walsh interjected, “Are you going to have them do anything with geography?” When Nathan said, with uncertainly, “a map,” Mr. Walsh responded, “There’s nothing wrong with maps.” He reminded Nathan, “Ask them about the relationship….”

Ms. Neal quickly added, “Remember, you are always working toward a goal. Don’t get caught up in a single activity.”

Having wrapped up her planning with Mr. Conlon for Sociology by this time, Sara had opened the geography activity the cooperating teachers used in previous years, an activity that would be part of the lesson tomorrow. The teacher gave this file, along with others, to the student teachers with the expectation that they would use parts of the previous work but modify it for their own lessons. Upon reviewing it, Sara suggested that she might leave the first question on the map worksheet as it was worded (1. “Label 10 physical features on the map of India.”) because she felt her Accelerated Ancient Civilizations students could do this without additional support. Hearing this, Mr. Walsh suggested that Nathan should pick the 10 things that he wanted their students in the academic level course to label. Walsh also noted that the student teachers
could, of course, write their own questions or pick the ones from the previous map assignment in DropBox that they liked.

The conversation returned to whether or not students could independently label ten physical features of their own choosing on the map. Mr. Walsh insisted that he wanted the student teachers to choose 10 features for the students to label. He had done this before with great success. Sara asked about the Accelerated Ancient Civilizations course she had with Mr. Walsh during Period 6; she really wanted them to choose the items to label. He offered his support to that idea, but, looking at Nathan, he noted that “the regular class needs specifics.”

**Moments for Mediation**

Through the events recounted above, I witnessed two very different planning experiences for three of the participating student teachers in this study of a shared student teaching model. The distinctions between the peer planning sessions over Facebook and the established team planning time with three of the cooperating teachers at school were significant and illustrative of the learning experiences of the participants in this study. Broadly, I then consider the planning of the student teachers’ within their own community of practice and in light of their work with the cooperating teachers who were tasked with mentoring them through their placement. Although the particular critical incident above involved only a few of the participants, corresponding interview data and other teaching and planning episodes with additional participants demonstrate that the experiences and reactions were not confined to this single experience. Because many participants had similar experiences and responses with regard to planning, I will share relevant data from more than just those who were directly involved in the above planning experiences.
Delegation of duties vs. shared planning. Collaborative planning was not a practice common to the student teachers who participated. Although they occasionally co-planned and co-taught lessons in the previous early field experiences, the idea of planning regularly in groups was new to them. Given the tremendous amount of learning that occurs in any student teaching experience, the added expectation to assemble as part of a newly formed community of practice and to plan lessons and units of study as a group was initially overwhelming for them.

During our first interview, Jared articulated the tension that came with establishing norms of planning behavior within the student teaching community. “I don’t know exactly how it’s going to look in the planning. I don’t know if we’ll make the lessons together or end up being like ‘you’ll plan this day and I’ll plan for this day,’ and we’ll all end up doing the same thing. …[D]ifferent people plan for each day. I imagine it will end up being like that. I think we are all still finding our footing.” Equally unsure how the shared planning would work during his first interview, Eric worried, “We’re just not sure how much we’re allowed to do together. We’re in a state of confusion right now.”

The first question the student teachers discovered they needed to answer was how individuals could meaningfully contribute to the team planning process. With so many of the student teachers working in different combinations of peers, setting norms for planning proved particularly daunting. Jared consistently struggled to get the Ancient Civilizations planning group to work on materials farther in advance:

Working with people who aren’t as interested in planning ahead as far as I am was frustrating. Like for Ancient Civ., we knew what we wanted to cover each week, but we weren’t planning until 8:00 p.m. the night before…the actual lesson. That’s frustrating because in my World History class we had things done a week ahead of time.
The student teachers started their placements by attempting to set rules for collaboration that would support their work across the community of practice. Then, as the semester progressed, their work evolved.

Essentially, shared planning can range from the delegation of entirely separate responsibilities to a genuinely integrated process by which they worked together on plans and materials. Within an emerging community of practice, the student teachers were just beginning to learn how to collaborate. They were all eager but had to negotiate their roles, individually and collaboratively. As a result, they adapted their planning practices as the semester progressed, and their community norms and expectations solidified.

Early on, delegation appeared to be the easiest approach, so this is how the group began their planning. Eric shared one of his first co-planning experiences with World History:

> I met with the other three and ‘alright, we’ll all be teaching World History, so we need to be on the same page.’ I took the lead on that one and told everyone to go home and research this stuff, and I got some input from them. But, I don’t think they realize how urgent this is, and I know they’re all bright kids and they’re going to come through, I’m positive.

Eric’s concern over his peers’ follow-through in a timely fashion was similar to a concern that Jared shared. For Jared, the delegation of planning responsibilities often led to him receiving materials much later than he preferred. He commented that he often received plans and activities late at night or even the day of their use. In this case, delegation offered significant stress to both Eric and Jared, though they both noted the extent to which they trusted their peers to do what was asked of them.

Christie found delegation of separate duties to her peers to have a positive impact on her overall work with colleagues:

> I have definitely learned a lot about myself. I need to relax sometimes and kind of let other people do things. This model has been really good for me in that. I like to overtake
things and just do it for myself. It’s really taught me how to delegate tasks and just be like ‘it’s going to be okay, they’re going to get it done.

Christie was not alone in noting how delegation had a positive and expected long-term benefit on professional practice. When asked about sharing responsibilities with his peers, David expressed his enjoyment of sharing work with others, but he was not without concern over delegating work to others. He observed:

I’m enjoying it right now, but, down the line…for my Ancient Civ. prep, I’m not having as much responsibility as I would if I was…just me. You know a lot of stuff is just being handed to me, and I’m like, ‘Oh, yeah, that looks good. We should do that.’ I think we’re all taking on an equal role, but it’s being split up four ways or so.

Splitting up the work came at a cost for some of the student teachers. Nathan, in particular, struggled to find success through delegation. He was often behind in producing material for his peers to use, and he struggled to teach from the resources provided to him, activities and lessons he did not take an active role in creating. During his second interview, joined by Jared and Ms. Neal, he admitted, “I know I need to plan better. I think I was lulled into a false sense of security. I don’t blame anyone else.” When I asked him how he came to that realization, Nathan noted that Jared had been doing most of the planning for the U.S. History course they were teaching together, while he invested his time on materials for the Ancient Civilizations course. Dividing up the work and relying on planning Jared had done was clearly not supporting his instructional performance.

As Nathan reflected on his struggle to plan better and to take a more active role in that process, Ms. Neal shared her perspective on the challenges with delegation of planning duties among the student teachers:

At the beginning, it was a little of who’s just doing what, where. Then, it went to ‘well, so and so is doing it, so I don’t have to.’ Shared responsibility turned into nobody’s responsibility. You are having a much more easy student teaching experience than most people do. You’re not doing the day-to-day, and you might get someone else to write
your lessons. If someone isn’t doing well, it’s because they didn’t create it. They feel like they can’t work without the other people.

Other cooperating teachers shared Ms. Neal’s concern over dividing work among the student teachers. For example, in his first interview, Mr. Walsh felt that collaboration among the student teachers was a true positive of the shared student teaching model. “They are pretty good dividing up tasks, but I see the most dominant one taking over and delegating to the others.” By the time we sat down in a small group interview a few weeks later, he cautioned, “I think collaboration is good, but it also brings a deferral of responsibility. We aren’t all really producing.” Hearing Mr. Walsh’s comments, Mr. Conlon added, “The creation of the content has been delegated to one or two with planning duties. When you teach someone else’s material, you don’t know it very well. …I’ll just use what that person created.”

The cooperating teachers’ concerns over delegation did not eclipse their belief that peer collaboration, especially in shared planning, was a strength of the student teachers’ experience. By the second interview in early March, Mr. Walsh observed, “There are a lot of great things going on. When else do you get a chance to talk to your peers during student teaching about how things are going to look or what you want to do, or how it went in another class? It’s taken us five years to get there in a PLC [Professional Learning Community].” Walsh suggested more collaboration during the early field experience in the semester before student teaching, including time to watch their cooperating teachers interact in their own PLC. “If the collaboration started earlier…, they could see what collaboration looks like. They could see what co-planning looks like [among the cooperating teachers]. So it’s not just thrown into it.”

Since delegation proved to be problematic, for both the student teachers and cooperating teachers, they needed to adapt their work. By trial and error and a commitment to improving their own individual practices of planning and of instruction, the student teachers moved away
from delegated tasks to a more holistic, team-focused approach to planning. The Facebook group dialogue above, which occurred in late March, is one example of the sustained participation of multiple student teachers throughout the design and implementation of an instructional activity (the caste system simulation). One relevant excerpt from the two-day Facebook group dialogue above demonstrates this shared effort:

Sara: okay so i read the directions that you e-mailed out. i get where the activity is going but what exactly are we having them do for 5 minutes? okay, so idea. since i seem to be confused i did a little more research on some simulations and i found this one. basically students are assigned a role in society and their task is to get as many signatures from their classmates but since they have their defined roles there on restrictions on how they can interact. it's not really focusing on content like the other idea was but it still gets the point across. then maybe if we have time after we can debrief (using the same questions?) and then start the map activity or something that nathan was planning on doing on day 2. thoughts? comments? check out this powerpoint i found, it explains it well

Nathan: Just looked at both activities. I like the roles and interactions in the one you sent out Christie.

Sara: I like that that activity is simpler for kids to navigate through, but how can we make sure that people aren't signing across castes? In other words, how should we structure the activity to make sure it runs smoothly. Also, I agree that we should remove all the India content from the activity and just have kids think about their place in society.

Nathan: I just think throwing the complicated caste names at them will confuse them.

Christie: We can come up with colors and each color can correspond to a specific caste. Like make all of the highest castes slips of paper on green paper and then the next lowest in yellow etc. Just have Green Group, Pink Group, White Group, Yellow Group, etc

Sara: we could maybe give them all some money too and have the upper castes get more and so on and we can see if they try to buy signatures or bribe people to help them and stuff like that?

Christie: true true

Sara: do we think that can work? i think this might be what i do for my classes

This back-and-forth, give-and-take is reflective of a truly shared planning process. In this example, the student teachers are sharing resources, asking clarifying questions, designing
elements of the lesson/activity together, and proposing instructional strategies to support student learning. Such an exchange became a much more common occurrence in the last two to three months of the shared student teaching placement. Even when delegation seemed more efficient, such as when Christie asked at the beginning of the Facebook conversation about splitting up the work, the group members remained engaged in the planning dialogue. The group continued to plan the simulation. Sara found a sample simulation online and shared it with the group. The group decided to modify it for their purposes. Christie suggested a rewording of the questions from the sample and the creation of a teacher script to guide the activity. Sara began to reword the questions, Christie made individual directions sheets for students, and, with support from Christie, Nathan began to create directions and rules on a Prezi. Throughout they remained active participants in a shared process.

Changing their community’s norms of planning performance became apparent in the student teachers’ final interviews when I asked them about working together with their peers. Eric previously worried about being on track and not copying the work of his peers, but, by my final conversation with him in May, he acknowledged that he “enjoyed bouncing ideas off in conversation with other teachers. It was nice to have that support group also. A whole group of us at that same stage in our process, so if we had any questions, we could just rely on each other for that.” From being initially concerned about just having things handed to him to developing a new appreciation for active, shared planning, David reflected that his experience had “given a more honest look at what teaching is going to be like down the road.” He added, “The ability to be able to share material for some stuff, to put our heads together for different things—I think, from what I’ve seen here, is a fairly honest assessment of what goes on.” Sara saw the long-term benefit of this type of exchange of information and shared production of teaching tools:
I know I am going to be so much better off than other people—becoming more well-rounded, getting to work with others, getting ideas from other people, not being scared to collaborate with other people is huge, especially as a first-year teacher. Not being scared to say, ‘these are my ideas. What are your ideas? How can we share?'

Even Nathan who acknowledged that delegation had left him feeling unprepared to teach the work of others realized that shared planning, while not devoid of individual responsibility, made for stronger, richer lessons and activities than did the “divide and conquer” approach:

I started out planning at home because it works to talk about it with people here and then do it at home. Now that we’re doing more stuff, it makes sense for us to use our time here to plan. If we’re doing something at home, we message each other back and forth on the e-mail or Facebook or any way. If there is a lot to do, people have certain responsibilities, and we make sure people have the material before it has to be taught. We have time to think about it and ask questions. You can’t do it alone. You can’t be an island.

The cooperating teachers also noticed and seemed to appreciate the shift from delegated planning tasks to more shared work as a community of student teachers. Early on, it was with Ms. Swartzbaugh’s World History course where the first signs of shared planning began to be normalized with Eric, Brian, and Jared. During their planning of a unit on Africa, the student teachers impressed Swartzbaugh:

I think the group we have is really good. They are really strong. Watching them work together and work through planning a unit together, like the Africa unit last week…it will be good for them and the job situation because that's what we do in our PLC.

That sense of responsibility to work as a team was something that Ms. Neal saw as a powerful learning experience, too, especially for the student teachers who might have been more fiercely independent at the beginning of the placement, those who struggled to delegate at first. “Someone who might be a loner may start to realize that [he/she] needs to develop those skills.”

As she thought more about the collaboration among the student teachers, she still worried about differing levels of ability and commitment among individual student teachers in the group and
considered the student teachers’ collective performance in the shared model against the traditional 1:1 placements:

I learned, for their emotional well-being, having at least a buddy, if not this system, was really good for them. No one got into the hole that a lot of people do during student teaching where they go off to their room where they are at the mercy of the coop. Are they there? Are they not there? Are they overbearing? Are they not there enough? Having each other to talk to really helps them in terms of not just trying to get stuff done to get it done but to be able to have that support. So it does come out with their work being slightly better, I think.

Not all of the cooperating teachers were convinced that the student teachers should have relied so heavily upon collaborative peer planning as the primary support system by which they learned to teach during the shared student teaching experience. After all, the work of collaborative planning, as demonstrated through the Facebook group, was done independent of the cooperating teachers. The cooperating teachers routinely expressed their concern about being “on the outside” of the student teachers’ community of practice. Their role as cooperating teachers fundamentally changed with the advent of sustained peer collaboration and a higher functioning community of practice among the student teachers. It was Mr. Conlon who offered what he believed to be the most significant concern. “[I]t’s like the blind leading the blind. We’re still involved in their daily planning. We’re still driving instruction, but when they’re planning collaboratively, they’re still just novice teachers and don’t necessarily know some of the ins and outs.” The student teachers’ familiarity with the course material and their awareness of teaching strategies was vastly different than that of their cooperating teachers. Their response to that, the reaction of their cooperating teachers, and the potential benefits and risks of such a gap warrant consideration in the model design.

Content knowledge. The student teachers commented throughout their experience that much of what they taught in the Scott High School social studies curriculum was content only
vaguely familiar to them, and, as Nathan keenly observed, “I don’t expect to be teaching perfect lessons. I’ve never done this before.” This happened most frequently in the Ancient World History (Civilizations) course that all of the student teachers taught, either as a primary instructor, secondary instructor, or during a floating assignment. With units covering ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome, the course pushed the student teachers well beyond their comfort zone. For most of the student teachers, this content was covered briefly in a world history survey course early in their undergraduate education, if, in fact, they even took that particular course. Otherwise, much of this content was new to them. They were teaching themselves what they needed to know to meet the course objectives, all while learning more about teaching and their own identities in the classroom.

Because of their peer collaboration, the student teachers were able to support each other in learning new content and preparing to teach it to their students. This was illustrated during the Facebook group planning session when Christie questioned Nathan’s reference to whether Indians could move between social castes. Certain that they could not move, she asked him for further explanation on his proposed simulation activity. He reminded her that, although they could not move during their lifetime, they could be reborn into lower or higher classes. To this Christie responded, “[O]h yeah! [S]orry I forgot about that!”

During the team planning time Nathan still showed his limited understanding of other content related to ancient India. While Mr. Walsh was reviewing Nathan’s forthcoming lessons, he found an element of a future lesson that needed to be revised and clarified for the students. (“Hint: Dharma is not about doing good. It’s about being a good Sutra.”). Nathan then asked for clarification between karma and dharma, to which Walsh offered a brief explanation before continuing his critique of the lesson plan. During his review, Mr. Walsh asked Nathan several
more questions about the content related to ancient India. As he asked him questions, Nathan struggled to answer them; often Mr. Walsh answered his own questions as Nathan wrote the explanations. For example, when he asked about why ancient Indians lived as they did, Mr. Walsh went on to answer his own question (“Well, it sets up isolationism.”) before Nathan could formulate a response. When learning content from their cooperating teachers, the student teachers became passive recipients of knowledge. This was certainly the case when Nathan was guided by both Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal during the group’s common planning time.

When working with each other, like they did during the design of the Indian caste simulation, the student teachers were more active participants, negotiating meaning making dialogically in a shared venture. For Christie, peer planning provided support for content deficiencies. “I feel like it’s all about helping each other. Some of us have strengths in one content area…so I feel like if we can help each other out, that’s good.” Strengths and weaknesses varied, and so they assisted each other for mutual gain. Sara echoed this same sentiment, noting that she sometimes did not feel prepared to teach some content. “I can plan a lesson all I want, but that doesn’t mean I can teach it.” She recognized that, despite some challenges with different personalities and work ethics, the student teachers routinely worked together with much success. Like Christie, Sara saw the inherent value in working with her peers to plan, especially as it related to content that was unfamiliar to them.

**Instructional resources.** Instead of planning as part of a broader community of practice with the student teachers, the cooperating teachers attempted to address the student teachers’ content and pedagogical gaps by sharing large amounts of information, previous lesson materials, with the student teachers without restriction. Their decision to share these files with the student teachers gave them a wealth of tools to consider when planning, especially when
there were plans, activities, and supporting materials (PowerPoint, etc.) that addressed content and pedagogical gaps. The cooperating teachers did not expect, nor encourage the students to use these materials entirely as they were created. In fact, many of them commented during our interviews that they hoped the student teachers would only consider those materials and then adapt them. As Mr. Walsh suggested, “Add an activity, take my reading, give it a spin for yourself.” Ms. Neal concurred when she observed, “I’ve given them resources. I’ve said you can use all of it, some of it…I’d like to see them make it their own, but they don’t need to reinvent the wheel.”

Dissemination of previous materials and critique of student teachers’ new materials was more common than collaborative learning. Mr. Conlon knew his student teachers struggled with the material taught in Ancient Civilizations. “None of them are specialists with ancient civilizations.” To the extent that the other cooperating teachers agreed with this, they attempted to address this lack of content knowledge with previous resources for the student teachers to use.

Mr. Walsh told me early on that [the italics are mine]:

Every student in the common planning time will be a primary instructor for the Ancient Civilization course. We, as coops, are going to take a supporting role and tell them what we know. They are all linked up to our Dropbox. They have access to everything we have ever done. We want to be a resource. We want them to use the time to hammer out Ancient Civilizations because they all teach it.

The above comment from Mr. Walsh shows that the cooperating teachers intended to assume a passive role in the planning process, a resource as opposed to an actor in the process. They had already planned materials in their own community of practice. They knew the content and their preferred manner in which to teach it. By giving the student teachers their previous materials, they believed they were supporting the student teachers’ learning but not actively contributing to the interpretation and adaptation of those resources.
Most of the student teachers valued a look at what happened before and how the cooperating teachers presented the content to students. Christie appreciated that, with so many cooperating teachers, she had different people to tell her, “I did it this way. I did it this [way], and this is what works.” For others, however, like Eric, the mass sharing of teachers’ files was problematic. “I know she showed me her folder of stuff she used in the past. I didn’t really want to copy what she used. I looked through it, but I thought it would be more beneficial for us if we start from scratch.” For Eric, creating new materials with his peers expanded his learning experience and improved his understanding of the content and how he delivered it to his students.

**Cooperating teacher validation.** Although the cooperating teachers were rarely involved in the production of new knowledge and skills through extended planning processes, they were still very much central to the transition from planning to classroom instruction. Given their “contractual,” deferential relationship with their cooperating teachers (Clarke, et al., 2014), the student teachers planned together with an understanding that each lesson they produced would require validation from their mentors. They worked intentionally to produce instructional plans and materials that would align closely with the past practices of their cooperating teachers. This is the same “unconscious” modeling of each of his mentor’s teaching that David recognized in his own practice early in the experience. After nearly two days of work, the Facebook planning group (Nathan, Sara, and Christie) reached a point where they sought validation of the emerging caste system simulation:

Nathan: I think it could work. Anybody want to shoot an email to Wes [Mr. Conlon] and Matthew [Mr. Walsh]? See what they think?

Nathan: maybe they've done something similar in the past but neither has emailed me back yet.
Sara: [W]es hasn't emailed me back over break but he texted me yesterday, maybe try that? if you really need an answer

Christie: email sent and you all were CC in it

Nathan was concerned with the planning, insofar as it needed to meet these two cooperating teachers’ expectations. He even wondered if it was reflective of something either one had done previously. After the cooperating teachers chose to share all of their previous materials, in bulk, a new marker of legitimacy became the similarity of the student teachers’ plans to those done by the cooperating teachers.

By this point in their collaborative planning, the group was concerned that they had not heard from Mr. Conlon or Mr. Walsh over the spring break. Nathan had tried to reach them both. They felt that they needed the cooperating teachers’ validation to proceed. So, Christie sent the following e-mail, along with the simulation document they had created:

Hello Wes [Conlon] and Matthew [Walsh],

I hope you both are having a great snow day! Nathan, Sara, and I wanted to share an idea we had for class tomorrow and gather your thoughts and opinions. We wanted to do a simulation tomorrow to introduce the concept of the caste system to the students. We will not be saying that this is the caste system or adding any information about India but rather just introducing the concept. This is to get them thinking about the system and see if they see anything similar in their own lives. We feel that this would be a very interesting way to get them thinking and moving in the classroom. I attached all of the information we have completed so far for this activity. We are still trying to come up with all of the logistics like "money" and a way to break them up into the classes. Please feel free to express any concerns or feedback.

Thanks,

Christie

After the plans were sent to the teachers for review and for approval, Mr. Walsh responded to the group by e-mail. He wrote, “Go for it. I'll be really interested to see how the kids handle it!”
As the group finalized their simulation activity, a two-day long process, they immediately turned their attention to the need for approval from their cooperating teachers to proceed with their plans. They did not involve the cooperating teachers in any of the intellectual work prior to this. This is consistent with the generally passive role in planning by the cooperating teachers.

Although not actors/strong participants in the planning process, the cooperating teachers retained their control over the lessons taught in their classrooms. As Mr. Conlon noted above, they were still “driving instruction.” Their validation, even as simple as what Mr. Walsh offered in his e-mail response above, was crucial to the student teachers’ sense of efficacy. Concerned that he did not know if what he was doing was appropriate for one of his cooperating teachers, Eric shared with me that, instead of teaching his own lessons, he was often asked to teach lessons designed by one of his cooperating teachers. When that happened, he was frequently interrupted during his teaching, so the cooperating teacher could address elements of the lesson that Eric did not understand beforehand or fully address during instruction. He lamented:

It would have been helpful, if maybe…right off the bat…this is what you’re expected to do kind of thing…or this is what you’re expected to cover. I guess a curriculum would have been nice to see…. I don’t know what I’m teaching for. That doesn’t make sense to me. It would make sense to me if I saw the test. “Oh, these are the questions we’re going to ask our kids. These are the standards we are going to cover.” They have gotten into a groove relying on their old lessons, so they don’t know what it’s like to start fresh, not knowing anything about it.

Eric went on to say that he worried about sharing his own ideas with this particular cooperating teacher. He observed that, while he did co-plan with his peers in that classroom, he noticed a considerable difference in the amount of freedom he and his peers had to deviate from the previous plans of the teacher. Brian, who co-taught with Eric in the same classroom, concurred with this. “Our cooperating teacher wants us nearly to teach the exact same content between the three [course title removed] classes, which is understandable.” He went on to explain how they
were asked to use many of the same readings, activities, and assessments already created by the teacher, though they could modify them as a group, if they thought it necessary. The student teachers did so only occasionally; they perceived that they should accept that previous materials designed by the cooperating teachers were best, and they did not need to deviate from them.

**Conflicting objectives.** Even with the positive peer interactions illustrated above, there were also tensions that were a part of the shared work of the student teachers. This is particularly telling throughout their planning processes. The student teachers did not always agree with each other—in the scope and sequence of an activity, in the goals and broader purposes of the lesson, or in the way in which they would present content to their students. For example, through the Facebook planning dialogue, the student teachers had very different purposes in mind when designing the caste systems simulation. By the end of the second day they had built something that emerged as different from any of their own original ideas. They modified their plans and the simulation activity in response to questions and concerns of their planning partners. Throughout this two-day planning experience, no student teacher left the conversation having relinquished control over his or her final plans or agreed to lead the simulation under duress. Instead, they collaboratively designed an activity that, in part, would provide the link to their own planned discussions about some critical cultural elements of ancient India.

**Differentiation.** As a new professional task, collaborative planning was challenging for the student teachers initially. They had to determine what satisfactory plans from their shared efforts would look like and, like the planning process itself, the lessons they produced collaboratively changed over time as well.
Looking back across the semester, Nathan reflected on how the group attempted to plan when they first came together. “In the beginning, it was us all coming together to produce one idea that we would all use.” Sara agreed that “in the beginning we definitely tried to do the same thing in every class because we thought we had to, so, if I was doing a lecture and a summative assessment, Nathan was going to do it in his class.” Collaborative planning meant that a final product would be used, unaltered, in every classroom for each student teacher. Because they were all teaching the same lessons, student teachers could teach a lesson and immediately share feedback with another peer. Nathan pointed out that “if someone has a class that’s ahead, we let the other people know how class went, what went well, not so well, and maybe improve upon it for the other period.” This became the way of shared planning for the first few weeks of their work.

The cooperating teachers grew concerned with this approach almost immediately. They shared with me how some student teachers were unprepared and how lessons were not reflective of the student teachers’ strengths and the needs of the high school students in their classrooms. Mr. Conlon was one of the first to express his concerns:

In the ancient civ. classes, with so many people teaching that course, they are trying to figure out how to keep common assessments and activities while differentiating the lessons. They can’t teach the exact same lesson in eight different classes. This is very similar to what we have experienced in a PLC setting. What works in one class won’t necessarily work in another class. They thought, because of the PLC and the student teaching model, that they were supposed to teach the same lessons if the classes were the same. I think that’s been a big thing that they’ve been running into.

During her second interview, Ms. Neal also expressed concern. “There are a lot of good collaboration times, but it’s not necessarily leading to better teaching, in general.” Clearly, the student teachers needed guidance from their cooperating teachers, influenced by their own
previous work in a community of practice, and time to adjust their collaboration to better meet their needs.

As the semester progressed, the student teachers began to discover more about themselves—teaching style, instructional strengths, areas for improvement—and, most importantly, about their students. Consequently, the planning outcomes shifted from identical lessons taught and amended throughout the day to lessons designed around key themes and linked assessment but often different in materials, procedures, and presentations. By the end of the semester, Nathan recognized the shift from common lesson plans to common themes and assessments. “We’ve…tried to develop plans around themes or goals. When we get there, as long as we agree on assessments, I don’t see a problem if someone doesn’t want to teach my lesson or use my activity. If that doesn’t work for or your class, it doesn’t matter, as long as in the end we can assess with the same assessment.” Sara came to realize how important differentiation of instruction could be:

My classes are very different than Nathan’s classes, so, I think, now just learning how to adjust the same content to different students has been a challenge. But, it’s a challenge I’m glad we got to go through now with one another and the cooperating teachers to be able to talk to about it.

The critical incident involving the planning of the caste system simulation highlights two examples of differentiation in action—one with the student teachers acting collectively and the other with the engagement of the cooperating teachers. During the simulation planning on Facebook, Nathan, Sara, and Christie were trying to set a general schedule for the first few topics of the unit and allow for enough time to draw connections to the simulations. Fearing the others were moving too fast in their accelerated courses, Nathan stood his ground, “[Y]eah. You guys can move a bit faster if you want to, but I'm going to try and break it down for my 458ers [academic level ancient civilizations students]. During his final interview in May, I asked him
about times like this when he decided to differentiate his instruction to meet the suspected needs of his students. He noted that he had to know “what will work with a certain group of students.”

He continued:

When I’m planning for Ancient Civ., I’m planning for 1st hour and 6th hour, and those are two completely different groups of kids. 1st hour is low-energy…, and 6th hour, everyone is talking. I think I’ll try and plan for 1st hour, see how it goes, and then try to make accommodations before 6th hour. I have to take whatever we create as a group and make sure it works for my students, for what they need from me.

Over the semester collaborative planning encouraged differentiation and supported the potential for highly responsive instruction from the student teachers.

The cooperating teachers recognized the improvements in planning made by the student teachers throughout the placement, and they often commented on the caliber of work as compared to previous experiences. Ms. Swartzbaugh recognized during her first interview that “compared to last year, they are taking over the classes faster than I did with a single student teacher, and I think it's probably because they're working together. They are planning together, and I am less worried about it than before.” Ms. Neal also saw a difference from previous student teaching experiences after the group began to plan together and then differentiate their lessons. “With this model, the benefit was they could lean on each other, trying different things…they didn’t need to be monitored as closely.” The student teachers gained considerable credibility in the eyes of the cooperating teachers when they began to tailor their lessons to the specific needs of students, and the cooperating teachers were a part of that process, even though they typically stepped away from initial planning work.

Aware of the need for and benefit of differentiation, the cooperating teachers supported student teachers as they differentiated their plans. During the team planning time at school that followed the two-day Facebook group work, the discussion turned to working with students on
ancient Indian geography. As was usually the case, the cooperating teachers had shared a previous map activity with the student teachers. Mr. Walsh said, “I want you to pull up geography. I want to see what you’re going to do tomorrow. Pull it up on Dropbox.” He furthermore validated the importance of that particular learning activity with the student teachers (‘There’s nothing wrong with maps.’).

In her final interview Sara talked about learning to differentiate her lessons and to consider the perspective of her colleagues when planning, both during the shared model and after:

I think that being able to collaborate with other teachers has been huge. I know that I won’t necessarily have that collaborative relationship all the time with future teachers in a job that I have someday, but I’ve seen what that collaboration can look like and how cool it can be, and I’ve learned so much from watching other teachers. I mean, Nathan has a totally different teaching style, and so we can feed off of each other. …I can come up with an activity and then see how he can adjust it for his lower level classes. So, things like that…if I just had my Sociology [primary with no co-teacher] and two accelerated history classes [honors courses], I would be sheltered and not know as much.

In a similar way, Jared touted his perceived benefits from the shared student teaching model, especially with regard to differentiated collaborative planning. “I think we did some cool things lesson-wise that maybe I wouldn’t have thought of doing if it was just myself, planning everything. I think the burden of that made it easier for us to be creative because it’s not like every night I have to create something without the help of someone else. Then, we made it work for us.”

Reflecting on collaboration. The student teachers spoke often to me about what it was like to collaborate with their peers. For most they saw the collaboration as a valued-added experience that fundamentally changed the way they thought about working with others. Christie acknowledged this during her final interview:
It’s definitely helped me into thinking that my way is not always the best way, that there are other ways that may be more relatable to students, that the student will be able to grasp the concept a little better. It’s also taught me that asking for help isn’t taboo.

Differing ideas did not have to come at the cost of individual teaching goals. Like the varied plans for future individual instruction identified by the Facebook planning group, David believed that “…[Y]ou have to be flexible like that. I don’t feel like I’m sacrificing, at any point, any of my staunch beliefs or practices or anything like that.”

Sara was quick to point out that, for her, the biggest obstacle was “…not with people not doing things…just trying to figure out where we all are and juggling other people’s ideas.” She found that over time the group became better at learning to work together and both to compromise and to defend their instructional choices.

Now, as the semester has gone on, we’ve kind of gotten used to each other, figured out how we need to be for one another. I’ve probably relaxed. Other people have probably tightened up a little bit. Now I think the biggest issue is just keeping things exciting, mixing them up and adjusting for our different classes.

During his final interview, Nathan perhaps best assessed the benefits of shared planning while recognizing how collaboration strengthened his individual vision for teaching and the vision of his peers:

I like having someone who has a different perspective than me in there because they might be able to draw some connections with the students in a way that I couldn’t. They could present information in a way that’s more effective than a way that I thought to present it. I don’t feel like my pride’s hurt or anything. I think that’s been a benefit. Just getting comfortable…once it moves along and everyone is confident, I think, with their planning style, it becomes a little, honestly, tougher to collaborate because we’re all confident. We have an idea where we would like to go. In the beginning, it was us all coming together to produce one idea that we would all use. I think that helped us all become more confident to know what we’re good at and what we’re not good at. So, now, it’s us all coming together to say, ‘What do we want to accomplish in the end?’ We do generally do similar things, but we all have different way we do it. That’s been nice.

This reflection encapsulates so much of the co-planning experience. The students initially struggled to find planning strategies that were fair and appropriate and gave them each
the opportunity to be vested in the professional work as a whole. They, both individually and collectively, adapted and subsequently grew in their abilities to plan collaboratively as the semester progressed. Throughout the time together, they supplemented the guidance of their cooperating teachers with peer support, and they discovered ways in which to differentiate their instruction while still committing to planning. Just as they were expected to plan together in shared student teaching design, the student teachers were also asked to teach together. That is a process that, while directly related to planning, is an entirely different story.

Summary

Student teachers often struggle to plan, in large part due to the linear and formulaic manner in which they are taught to do so, i.e., out of context, in university methods courses (John, 2006). As they begin in their placements, the student teachers may depend upon and even imitate the plans and practices of their cooperating teachers, regardless of tensions in beliefs or previous academic preparation (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1999; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012). They do so to earn legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in the classroom and within the teachers’ community of practice (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Lave, 1991). Working in isolation (Grossman, 1991), traditional student teachers plan with their cooperating teachers or alone; peer interactions are not common as they develop deeper, contextualized understanding of teaching and learning through their planning (Korthagen, 2010).

This incident of co-planning, both within the student teachers’ emerging activity system and at an intersection with the cooperating teachers’ activity system, demonstrates several significant sociocultural influences and forces (Engeström, 2001) that ultimately expanded the student teachers’ learning during the shared student teaching experience. As the student teachers began to co-plan, they needed to establish the rules and division of labor that would guide their
collaboration. This process was ongoing and evolved over time as they learned to move from “dividing and conquering” tasks to more integrated planning approaches. The use of the Facebook group as a tool to plan and to refine their collaborative dispositions was central to this mediation process.

Beyond their own activity system, the student teachers also had to interact within and in collusion with the activity system of their cooperating teachers, as evidenced by the face-to-face planning that occurred during the school day as part of the established schedule of a number of the participants. Here, the cooperating teachers’ rules, division of labor, and community identity produced forces of historicity (previous plans, time in PLCs), multiple voices (perspective of different cooperating teachers on lesson design), and contradictions (peer plans vs. cooperating teacher materials) that the student teachers had to further mediate to expand their learning. What resulted was repeated examples of new learning that propelled the student teachers’ instruction beyond specific lesson plans or materials (tools) to what Nathan referred to as individual confidence and a collective vision of student learning outcomes regardless of how each student teacher enacted the common plans.

As planning increased in the evolving activity system of the student teachers they began to assume greater classroom instructional responsibilities. While many of the collaborative practices of planning have direct transference to teaching, the goals and outcomes of co-teaching are unique. Therefore, co-teaching is the subject of the final critical incident.

**Critical Incident #3: Teaching with Others**

During my own teacher education, I spent three semesters participating in early field experiences with at least one other peer. During my first year in the program, I voluntarily participated in a grant program with Apple that led to my assignment in a 6th grade middle school
social studies classroom for two consecutive semesters. I was joined by two of my peers. In addition to practice teaching episodes in the adopted world cultures curriculum, we worked with the classroom teacher and a university staff member to design a technology-supported service-learning project. The yearlong project led to the creation of a series of webpages with community resources, videos, and important information intended for international students and families in the local area. The students produced all of the pages with our assistance, and we provided guidance on design, content, and technology integration. It was a powerful experience for me, not only because of the unique grant programming, but because I spent an entire year in a single classroom with the same two peers and cooperating teacher. We grew close to each other and to the students.

During my senior year, after the grant program ended, I was placed in a nearby high school classroom with a different peer. There, we taught American History and Sociology. The experience was not ideal. The cooperating teacher was under investigation for inappropriate interactions with a female student, and his attention to us was minimal. In fact, we both worked in a second classroom periodically to gain more teaching experience when he was frequently absent. My peer and I had a good working relationship, but the placement was only a few weeks long, just six hours a week, so our time to develop strong collaborative practices was quite limited. After that experience, I student taught independently and then graduated and began to teach in my own classroom alone.

A few years into my professional life, the high school where I taught began to implement co-taught classes in English and mathematics, teaming general educators with special educators and integrating courses with 30%-50% of students with special needs. As a social studies and Spanish teacher, I did not co-teach with anyone, but I distinctly remember the trepidation of my
colleagues who were asked to join co-teaching teams and the resulting struggles they had establishing norms for collaboration, roles in instruction, and equal legitimacy with their students. For most of them, even the special educators, co-teaching had not been a part of their previous professional experiences and, in many cases, was not a skill for which they were prepared in their teacher education. The need for professional development was considerable; sometimes they received support but not consistently.

When I became a school administrator, co-teaching pairs were common in the school, and I was often charged with evaluating teachers who worked in co-taught classes. While many of them had the same struggles as my teaching peers, I found that time and professional support had made these teachers better versed in co-teaching practices, though it was still clear that there was a lead teacher in each classroom and those who were there to provide targeted support and sometimes just clerical assistance. One thing that always caught my attention during a classroom observation of co-teachers was the tendency of students to seek support from the teacher they felt was there to serve them. Consequently, the interactions between the special educator and those students with special needs were always greater than with students in the general education population. In fact, students without IEP’s rarely interacted with the special educator, and neither the students nor the two teachers in the room seemed too interested in breaking that boundary of service. Because I viewed this as problematic and limiting in the co-teaching implementation, I spent a considerable amount of time researching co-teaching practices and also attending professional developments sessions related to co-teaching at conferences I attended. I often talked to teachers about extending and enhancing co-teaching to not only allow both professional educators to serve all students in the classroom but to empower the special educator through mastery of content and legitimacy with all students,
Upon my return to the university, when I immediately began teaching social studies methods courses in the secondary program, I was pleased to see that co-teaching was still an expectation. All secondary education early field experiences included the placement of pre-service candidates in groups of two to four students. Minimum requirements for teaching during each placement included opportunities to co-plan and to co-teach lessons during the short-term placements in those classrooms. I realized that co-teaching with two content-specific general educators was not common in most school settings, but I also knew that experience with co-teaching, especially with the equal participation of the participants, could be a valuable formative experience that might translate into collaboration between the candidates and special educators later in their careers.

My return to the university also exposed another reality. Just as had been the case in my own teacher education, despite being placed with peers in the schools during early field experiences, there was no formal training offered or course content related specifically to co-teaching. Students were expected to work alongside their peers in the field, but, beyond basic lesson planning instruction, they were not given support or resources to make co-teaching a viable reality. Finding this unacceptable, I began to include class sessions in my own methods courses about co-teaching. Borrowing from the literature in special education, we talked about potential co-teaching arrangements, including one teach, one assist; parallel teaching; stations teaching; and team teaching. I urged them to consider planning that would engage all teachers equitably and not relegate one or more to clerical tasks or only managerial interactions with the students. I also encouraged them to consider planning their lessons with full consideration of how they could use their co-teachers to enrich instruction, especially being able to differentiate for better student support.
I found during the semesters that I taught in the methods sequence that students were sometimes willing to explore more complex co-teaching arrangements, but not always. I perceived these limited attempts to be the result of unease with the processes, lack of personal and professional experience previously (Lortie, 2002) and too little time to design lessons effectively in this format. Still, some did attempt to co-teach in ways that did not involve a “tag in-tag out” fashion, whereby one is “on stage” while another monitors students until they switch roles. Those who pushed beyond that commented routinely how powerful the learning experiences were when they were both truly teaching simultaneously.

Unfortunately, my colleagues at the university did not all share my interest in co-teaching and did not regularly include instruction about co-teaching in their methods courses. For them, the placement of multiple teacher candidates in a classroom was just a convenience for the clinical experience office and not cause to support this design. So, most students in the secondary education program co-taught in whatever manner they deemed appropriate and may or may not have considered new ways to work more efficiently and effectively together. So, by the time they student taught individually in a classroom, co-teaching was no longer a standard component of the placement for secondary education candidates. Some might have been in classrooms where co-teaching was happening between their cooperating teacher and another educator, but this also was not guaranteed.

I intended co-teaching to be a central element of the shared student teaching model for two significant reasons. The first was to extend the impact of learning from multiple cooperating teachers, as demonstrated by how the student teachers continued to think about teaching and learning, and the collaboration from peer planning to enacted instruction. I believed that instruction would improve through interaction with peers. This, of course, was theoretical and
warranted investigation through the design experiment. The second reason I advocated for co-teaching, specifically those strategies, like stations teaching, parallel teaching, and team teaching (Friend & Cook, 1992) that charged both student teachers with relatively equitable instructional tasks was out of concern from critics that the model minimized student teachers’ “teaching time” and therefore weakened their overall experiential learning. Advanced forms of co-teaching would require both student teachers to guide instruction and not invite one to take the lead while the other became superficial during instruction. This focus on encouraging particular styles of co-teaching influenced both my initial reactions in the field and my subsequent analysis of the data, and I have been cautious to remember this in my reporting.

With this in mind, I present the last critical incident below as a narrative account of two classroom observations of co-teaching that demonstrate student teachers attempting to implement co-teaching practices. I then discuss this incident using data from participant interviews, Facebook group messages, and supporting artifacts to illustrate the learning of the student teachers during the semester. Co-teaching, as demonstrated, was, at first, a disappointment for me and a legitimate concern I had with the shared student teaching model, though the student teachers and cooperating teachers readily identified, as supported by the data, notable learning from this element of the shared experience. The incident reflects both of these perspectives.

Who’s in Charge?

Unlike my previous observations of the student teachers, my visits on April 17, 2013, were by the invitation of the student teachers. They had selected lessons that week they wanted me to see, highlighting their efforts to co-teach with peers and, where possible, with their cooperating teachers. My first observation was in Mr. Conlon’s Ancient Civilizations course where Brian and Nathan were teaching a pre-lesson on forms of government before looking
specifically at the governmental structures of ancient Greek government. As I sat down before the beginning of the class, each student teacher greeted me and continued to chat casually with the students entering the room. Then, immediately as the bell stopped ringing, Brian said above the extemporaneous chatter, “Mr. Rhine, what are we going to learn today?” To that, Nathan responded with enthusiasm, “We’re going to learn about government.” The lesson had begun, and both student teachers were sharing the classroom floor.

Suddenly, as quickly as he had asked the all-important question about the day’s learning goal, Brian stepped away from the center of the classroom and grabbed a paper off the teacher desk. When a student inquired about it, Brian answered, “It’s a seating chart.” In the front of the room, Nathan continued with his instruction and announced to the class what Brain was doing. “Mr. McKenzie is putting you in a seating chart. We’re going to take notes today. I have the special page you are going to take notes on.” He began to hand out a Cornell notes sheet, a format that Mr. Conlon used in his AVID classes and often “borrowed” for his social studies students. Nathan added, “While Mr. McKenzie is giving out seats, I have a little thinker here. We’re going to think about government today.”

As Brian finished moving students to their new seats, he announced, “Mr. Rhine, I think you are missing one valuable person today.” This was the indication that just one student was absent from the class that day. As he reported this, he saw a student with a cell phone tucked in his lap. He admonished the student and the class. “If I see a cell phone out, I will write a DR [discipline referral]. So will Mr. Rhine. We’re in a cell phone-free zone.”

Nathan continued teaching. “Guys, take a second. Start thinking about what form of government we live in. There’s no right or wrong answer, you guys.”
As some students worked, others did not. Moving around the room, Brian stopped by one table and scolded them. “Guys, you have an assignment to do.” As he continued walking, he warned again, “If I see the phone again, I am going to write you up.” At this point both Nathan and Brian moved around the room to monitor the students as they completed their warm-up activity.

“When you’re done, we’re going to come take a look,” Nathan informed the class.

Brian made his way over to a student who brought a basketball into the classroom with him. He was holding it, moving from hand to hand when Brian approached him. Brian asked him, “What kind of government do we have?” To this, the student grunted, “I don’t really care. I’m not really into that kind of stuff.” Brian asked him why. When the student did not answer him, he asked the others at the table. “What did you write down?” Students offered characteristics that included: slightly fair, bipolar, democracy. Then, the young man with the basketball pondered, “Why are teachers so strict?” Brian smiled at him before grabbing something else off the desk, writing something, and walking out of the classroom.

Nathan regained the students’ attention and reminded them, “You know how Mr. McKenzie talked about DR’s. You know how you get angry; today we’re going to talk about a government that runs like that.” He opened a Prezi presentation entitled, “Types of Government.” Nathan continued, “I’m giving you guys paper. Go ahead and write types of government on top of it. We’re going to learn about different types of governments today.”

A couple of minutes later, after Nathan began the notetaking activity, Brian returned with a stack of DR’s. He immediately went to the same student who he spoke with previously and handed him a DR. As the student complained and others began to chide him, Brian called out, “We’re not ready, Mr. Rhine.” With this Nathan sat down to wait for students to listen.
As Nathan sat in the center of the room, he redirected students who were off-task. Brian stood up and began to circulate around the room, checking on student progress. As he walked by one group a student complained, “I’m trying to write, but I can’t with him over there snapping (a rubber band).” Brian intervened.

Nathan started a discussion about how our government system may resemble an oligarchy. He then asked if the student knew what an aristocrat was. A student made an immediate connection to a Disney cartoon by a similar name (The “Aristocats”). After he drew some connections to the film and the aristocracy, Nathan asked, “What society does this sound like, sort of?” The students identified the caste system in India.

Nathan advanced the Prezi to discuss the concept of tyranny. “What do you guys know about tyrants? What do you think about when you think of tyrants?” One student made a connection between knights and tyrants. Nathan clearly struggled to see the connection and started to tell the student as much, but Brian interjected and said that a king could be a tyrant.

“Can you think of a tyrant that was elected?” Nathan waited for an answer to his question, but no one volunteered a response initially. After significant wait time, a student suggested that a school principal is an example of a tyrant. From there the conversation continues with fathers being the next example of tyrants suggested by the students. During this analysis and discussion, Brian wrote passes for a few students to go to the bathroom. Finally, as the conversation was concluding, Nathan revealed that he and Brian had been playing a game with them, trying to be tyrants. Nathan admitted, “I’m not very good at it.” As Nathan explained how they behaved like tyrants (singling out students for punishment, setting rigid expectations for performance, etc.), Brian leaned against the back wall and listened.
As the conversation continued, the students discussed again what kind of government the U.S. has. Most students acknowledged that there is a democratic government. Nathan questioned them about the voting habits of the population. “Because we have low voter turnout, can we really be a democracy?” Nathan asked the class why voting is important and why young people don’t vote like their older counterparts.

As this conversation continued, Brian handed out an exit slip. They had to respond to what extent American democracy was working and whether or not another form of government might be more successful. Brian did not engage the students in any discussion of the exit slip, but when they were all handed out, Nathan asked them to work on their responses for the rest of the class period. As they worked, one student spoke aloud, “The government we have doesn’t work because it doesn’t help people. It falls apart.” To this, Nathan noted that an oligarchy or a tyranny might fix the problems with democracy. Because the classroom had been set up as a tyranny, Nathan asked the students, “Why did we set up our class this way?” A student says that in a democracy the students would decide whether to listen or not. Nathan wondered aloud then if having a true democratic classroom might be an issue.

With that the bell rang, and Nathan and Brian dismissed the class, saying goodbye to the students and engaging in some additional conversation individually with a few.

Tyranny Doesn’t Have to Be Bad

I immediately left Nathan and Brian’s classroom to observe another co-taught lesson. As I walked down the hallway to the next class, I glanced at my notes. Sara had invited me to see her work with Eric and with her cooperating teacher, Ms. Neal, on a similar lesson on the governmental structures in ancient Greece. This was an accelerated class, and the plans reflected a noticeable difference in the approach from the one I had just seen Brian and Nathan use.
I arrived in the classroom right before Ms. Neal; she entered just as the tardy bell rang and immediately asked for the students to find their seats. Then, Sara asked if the students had heard the announcements yet.

Sara continued, “Are you in your assigned seats? Is anyone else not here besides [student name]?” With attendance taken, Sara showed the class her “Greek artifact” travel folder that she made. This would be their summative assessment, a travel portfolio highlighting the major cultural components (GRAPES) of ancient Greece. Sara reminded the students that they did not have to write reflection statements, if they created the artifacts themselves. However, if they used resources directly from the Internet, they had to write about it as well.

As Sara explained this to the students, Ms. Neal interjected, “Could printing out a plain map and drawing in the city-states be a way to do something extra?” She asked this to the students, but Sara shook her head in affirmation as she looked around the room. A few students asked Sara additional questions. Since the beginning of the class, Eric sat at the desk with a red pen, writing something. Sara walked over to tell him who was absent, and he entered it into the computer database. She did this while continuing to answer a few student questions. Finally, about ten minutes into the class period, Sara opened up the Type of Governments Prezi, the same used by Brian and Nathan during the last class period. She started with the term oligarchy.

By this time, Eric had stood and moved near the front of the room. He asked the class, “Does anyone think this class runs like an oligarchy?” Sara immediately added, “What would be the advantage of having an oligarchy?” A brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of oligarchy continued with several students offering ideas. Eric and Sara both commented on the replies and asked extension questions occasionally to help the students refine their thinking. Then, they moved forward to the slide on tyranny.
As the students were copying the notes, Sara suggested, “Tyranny doesn’t have to be bad. I’ll explain what I mean after you write.” Ms. Neal then noted that a student was not writing. She moved over to see what he needed. She also saw another student who wasn’t writing and redirected him. By this point, Eric had returned to the teacher’s desk; he was sitting looking on, but not participating directly in the instruction.

Sara asked again about whether or not tyranny should be viewed as a bad thing. Ms. Neal interjected to ask a secondary question. “What were the interests that the tyrants were protecting? What were the people excited about?” As the conversation continued, Sara asked, “What’s an example of a public work?” Eventually, a student asked if Professor Dumbledore from the Harry Potter series would be an example of a tyrant. Ms. Neal and Sara facilitated a conversation about this question across the whole class while Eric continued to sit at the computer without commenting.

Sara advanced the Prezi to the concept of democracy. She moved to the back of the room to continue the lesson, giving the students better opportunity to see the screen where the notes were displayed and to monitor their notetaking.

As the students wrote, Sara asked, “Why don’t we have a direct democracy?” A student suggested that it is because there are too many people and would take too long. With that idea, another student asked why there is not direct democracy within smaller towns. This conversation set up the next slide on representative democracy. This prompted students to ask about the U.K. parliament and about the UN. Unsure of how best to respond, Sara deferred to Ms. Neal who offered some elaboration.

Finally, Sara asked which government is best. Some students supported tyranny. Others suggested that representative democracy was best. One key discovery was that the students did
not support the general Greek oligarchy or Athenian democracy. Ms. Neal shared with the students that she would like to see direct democracy work in a country someday.

As the class concluded, Ms. Neal asked if they had to create a geography entry for their travel portfolios that evening. Sara indicated that they did not as she handed out the folders right before the bell rang. Eric continued to sit at the computer, grading papers and responding to a couple of individual questions of students, mostly dealing with make-up work.

Moments for Mediation

The complexity of classroom teaching is well-researched and oft cited by those who recognize the professional demands educators face head on each day (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Eilam & Poyas, 2009). Learning to teach is a daunting undertaking. Even after semesters of coursework and previous practice in the field, teacher candidates are often overwhelmed by the vast amount of learning in the relatively short student teaching experience (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). Facing this challenge, the student teachers who participated in co-teaching as part of this model acknowledged significant benefits to sharing classrooms with their peers. The interaction of two or more student teachers in the same classroom supported powerful learning experiences for them as my interventions as a researcher were appropriated into their classroom practices in very different ways.

A key element of the shared student teaching design was the interaction of student teachers and their peers in the same classroom space. I took an active role as the semester began to encourage the student teachers to explore ways of co-teaching with their fellow participants. Early on, I assumed this would be their cooperating teachers and would then transition to student teachers teaching alongside each other. I frequently discussed co-teaching with them and shared a number of resources, including the Friend and Cook (1992) co-teaching
strategies chart (see Chapter 2).

Brian, Nathan, Sara, and Eric all invited me to watch them co-teach that afternoon in April, and I was most eager to see how their co-teaching had potentially expanded their learning during their placement. Against the backdrop of the critical incident above, I consider outcomes from their co-teaching and then limitations in practice manifested throughout the semester.

**Outcomes**

Having been a part of the same cohort of future social studies educators for three previous semesters, the student teachers in this study knew each other well and had a close working relationship when the placement started. They used these relationships to ease themselves into the student teaching experience. Christie shared her excitement for working with her peers. “Being here with people in the classroom made the transition really easy. I really enjoy having those people there to be like, ‘Oh my gosh!’ Having people that you know…have known for the last two years.” This familiarity was further heightened by their interactions at Scott High School the previous semester. Although they were assigned to just one classroom with only one or two other peers during the fall, the student teachers had already planned and taught some lessons together prior to the start of the spring semester when the shared student teaching experience began.

For how similar their previous training and fieldwork had been and the supports they were provided during this experience, the student teachers varied in personality and in ability to assume the duties of full-time teaching. Even when expressing excitement to work with her peers, Christie also astutely observed that they “all have a different flare…and having that in the same classroom makes the classroom more engaging.” These differences both enhanced
the work they did in collaboration with one another and also presented challenges to their interactions, especially when they attempted to co-teach.

Working with their peers was generally viewed as favorable from the onset of the experience. During our first interview, Jared immediately commented about the benefits of co-teaching and working in a team. Brian concurred but with a significant qualifier to his enthusiasm for co-teaching. “I would be open to co-teach, especially if it’s someone that I can get along with.” Getting along with her co-teacher was also something that was on Sara’s mind when she commented:

> I never imagined having to share my classroom with another student teacher. Teachers sometimes get really territorial over their classrooms and their students, so I think it’s good to like not have that engrained in me right away. I also think that getting to work with people in a new way is really beneficial.

Throughout the placement then, I found myself leveraging their general enthusiasm for working with each other while remaining cognizant of the strong desire they had to get along well with each other and learn to share classroom space effectively. On more than one occasion I witnessed student teachers working consciously to support their peers and to do more than might otherwise be expected to protect their relationships with each other. This sometimes included doing the work of others when individuals fell short of fulfilling their responsibilities. The processes of setting rules and norms within their community and managing group dynamics carried over from co-planning to classroom instruction.

The student teachers recognized that they were on display for their peers, as well as their cooperating teachers and students. They frequently commented on how peer interactions in the classroom influenced how they taught and managed their classes. Brian realized his teaching was impacted by the presence of his peers. “I didn’t know I could be as strict as I have been. I don’t know…maybe it’s because you have another co-teacher in the room.” Peer
pressure to be more effective in the classroom was also noticed by Christie. “When you are with your peers, you want everything to be perfect. It makes me push a little more. I’m a competitive person, I’ll see what they are doing and want mine to be a little bit better.”

The abilities and personalities of two or more student teachers in the same classroom shaped the way they taught. Differences among student teachers became learning opportunities for their peers. Christie appreciated “picking up different techniques from the other student teachers.” She recognized the aptitudes of the others and how they could help her development:

[David] is super patient. I’m not as patient. I’m more patient in a classroom than outside in the real world, but he is super patient with them. I have been trying to match his patience with them, and it has been working so much better in the class period. ‘Oh, this works with these students,’ so I need to model that just a little bit more, and I’ve also had other student teachers tell me that they have picked up what I’ve done. It’s great that we have the cooperating teachers to model after, but it’s also great that we have each other to model after.

The benefits of seeing other student teachers teach was a repeated theme among the participants. They all commented on how much they were learning from their cooperating teachers, but they also saw great value in watching and learning from their peers who were in similar positions as them. They saw the gap in their abilities from those of the cooperating teachers as quite vast; learning from those who were closer to them developmentally, even with the recognition they were all still quite inexperienced, was highly valued.

As I studied the enactment of co-teaching by the participants in the model, I found two significant learning outcomes that emerged from their collaborative instruction, namely their purposeful attempts to learn more about their students and to build better relationships with them and their shared classroom management. I discuss each below.

**Building knowledge of and connections with students.** During our first interview,
Sara compared her experience in the shared student teaching model with those in the secondary social studies cohort who were participating in a traditional 1:1 experience. For her, the most significant difference was how the others talked about the frantic pace in which they were moving forward with instruction in the classrooms, trying to keep up with the day-to-day teaching of all of the students under their charge. She explained that one of her cohort members described it like wearing blinders, trying to just focus on what was ahead the next day, week, and month. Because of the shared student teaching model, Sara felt markedly differently about her work. While still acknowledging the cognitive, physical, and emotional demands of student teaching, from planning to instruction to other professional responsibilities, Sara believed she had more of an opportunity to step back, consider how she was serving each student individually, and then work, as necessary, to support the learning needs of each student while simultaneously building relationships to guide her practice. The data demonstrated, for Sara and other participants, they could rely upon peers to advance whole class instruction while they could turn their attention to individual students and small groups. This relationship-building and support for student learning emerged from the collaborative instructional elements of the model design.

Admittedly, the student teachers in this study did not have a traditional experience to compare their shared student teaching placement against; however, they knew something was different. Brian recognized this. “I never really had the traditional model, but from what I can tell, it’s helped me get better at certain things that I haven’t had much practice with.” When I pressed him on this, Brian identified: working with individual students, building personal relationships, and leveraging his relationships with students to support their growth and development. Jared had a similar reaction:
I think the students got a lot out of it because there were times when one person might take more of a lead on a lesson, while the other person would go around and help students who might need help and keep students on task. I think it was really good for that. I think…developing relationships with students was good.

Having support from others while teaching allowed the student teachers to turn their attention to particular students and groups of students without sacrificing whole class instruction. All of the participants who co-taught during the incident described above shared responsibility for whole class teaching and more focused student support. Other student teachers had similar experiences during the semester. When I asked Christie to share a particularly successful experience early on in her student teaching placement, she commented on a struggling student with whom she had been working who had recently earned his highest grade to date on a summative assessment. She noted how surprised her cooperating teacher, Ms. Neal, was with this and how impactful her individual attention likely was to his accomplishment and to his refocused energy and effort. She observed:

"When there’s one person in the classroom, it’s hard to give everybody that attention when you have 30 kids in the class, you have 50 minutes, and you have to teach and also do all that, so it’s really hard. So, it’s nice that we have so many people in the classroom, so that students who need that attention to be able to be successful get that."

This kind of attention to individual students is exactly what Nathan, Brian, Sara, and Eric were able to provide in their respective co-teaching experiences, which I recounted above. Through their planned co-teaching, they each had opportunities to work with individual students and to provide supplemental instruction and guidance, while their partner moved the class forward through the lesson objectives.

The ability to focus attention on a single student or small group of students while simultaneously facilitating whole class instruction is not something that would be common while teaching independently. In that regard, the opportunity was more clinical, allowing for
experimentation and skill development in a natural classroom setting without regard for the constraints of teaching alone. The student teachers, like Eric, however, realized that replicating this experience was not likely as they transitioned to a classroom of their own. Eric described his work with an ELL student who just moved to the area from Mexico. He noted that he has tried to help him individually, especially with vocabulary acquisition in the social studies disciplines. When I asked him what impact multiple teachers would have in this endeavor, he suggested, “I have a coop, a student teacher, and me all in the room at the same time. It will help me to work with him. I think it’s positive. It’s nice to have support. In a real situation, you’re probably not going to have something like this, but, for the learning, it’s nice to have that fallback.” Still, despite the success Eric had with this particular student, working with him as a direct result of the support he had from his fellow co-teachers, he was concerned how having multiple educators in the classroom during student teaching would impact his future practice:

   Co-teaching was fun. It was a good way to have to segway into teaching itself, and I enjoyed bouncing ideas off in conversation with other teachers. There are still times when I feel like I have areas to improve on in interacting with the kids in a 25:1 setting. We’re not in the same experience as someone who’s in front of a class by himself all day.

   Other student teachers also realized that they were able to do more for individual students because of the shared model, but they, too, recognized the improbability of replicating the same practices when their student teaching experience ended. Christie was quick to point out that “working with the students” had been the most rewarding experience but would be different in the future. She shared the work she did with a student who was diagnosed with a form of autism. She worked with Mr. Walsh to consider his grouping, assignments, and presentation formats. Each of them worked with him individually and then gradually helped
him to work in small groups with his peers. The culmination of their efforts was when the student joined his peers in the front of class for a skit. This experience would likely influence the way in which Christie worked with similar students in the future, and she learned approaches to serving him that she could implement easily while still serving her entire class. However, other student support efforts she knew could not continue without the benefit of a co-teacher.

A lot of my freshmen need help during their lunch period, but I’m also teaching Modern U.S. 4th hour, so it’s great that I have Jared. So, I say, ‘Ok, during 4B, I’m going to step out for a little bit, so I can take care of some questions that my freshmen have. It’s great that [Jared] Tulin is in here then. He’ll step up and say, ‘Ok, I’ll take over this part of the lesson.’

Jared was able to teach the class while Christie worked with another group of students from another course. This would not be likely when she assumed independent responsibility in a classroom. Under the circumstances, the practices enacted during the student teaching experience were beneficial to support the student teachers’ performance in meeting diverse learners’ needs, but it remains unlikely that this same practice could be carried into their first full-time classrooms. Nathan also understood the limitations of the model when he taught alone, but he could also see the benefit of being able to focus his attention on individual students while he was learning to teach:

It helps to get input. If it was just me and if it will just be me, I have learned how I can use my own skills in the future, just from this experience, but now, if it was just me, it would be hard for me to see all these little things and just hone in on maybe how one student learns because I’m so concerned how everybody learns. Working one-on-one can really help them in the future when they figure out what they struggle with.

Nathan and others saw this division of labor, allowing extended interactions with single students and small groups as a tool to expand their learning in specific areas of performance while still advancing broader curricular objectives. Co-teachers were both learning through
experience, doing the work of teaching, but they were doing so simultaneously with different focuses.

**Classroom management.** Having a second or even a third student teacher in the classroom not only allowed for more individualized support of student learning, but it also promoted focused attention to classroom management. Student teachers and new teachers alike worry about managing their classrooms, especially when handling situations with disruptive students (Rushton, 2001). The prospect of maintaining order and control of the learning environment with 20 or more students can be harrowing, especially for those who are just trying to find their professional footing. Because of this, student teachers worry about management (Tudela, 2014). Hopefully, their cooperating teachers have established an appropriate climate and culture in the classroom that will continue during the transition to the student teacher and back again. Even if policies and practices are already firmly in place, the student teachers still need to be able to assert their authority and gain the necessary credibility with their students. The shared student teaching model brought multiple pre-service educators into the same classroom to serve children together. Each additional student teacher in the room made it possible to focus on management strategies while another taught and to allow a co-teacher to manage disruptive student behavior so as not to distract them when they were teaching.

The team effort to manage the classroom was a common benefit expressed by the student teachers in their conversations with me throughout the placement. Brian talked about his 6th hour class, the same class that he and Nathan co-taught in the narrative above. It was, in his estimation, a rowdy class; disruptions and off-task behavior were magnified by the big tables where the students sat together in a classroom much larger than usual. Recognizing that
they were losing control of their students, Brian and Nathan often elected to separate the class. One of them would take half the students, usually those on-task, to the library or to another classroom where they could continue to work and learn without interruption from their classmates. Then, another student teacher and the cooperating teacher would keep the other, more challenging half of the class with them in the classroom. This divide to conquer approach became a co-teaching strategy they used repeatedly during the semester. Brian felt that “it has fixed everything…. That’s co-teaching at its finest.” His co-teacher, Nathan, concurred. “We’ve been working together to figure out what we can do to harness that energy. I’ve taken somebody…we do the same stuff, just in different environments.”

Initially, this might be viewed as an avoidance technique that minimized classroom disruption but masked more significant issues. Teaching the focused students in another space while corralling the others in the classroom does not appear to solve any management issues. However, in a clinical sense, this is not nearly as problematic as it may first appear. First, by taking the on-task students to another space, the attention returns to instruction and corresponding teacher performance. The student teacher is able to enact his or her lesson plan, as designed, without the additional distractions of managing disruptive students. The focus of the student teacher’s performance turns almost exclusively to instructional delivery and assessment; management, while not ignored, becomes secondary to the former. Second, for the student teacher and cooperating teacher who remained in the classroom, the task becomes to demonstrate the necessary flexibility and responsiveness to adjust communication, instruction, and student engagement strategies to respond to student off-task behavior and disruption. Instruction is not abandoned. Instead, it is modified to meet the needs of learners who were not participating fully during the whole class lesson. Specifically, by reducing the total number of
students, the student teacher is able to focus more attention on individual students and small
groups to redirect their learning and monitor their performance as the lesson continues.

Granted, this also is not a realistic solution for a single teacher in a classroom of his or her own,
but it is a valuable component of the shared student teaching model, intended to support the
scaffolded learning of the student teachers. Practicing instructional skills, environmental
management, and responsive teaching in modified circumstances has the potential to strengthen
performance in the future when all variables are reintroduced in a full classroom setting.

Because classroom management was an area that all the student teachers expressed a
desire to improve, it often became the immediate support they attempted to provide their peers
while they were co-teaching. When I asked David what he was doing in his supporting roles in
the classroom, he noted:

I’m mostly monitoring classroom management, behavior, I guess, and then just kind of
chiming in, bringing…for instance, with Sara’s Sociology class first hour, she always
gives me her plan, makes sure that I’m familiar with all of the content, and then…if
she’s just discussing with the group and I think there’s something she meant to bring up
or I want to bring up, I’ll raise the question to the class. She’s given me free reign to do
that. Also, at the same time, there are a couple…with the way the tables are set up…if
they get a little chatty, I just mosey on over there because I know she has more
important things to worry about.

David saw himself as the enforcer of classroom rules and norms of behavior while Sara taught.
He did not ask Sara to purposefully include him in her planning for the course or to engage as a
co-teacher of the content she was presenting. Instead, he occasionally raised questions but
usually focused more on managing disruptive behaviors, so that Sara could teach her lessons as
she designed while he remained on the fringe. This role was not something that David ever
seemed to mind. In fact, he saw a particular value in being able to work with the students in
Sara’s Sociology classroom primarily from a behavioral support role:

I feel like a broken record when I talk about classroom management, but I’m glad I’m
being given that opportunity. In Sociology…where I’m a secondary…that’s the only other class [I am assigned to teach] that’s not accelerated. So, I’m getting a chance to try out some…maybe challenge some kids…and not have to focus maybe so much on some of that other stuff. It’s something I am more aware of when I’m not standing in front of the class.

Without formal instructional responsibility, David turned his attention to honing his management skills, working to maintain a focused, productive learning environment for all the students without having to simultaneously lead the learning activities. This is another example of skill development that could be isolated and refined as a result of the co-teaching framework in the model. The student teachers were serving the students and advancing their practice with hopeful transference to more complex professional experiences in the future.

The cooperating teachers also appreciated the management that became a shared endeavor among the student teachers. Ms. Neal spoke to me about how Sara and Eric had handled a situation with a White student and an African-American student that could have otherwise escalated, but they did a “one-two punch and handled it together.” She also recognized that some student teachers were more comfortable enforcing classroom expectations and would often take the lead on management issues, modeling their responses for their peers. “Having that many people in the room…some just have the intuitive stuff to go after that.” Her biggest concern though was that some of the student teachers might repeatedly defer management to their peers. “Sometimes with two people the difference is the other person doesn’t have to stretch their wings to assume authority; the other person will just do that.” In general though she spoke highly of the impact that the co-teaching structure had on the student teachers’ control in the classroom:

It [the model] did help management, I think overall. I do think they were able to rely on each other and kind of also that shared model when there is that second person does help quite a bit in terms of delivery to have someone else managing it. Some of them might be very surprised when they get their own room, but hopefully what they learned
will be able to translate into them being able to do both.

When I designed this initial shared student model, I expected that classroom management would be an important component of the co-teaching experience. I wanted them to consider the management strategies of multiple practicing teachers and add what they had learned to their proverbial toolkit. Then, with their peers, I had hoped they would design deeply engaging lessons that provided differentiation of instruction through routine co-teaching. They were able to consider environment, student engagement, and management of disruptive behavior in tandem, while their peers guided instruction. Both the student teachers and their cooperating teachers knew these conditions were not reflective of the realities of independent teaching practice, but most of them appreciated the focused learning that emerged as they learned to work together to perform all of the duties in the classroom. So, even when not playing a significant role in instruction, the student teachers were focused on classroom management and on individual student support, neither one insignificant to the demands of teaching. It was Mr. Conlon who best captured the impact of this work and fittingly brings the discussion of co-teaching to a close:

Anytime you have two adults in the classroom, you can break it up. That way, you’re not too concerned with just too many aspects of teaching. It frees your brain up to learn things. They [the student teachers] have someone in the classroom who makes them feel supported. They talk to each other about students, just like teachers do. They are able to start thinking about student engagement and student achievement by talking to each other about students they all know.

These outcomes proved to be powerful learning experiences for the student teachers that were a direct result of the design features of the shared student teaching placement. However, the same design also restricted participants’ learning and warrant further discussion.

Limitations

Co-teaching did not always advance the learning of the student teachers as I had
anticipated, and gains were even sometimes limited by the tools they had, the rules they
followed, and qualities of the actors themselves. These limitations to the learning can be
classified in two categories: participatory and programmatic. In essence some of learning that
might have emerged from co-teaching was restricted by personal characteristics of the student
teachers and other learning was negatively impacted by their previous academic and clinical
preparation as well as specific features of this design model. A discussion of each follows.

**Disparities in practice.** The cooperating teachers acknowledged numerous benefits
from co-teaching, but they worried about the imbalance between the student teachers who were
more confident and more at ease in the classroom than those who were more unsure of their
abilities. All four spoke frequently about the powerful impact that multiple student teachers
had with supporting student learning and enhancing their own teaching practices. This was
routinely followed by the caveat that they did not want to see student teachers lost in the
shuffle, overpowered and outperformed by more able peers. During my first interview with
Ms. Neal, she perhaps best captured the thinking of the cooperating teachers with her extended
comments on the benefits and risks of co-teaching with student teachers of differing abilities
and personalities:

> The one thing about having this many people is that follow-through is really nice. I’m
letting them do more things. When it’s two on two, if you’re not a very gregarious
educator, some people aren’t really sticking their necks out much, and I kind of have to
prompt that. They have to be just as involved as the person who is talking. It can work
well for them to help each other, but it allows someone who is more timid to hang back
until they are told specifically they need to be doing something. The kids want to do
really well. I just think the stronger personalities start better, faster. I think some of the
others will learn what they need to do with voice modulation and follow-through by
being around other people and seeing what works for them or what doesn’t work very
well. I think when I say it they could think that I’m just a stick in the mud, but when
they see it happen with their peer, that helps a lot.

Mr. Walsh also echoed many of Ms. Neal’s sentiments:
You can get a sense of the teachers that are more comfortable in the classroom. To me, you can tell they are helping each other get more comfortable in the classroom setting. There are always some student teachers who have a knack for being with the kids. There are others who are more cautious. I’ve seen a few examples where one student teacher takes the lead role and models behavior that the other one picks up. I think that’s been good.

Both Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal appreciated the impact of co-teaching in the classroom, but they were skeptical of how educationally beneficial the pairings would be for those student teachers who were struggling and those who were willing to let others take control of the classroom. They felt each student teacher needed to learn to perform the functions of a classroom teacher during the student teaching experience. They were hesitant to offer full support to any model that allowed a participant to hide behind his or her peers. A relevant example was Brian and Eric in the co-teaching incident I recount above. In both classrooms, these student teachers were more reserved and less participatory than were Nathan and Sara. Both classes were planned as co-taught lessons, but there was noticeable difference in the performance of the student teachers. This mirrors the concerns that the cooperating teachers expressed about the co-teaching environment.

The student teachers themselves typically saw only benefits from co-teaching with those who were different from them. They were cognizant of their differences, in responsibility and in performance, but they saw their interactions as a chance to learn from each other. Nathan suggested:

We’re both growing and learning together at this point. I could see how he would teach it. He could see how I would teach it. I feel like that’s part of the experience. It’s awesome to see how somebody else would teach the same lesson.

Nathan was not concerned about not being able to teach independently because of the presence of another peer in each of his classes. He was not concerned with peers teaching peers, what Mr. Conlon called the “blind leading the blind.” He appreciated the exposure to different ideas
and instructional approaches. Nathan also understood that his peers might be better at presenting some lessons than he would. He saw that as an advantage for him and for his students. He wanted to learn from his peers. Unlike his cooperating teachers, Nathan was not worried about being too much in the presence of other peers, sharing in the duties of teaching:

I’ll have my 3rd hour all to myself eventually. I’ll have that experience. I don’t think there’s any difference in having three periods alone to having one period alone. What if I had my own classroom every period? What if I had to work with another teacher in the future? Then, that would literally be my first experience doing that. I think that’s the value of working with another student teacher in the classroom. This is all an experiment for all of us. We’ve never done this before.

Throughout the semester, the student teachers worked together, but, as the cooperating teachers noted, this was too often with little time to teach independently, without responsibility for assuming the full duties of classroom teacher, and, for some, routinely in the shadow of their more capable peers. Some of these concerns were not a result of the student teachers but rather a direct result of the model design and their previous inexperience and training in co-teaching.

**Rigidity of roles.** The student teachers often drew sharp lines between the role of primary and secondary/supporting instructors, and this unintentionally created some of the wide differences in performance that concerned the cooperating teachers. Both co-teaching episodes above reflect this. Brian and Eric found themselves in secondary roles, tasked with supporting Nathan and Sara, each of whom had primary instructional responsibility. Consequently, Brian and Eric had to find ways to insert themselves in the lesson and were often on the periphery of the class happenings.

During our second interview, Brian shared extensively his perceptions of co-teaching. While he was ready to commit to more co-teaching, he struggled to think about what it might look like between primary and secondary instructors. “I think it can only be beneficial. I think
everyone knows their roles, too. It can be a little awkward when one’s a primary and one’s supporting, but we’ve got a pretty happy-go-lucky group, so I don’t think anyone is too offended if someone jumps in to make a comment.” This comment encapsulates the more glaring concern with perceived role limitations. Seeing themselves as either fully in charge of the class or there to provide ancillary support, they seldom shared instructional responsibility equitably.

I pressed Brian on his perception of the duties of a supporting student teacher. “That’s a good question. It honestly…it changes with which class I’m in.” Walking me through his entire day, in classes where he is a secondary/supporting student teacher and a floating member of a class, he noted the biggest difference in his participation as a secondary/supporting student teacher was during the class where he taught the same material already as a primary. For that particular class, he took a more active role, having learned what worked, what didn’t, and, perhaps most importantly, what he wanted to convey to students after the first attempt with the lesson. By the second time he taught the material, even in a supporting role, Brian said, “I take more of an active role. I’ll chime in when the other student teacher maybe didn’t clarify something quite as much.”

During the flex period later, Brian consciously took a more hand-off role because “it’s all his [the primary student teacher’s] show.” After that flex period, he saw his next secondary/supporting role as one where he needed to “keep people on task and only really talk when they break out into groups.”

For the last class of the day when Brian was again the primary instructor in World History, he noted that he usually relied heavily on his secondary/supporting student teacher, Jared, because he had already seen the lesson previously during the day. “I’m very happy if we talk the same amount of time because you’ve already seen what works and what doesn’t.”
Throughout his description, a constant appeared to be that the secondary/supporting and floating student teachers were in far more passive roles than the primary student teachers. They were being invited to partake in the lesson, at the will of the primaries. Because Brian shared this with me early in the placement, I asked him if he saw any potential for more intentional shared instructional roles and subsequent lesson design between the two student teachers as a team. “I think we’ll actively look to see what the other person will be doing, not in just the ‘just in case or in addition to’ role.” That was exactly what I pressed them all to do throughout the experience, as I continually spoke to them about those co-teaching strategies that support shared instructional duties, such as parallel teaching, stations teaching, and integrated team teaching. I gave them the Friend and Cook (1992) co-teaching strategies chart on more than one occasion and referenced these strategies in numerous conversation with each student teacher.

Despite this intervention, Brian’s interpretation of the secondary and floating roles in the classrooms was similar to how others saw their involvement in the different classrooms as well. For example, Jared, Brian’s co-teacher in that last class period described above, told me during the same round of interviews that, when he is a supporting student teacher, he would “…take a step back.” This deference to the primary instructor, the sense of having a lesser role in the classroom, repeatedly confounded any efforts of the student teachers to raise each other to levels of equitable participation. Nathan acknowledged this as he tried to distinguish Brian’s role during the class I observed and recounted above; the confusion was between the secondary/supporting role and the floating role:

He is secondary. He’s not floating. We’ve had questions about how does that manifest itself. Does he just take attendance for me? Collect papers, or are we genuine co-teachers in the classroom? For that lesson we chose to genuinely co-teach the lesson. He would take…and I would step off to the side…he would take the role of the main teacher, and then I would while he helped students. Before class we had already
established we were both going to be teaching, so we both had the same knowledge base.

Nathan implicitly suggested that the secondary/supporting role was more significant than a floating role, yet, even in a supporting role, he was unsure of whether or not Brian was to provide clerical support while he taught or actually be a part of the instruction. When he spoke of “genuinely” co-teaching, he suggested a sort of passing the baton where one would be the main teacher while the other helped students. This minimal sharing of instruction and the need to identify which individual student teacher was responsible for teaching at a given moment in the classroom, as if they could not both be in the role simultaneously, reflects their perspectives on co-teaching that spanned the duration of the placement.

Although enacting a narrow conceptualization of co-teaching, Nathan insisted that both he and Brian had to purposely and collaboratively plan to co-teach and be sure that each had the same content knowledge to fulfill their respective roles. That was not always the case.

Sara was the primary instructor for Sociology and worked alongside David in a secondary/supporting role. When I asked her how she worked to involve David in the class, she admitted:

With that class, I don’t know how involved he’s wanting to be, which is fine. A lot of times he’s just like, “Oh, what are we doing today or tomorrow? Let me know how I can help you.” So, he’s taken kind of a backseat role and just let me roll with it. I think in the beginning that’s been nice, just letting me develop a relationship with the students as their primary instructor because they kind of noticed the power shift from Mr. Conlon to me. It’s been nice to say, “I’m the teacher.” I hope, as the semester goes on, that we’re able to work together more because it’s nice to have a second person in the room. There are only 15 kids in the class, so, if we can divide them up into two groups, that’s nice small groups to work with. That’s something that I think I would like to work on throughout the semester.

Sara was struggling to involve David in the course. David was willing to help, but he was relying on Sara to tell him what to do. Again, affirming an unintended, imbalanced power
dynamic between the primary and secondary/supporting roles, Sara planned and instructed independently to assert herself as the legitimate teacher in the classroom. However, with that transition well underway, Sara was still looking for a way to do something with the co-teaching potential of having David in the classroom. Although this was early in the semester and her intentions seemed clear, there was little evidence during my observations of change over the semester.

The cooperating teachers saw great potential for co-teaching, but they also struggled to find their place in the classroom and to define the roles of their student teachers. Ms. Neal was very enthusiastic about the chance for the student teachers to co-teach regularly:

That’s what’s great about having two people. You can do more group work. You can come up with bigger things every day. Sometimes, when you are student teaching, you are just playing catch up and putting your head down and you’re trying…you just can’t do vibrant lessons. So, that’s great.

However, even when she participated with Sara and Eric during the co-taught lesson described above, she, too, was a modest contributor throughout a lesson designed and largely executed by Sara alone.

Mr. Walsh praised the shared student teaching model as allowing two or more adults to work together in the same classroom, something he saw happening more and more in schools. However, he also noted that it was less common in social studies classrooms and more prevalent in other content areas where special educators are assigned to support instruction in literacy and mathematics—“tested subject matter.” Either way, when faced with the opportunity to co-teach, many educators, pre-service and in-service struggle to make the relationship effective and efficient (Friend & Cook, 1992). For Walsh this was due mostly to the power differences inherent in such an arrangement. “Who has the power,” he asked, observing that this is true when there were two teachers regardless of their roles. They are
“always a little reluctant to tell the teacher what to do... [and] to just blindly accept what they are doing.”

Changing perceptions of co-teaching and encouraging complex forms like parallel, stations, and team teaching is a difficult undertaking for student teachers, as it is for practicing teachers too. Moving in this direction was especially difficult for the student teachers in this study. As I considered the challenges caused by the model itself, including the designation of primary and secondary/supporting roles, I also recognized that the student teachers’ previous experiences, or lack thereof, further compounded their ability to expand their co-teaching practices.

Lack of training and experience. It can be argued from the data that the struggles of the participating student teachers to enact consistently more varied co-teaching strategies were not a result of lack of interest in the concept, rather it had much more to do with their lack of formal training in co-teaching and very limited exposure to successful co-teaching in practice. These social studies candidates were never my students for a method course, and, consequently, they did not receive any earlier support in co-teaching or a chance to see co-teaching enacted before the student teaching experience. Their recent awareness of co-teaching strategies, from my own intervention, was not enough to translate to practice. They needed the support of both preparation and experience to bring their ideas to fruition. Mr. Walsh, as a cooperating teacher and an experienced social studies educator, recognized the potential of co-teaching but also the limitations in his field:

Any more in education, there always seems to be more than one adult in the room, but it never seems to happen in social studies. I certainly like it [the concept of co-teaching] because it lets me communicate with students, to differentiate, so it makes that more effective. There’s a lot more possible.

Mr. Walsh saw the shared student teaching model as a way to introduce co-teaching into the
social studies classroom, and he was consistently supportive of the student teachers’ efforts to teach together in distinct and meaningful ways. He repeatedly acknowledged the potential for improved student learning when co-teaching was fully implemented. Despite this encouragement, the student teachers struggled to turn theory and best intentions into practice.

Throughout my interviews with the student teachers, we talked about co-teaching. I encouraged them to take advantage of highly trained educators present in the room, utilizing each person to his or her full potential. We spoke about some of the more advanced co-teaching practices. The student teachers were often excited about the possibilities and quite confident they would explore those co-teaching approaches in their lessons. These conversations with me carried over to their own planning efforts, especially during the Facebook group dialogues. Two such exchanges appear below, the first from the same critical co-planning incident I have discussed previously:

**March 24—**

Nathan: what do you think would work Sara? I'm not sure how to format the actual simulation either, but I don't [think] any of us are that’s ok! Does everybody have another student teacher in the room when they are going to be doing this?

Sara: yes, i do in both of my periods.

Nathan: maybe we should plan something cool that uses both teachers and splits up the class?

Christie: I have [David] for 8th but just myself for 7th so if anyone is open and could help I would appreciate it!

Nathan: I haven't done stations yet, but maybe having students move around the room to different stations that put you in a different class.

Sara: i like the idea of stations

Christie  agreed! Maybe have them separated into groups and have at least 1 of each tier in a group and they can see how each group is treated at each station?
April 7—

Sara: tomorrow David and i are getting observed 6th hour so i think we are going to try to do stations with each of us taking half the class and doing separate things and then switching halfway through i know we are going to do an article...after that i'm not sure yet

Nathan: alright cool. what do you think you're going to do with stations? Eric and I were talking about getting kids moving around too.

Sara: we aren't totally sure yet

David: One will be articles... Still working on the other part

Nathan: maybe like picture analysis sort of stuff? something that will get kids thinking and then an explanation at the end

Sara: ohh we haven't done that yet, i like the thought

April 8—

Sara: so ancient civ tomorrow...anyone got any bright ideas of what to do? i did the split activity today

Christie: I'm doing that tomorrow. The movie worked out really well. All of my students were really into it. Also I think I am going to assess Friday, I forgot that I am being observed on Thursday

Nathan: I'm going to do the split activity tomorrow and move into economics in modern india on Wednesday

Christie: sounds good!

These Facebook group dialogue excerpts are telling in several ways. First off, by March 24, two months into the placement, Nathan acknowledged that he had yet to try stations teaching. Though not explicit, the replies from Sara and Christie suggest that they, too, had not explored that particular co-teaching strategy but remained interested. Further, for the April 7 split classroom activity, they again talk about stations teaching with each co-teacher leading a single activity before the students switch teachers and tasks. This is not indicative of stations teaching but more a form of parallel teaching; the student teachers struggled to identify their
practices in light of the Friend and Cook strategy descriptions they received from me. Finally, by the April 8 exchange, the student teachers shared what they had done or would do to “split activity” and allude to future lesson themes and ideas that do not appear to include any additional co-teaching delivery models.

Co-teaching was at times, like the above examples, a very deliberate goal of the student teachers. However, their ability to sustain co-teaching practices as part of their daily planning and instruction was often stifled by the training and experience they lacked. In general, collaboration was never a significant problem for the students. Granted, as their co-planning efforts demonstrated, they needed time and experience to establish the community norms and practices and find levels of mutual satisfaction and productivity. Still, they were already comfortable with working together, courtesy of the cohesiveness of their cohort and their previous placements together. Brian recognized this when he stated, “I mean you already have some basic teamwork skills, but you learn more how to be on a team in a teacher or educational setting. That was different.” The seven student teachers had to do that with each other and with their cooperating teachers. Whereas planning evolved over time due to the demands of daily teaching and the expectations of their cooperating teachers and supervisor, efforts to implement routine co-teaching practices were less successful. I attribute this in part to the student teachers’ ability to function in the classroom without having to co-teach. As long as lessons were being executed appropriately by the primary student teacher, co-teaching was a desirable possibility but hardly a necessity.

The role of primary student teacher in a classroom proved to be a deterrent to regular co-teaching, as I have discussed above, but so much of that was a result of the student teachers’ lack of familiarity with ways in which to make co-teaching a regular classroom occurrence.
Talking about teaching alongside her peers, Christie’s view of co-teaching between primary and secondary/supporting student teachers is particularly telling:

My philosophy as a primary... if you want to get involved, just let me know. I’ll do the primary work, but if you really want to teach a lesson or a week... that’s fine by me. I’ll help you.... It’s good that we have two brains working on it. As a secondary, I feel their support—whatever they need me to do—grade, walk around, co-teach 50-50. I talk a lot. Sometimes I don’t know when to stop. I was talking to Jared after the mock trials. He said, ‘It went really well, but I would have liked to have been able to engage more.’ And I was like, ‘Oh, I’m so sorry!’ I talk a lot, and I need to make eye contact and be like ‘You go ahead.’ I intend to be 50-50, but it turns out to be 75-25.

Christie did not see herself as an advocate for her peers to intentionally co-teach with her while she was in a primary instructional role. Instead, she just welcomed her co-teachers, those in secondary/supporting roles, to let her know when and how they wanted to participate in the lessons; otherwise, she was going to continue to plan as she saw fit, and, I presume, without the purposeful integration of her peer in instruction. Her emphasis on “helping each other” reflects a reliance on the one teach, one assist strategy, and, when she was in a secondary role, she immediately identified that she should be deferential to the primary instructor’s requests. Here she does suggest that she would be happy to “co-teach 50-50.” This reference to a team teaching approach is significant, but she goes on to recognize that, in a teaching episode with Jared, she struggled to do this, making the relationship with her co-teacher more like a “75-25” split that was more aligned with the one teach, one assist design.

As the student teachers continued to gravitate toward a one teach, one assist model for co-teaching, the cooperating teachers, who also did not have extensive experience teaching together with their peers, appeared limited to the same general strategy. When I asked about whether or not Ms. Neal believed the student teachers would do more purposeful and engaging co-teaching, she replied:

I don’t think they will do it without prompting. Because student teaching is so big, in
general, and because there’s this organizational component, I think it’s just so involved and so much time goes into it, especially with different people’s expectations, some people will just say, ‘oh, I’m just the secondary.’” She went on to explain how Mr. Conlon and two of the student teachers split the class down the middle to support a combination of students with special needs and those without. I think there need to be some guidelines. You need to look at differentiation. The role of a secondary person might be to help with accommodations or daily organizing. I think some of that…I think right now it’s a little nebulous. I think once they start taking over, there is the possibility to be really dynamic and great, but they need to know the expectations.

Ms. Neal affirms that the student teachers do not know how to co-teach. Added to this is their role rigidity described above. They planned for one to lead instruction and the other to support those efforts. Even Ms. Neal’s comments about differentiation and organization do not necessarily support more systematic shared teaching. Her notable example of Mr. Conlon and his two student teachers splitting the classroom for purposes of differentiation, but it is clearly the exception to practice. Despite best intentions, the student teachers and their cooperating teachers struggled to operationalize their limited knowledge of and exposure to co-teaching that heightened the engagement of each educator in the classroom. While they ably used the one teach, one assist model frequently to support individualized student support and classroom management, they were generally unable to leverage additional co-teaching strategies to expand their instructional performances and subsequent professional learning.

**Summary**

Co-teaching is challenging, even for practicing educators (Darragh, et al., 2011; Friend & Cook, 1992). With the advent of paired placements and more shared instructional responsibilities among student teachers and cooperating teachers (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Goodnough, et al., 2009), co-teaching has gained considerably more attention in the clinical education of pre-service educators. The limited exposure, both academically and experientially, that the student teachers in this study had to co-teaching made implementation challenging.
without having had the opportunity to observe its execution routinely in other classrooms (Lortie, 2002).

With my worries about any loss of instructional time as student teachers adopted more passive roles in instruction, I attempted to close the gap with continued discussion related to those strategies from Cook and Friend that promoted equitable instructional roles. Despite my efforts, the student teachers did not regularly use these approaches and even misidentified some teaching arrangements that they believed were enactments of a given strategy. As I considered this throughout the critical incident above, I discovered yet another unintentional demonstration of Engeström’s (2001) activity system and expansive learning theories. Despite the fact that I provided them with a tool (co-teaching strategies), the student teachers dismissed it as superfluous to the rules (planning, engagement) and division of labor (primary and secondary; divide and conquer) they had established within their own activity system. While I worried about the lack of their use of more sophisticated co-teaching strategies (outcome), they developed their own artifacts (tools, signs, language) to expand their learning goals: building better relationships with students to provide individual support and improving classroom management. One of the tools they relied on extensively to do this was peer observation. This would have been much less feasible in parallel, stations, or team teaching.

Ultimately, the student teachers did increase their learning through co-teaching, but it was not as I first intended. This should not surprise me when I consider the activities in play. For the student teachers, within their own activity system, to expand their co-teaching strategies they would need exposure, in practice, far greater than what my continuous references to the Friend and Cook model could provide. I now better understand the learning that did emerge from co-
teaching and consider it, along with other learning outcomes and limitations related to the design of the shared student teaching experience.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

I designed the shared student teaching model in a response to the problems related to traditional 1:1 student teaching, including student teacher isolation in quasi-vocational apprenticeships (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Grossman, 1991; Zeichner, 2002); inconsistent mentoring by cooperating teachers (Rozelle & Wilson, 2012; Torrez & Krebs, 2012; Tudela, 2014; Weasmer & Woods, 2003); underdeveloped professional practices (Conway, et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Rushton, 2001; Zeichner, 2010; Zeichner, et al., 2015); and collaborative dispositions (Bullough, et al., 2003; Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Dallmer, 2004; Howey & Zimpher, 1999; Nokes, et al., 2008) necessary for success in contemporary schools and classrooms. By promoting collaboration among peers, both in planning and in instruction, and by exposing pre-service teachers to multiple classrooms and cooperating teachers, I created an intervention informed by theories of situated learning (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Brown, et al., 1989; Korthagen, 2010; Lave, 1991), and professional communities of practice (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Kahne & Westheimer, 2000). When the shared student teaching model was enacted during the spring semester of 2013 at Scott High School, I considered the learning that occurred through the lens of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 2001; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010) and expansive learning theory (Engestrom, 1999), in order to understand how the student teachers were making meaning of their experiences and how the model impacted their learning.

This study was a design experiment (Brown, 1992; Collins, 1990) and therefore should be considered in light of the characteristics (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003) and features (Cobb, et al, 2003) of design-based research. The findings from the critical incidents above offer highly contextualized, actor-oriented (Lobato, 2003) accounts of working with
multiple cooperating teachers, co-planning, and co-teaching with peers, all as a result of the
design of the shared student teaching experience. I use these significant experiential kernels
(Abbott, 1992) in a narrative fashion (Hoadley, 2004) as evidence of, not only the impact on
local participants’ learning, but also to advance broader theories of learning for student teachers
(Barab & Squire, 2004). The findings are intended to make theoretical, as well as practical,
contributions to student teaching experiences beyond this case (Cobb, et al., 2003; Collins, et al.,
2004). Specifically, I consider to what extent student teachers’ participation in the design
expanded their learning. I do so with attention to both the local impact on participants, as well as
the study’s wider contribution to a theoretical understanding of how pre-service educators learn
during the student teaching experience. As Barab and Squire argue, “design-based research
requires providing local warrants for the effectiveness of the design work while simultaneously
attempting to contribute to a larger body of theory” (p. 6). Doing so requires me to consider
both the evidenced expansion of learning, as well as the limitations of the design (Greeno, 2016;
Lobato, 2003) and my own advocacy and criticism, informed by my professional experiences
and purposes (Barab & Squire, 2004; The Design-Based Collective, 2003).

**Expanded Learning of Participants**

In the previous chapter I addressed three significant design elements of the shared student
teaching model: working with multiple cooperating teachers, co-planning, and co-teaching. All
three of these elements directly affected the performance of the student teachers and were
influenced by their cooperating teachers. Each had an impact on the learning of the student
teachers. At the outset of my study I presented the following research questions:

1. How does a shared student teaching placement model impact the experiential learning of student teachers?
2. How do student teachers use collaborative relationships with multiple cooperating teachers and student teachers to support their learning?

3. How does a shared student teaching model influence the educational practices of participants?

4. How can this shared student teaching be further modified to enhance the learning opportunities for future participants?

In an attempt to answer these questions as they pertain to the local participants, I consider the data presented earlier in light of the research on teacher education and student teaching and the theoretical framework that informed my interventions. From a CHAT perspective, the student teachers’ learning was a shared object (outcome) for both subjects (student teachers and cooperating teachers). The formation and function of the student teachers’ peer activity system as it intersected with the activity system of the cooperating teachers ultimately expanded that object. I argue that the student teachers’ learning expanded through their participation in the shared student teaching model. I specifically consider the expansion of student teachers’ learning with attention to the tools, signs, and sociocultural influences that influenced the enactment of the design.

**Reflection on and appropriation of multiple pedagogies.** As the student teaching placement began, participants routinely observed and assisted no fewer than three cooperating teachers, and they had potential access to all four cooperating teachers. Consequently, their systematic, routine exposure to different content, pedagogy, and professional performance by mentors was more varied than the traditional student teaching experience. Through their assignment to multiple classrooms they could observe the same lesson (student outcomes, procedures, and/or assessment) being delivered by teachers with differing teaching styles. From this, they appropriated different elements of practice from multiple mentors. This was evident through the summative assessment described in the first critical incident in Chapter 4. The
variation of instruction by Mr. Walsh and Ms. Neal gave the student teachers exposure to dramatically different teaching performances and allowed Christie to assimilate elements of both performances in her own subsequent enactment of the lesson.

The student teachers continued to see variation in teaching during their gradual assumption of instructional responsibilities in each classroom. While the cooperating teachers taught less, the student teachers observed their peers’ instruction during co-teaching episodes to inform and to extend their own practice. Nathan’s deep interest in watching his peers teach, even when it meant he spent less time teaching independently, supported other student teachers’ acknowledgement that they advanced their practice through the demonstrations of teaching by their peers. All of the student teachers indicated they appropriated some of the teaching behaviors of their peers as they were exposed to them.

Sustained observation of peers remains elusive in traditional placements (Valencia, et al., 2009) and is limited to a single peer in more progressive paired placements (Dang, 2013; Darragh et al., 2011; Gardiner, 2010; Goodnough, et al., 2009; Nokes, et al., 2008; Talvitie, et al., 2000). Not discounting the advantages of peer placements, the data demonstrate that the opportunity to watch multiple cooperating teachers and multiple student teachers magnified the learning of student teachers through exposure to different pedagogies. The student teachers used numerous tools and artifacts, including cooperating teachers’ lesson plans, peer lesson plans, and online community dialogue through their peer Facebook group, to mediate their learning from observation of so many others. The shared planning experience of Nathan, Sara, and Christie, coupled with the subsequent face-to-face planning with Mr. Walsh and Mrs. Neal (Critical Incident #2) illustrates this mediation process among the participants. From these types of
experiences, student teachers considered multiple voices and contradictions in practice to expand their learning (Engeström, 2001).

**Higher quality lesson planning.** The demands on and constraint of student teachers in traditional student teaching placements can negatively impact their lesson design. Student teachers are taught to plan in isolation in formats that may restrict their thinking (John, 2006). Furthermore, they regularly mimic the teaching practices of the cooperating teacher regardless of the appropriateness of these strategies for the particular lesson or for the individual student teacher (Britzman, 2003; Gonzalez & Carter, 1996; Pittard, 2003; Weasmer & Woods, 2003). A traditional student teacher may then seek approval by mimicking the cooperating teachers’ planning (Rozelle & Wilson, 2012).

The cooperating teachers at Scott High School began the shared student teaching experience in much the same way they had during their service in traditional 1:1 placements. Through DropBox, they shared the entirety of their created materials for each unit of study with their student teachers. They also provided them with printed materials and other resources not accessible online. The intent of the cooperating teachers was not for the student teachers to use these materials unaltered but, as Ms. Neal said, to take them and make them their own. During the face-to-face planning for the India unit (Critical Incident #2), Mr. Walsh asked Nathan to return repeatedly to the materials in DropBox, but he stressed the importance of taking only what was useful. Nevertheless, he remained firm about how he believed the upcoming geography lesson should be differentiated between the regular and accelerated sections of the course, thereby restricting Nathan’s planning while Sara was modifying the previously used worksheet for her students. This type of planning between cooperating teachers and student teachers was not the norm during this study. Instead, as a direct result of the student teachers’ collaborative
planning within their emerging community of practice, they extended their lessons beyond many of the previously created materials and gathered resources of their cooperating teachers to design new lessons with instructional elements supported by the co-teaching arrangements in most classes.

There were challenges early on in the co-planning process. First, an initial “divide and conquer” division of labor weakened each student teacher’s familiarity with particular lessons, and that, in turn, manifested itself in weaker, more disengaged classroom performance for some, something that Mr. Walsh, Ms. Neal, and Mr. Conlon all expressed concern about early in the semester. Second, there were challenges with establishing appropriate rules within the community of practice for timely and purposeful collaboration. This led some students, like Jared, to work independently on planning and also to relegate co-teachers to lesser roles during instruction, as Sara did with David during her Sociology class. However, as the student teachers mediated these experiences, in light of the sociocultural influences noted above, they began to produce more complex lessons; to integrate new materials in their plans; to plan different instructional procedures, including varying co-teaching strategies; and to demonstrate their own abilities to plan independently and to modify shared planning efforts to address the specific needs of their students. This was a progression over time reflective of the discussion of Critical Incident #2.

All of the cooperating teachers acknowledged that the quality of the lesson plans and the implementation of these lessons was higher than previous experiences in a traditional placement. The evidence suggests that this is because they were planning together, developing an appropriate division of labor and establishing rules to support their efforts. They were mediating their learning through peer support and without a dependence upon the historicity of cooperating
teacher planning. Within their community of practice, they used online dialogue and anticipated co-teaching strategies to address contradictions and then integrated multiple voices in their lesson plans. By not performing in isolation or only as an invited guest within their cooperating teacher’s activity system, they created more advanced plans and translated that into increased learning as the semester progressed.

**Improved elements of practice.** Traditional student teachers are expected to continue to drive forward the curriculum through whole class instruction and the gradual assumption of nearly all their cooperating teachers’ professional duties. This is indicative of the apprenticeship model that is the basis of 1:1 placements (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Grossman, 1991; Zeichner, 2002). Working with individual students, providing extended learning opportunities, and practicing targeted instructional and behavioral management strategies can be nearly impossible in the frenzy of full-time teaching. Consequently, student teachers routinely cite classroom management and meeting the needs of diverse learners as two of the greatest challenges during student teaching, challenges that likely continue at the beginning of their careers (Rushton, 2001).

Because of the expectation to co-plan and to co-teach, the student teachers in this study were not independently tasked with the full totality of daily classroom responsibilities while they learned to teach. Instead of being completely overwhelmed by the demands of planning, managing a classroom environment, instructing, and performing various professional responsibilities, each student teacher had opportunities, thanks to their peers, to focus attention of select elements of teaching, such as classroom management, and to turn attention away from whole class instruction to work with specific students or groups. The model assigned multiple student teachers to each classroom during almost every period of instruction. As a result, the
student teachers would devise a number of instructional scenarios where they were able to target specific skill development by dividing the duties of classroom teaching. This is what the student teachers did throughout the two class periods that were the basis of Critical Incident #3. While not without its limitation, this approach gave each student teacher the opportunity to focus on student relationships, differentiated instruction, whole class teaching, and classroom management without making sacrifices to the overall instructional process or slowing the pace of learning for others. With peer support, the student teachers made the classroom into a laboratory where they could experiment with certain elements of teaching and learning without needing to be concerned with all facets of teaching. They used their community of practice to simplify the complexity of the classroom environment and target specific learning outcomes through the use of tools, like co-teaching strategies, to support them.

While some saw this as a luxury not afforded a full-time teacher alone in the classroom, others recognized that the support of their peers gave them more confidence and greater ability to resume full classroom responsibility and be more adept at balancing the myriad demands of the classroom teacher simultaneously. Nathan demonstrated a commonly shared perspective that such targeted learning and skill development would make his complete teaching performance stronger. Despite others’ concerns from student teachers and cooperating teachers that they may struggle to put all the components of teaching back together for future independent practice, the co-teaching arrangements led the cooperating teachers to note that the student teachers’ management and differentiation were improved from that of traditional student teachers in previous experiences.

**Sustained and improved efficacy.** Self-efficacy is critical to a student teacher’s success (Brown, et al., 2015; Lee, et al., 2012; Moulding, et al., 2014; Thomas & Mucherah, 2016).
Many of the challenges of traditional student teaching experiences noted above can have an adverse effect on the sense of efficacy among student teachers, and this can, in turn, negatively impact their learning. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of the shared student teaching experience on the participants’ self-efficacy. While I did not gather data sufficient to compare levels of reported self-efficacy by student teachers in this model to their peers in traditional placement, I can demonstrate that the design did not lower sense of efficacy of the student teachers.

Despite periods of frustration, especially during the norm setting as they began to work collaboratively, the student teachers in the shared placement model reported high levels of self-efficacy. During each of the four times that I administered the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy (TSES) questionnaire to the participants, student teachers reported relatively high levels of self-efficacy across the instrument, and over the course of the semester, there was a general trend of increased efficacy in student engagement, instruction, and classroom management. This was true for all of the student teachers individually and for the group collectively. The student teachers began the placement with a range of reported self-efficacy, and some were more confident in their abilities in certain areas than others. Nevertheless, they all showed significant gains from the beginning of the experience to the end. From these results, considered in tandem with student teachers’ comments during interviews over the semester, I can support the claim that overall self-efficacy increased for each student during the experience and that the shared placement model did not weaken any elements of self-efficacy over time.

**Collaborative disposition building.** This may be one of the single most important outcomes from the shared student teaching model and one that is typically undermined or nonexistent during a traditional placement. In more traditional student teaching the focus is on
the individual candidate and his or her abilities to perform independently. As a result, it is an isolating experience (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Grossman, 1991). Student teachers are separated from their peers; they rarely work together in the same classrooms and may have only one or two like peers in a particular school. In addition, as a student teacher, their self-assumed, if not prescribed status, is one of deference to the cooperating teacher and to other licensed professionals in the school (Conway, et al., 2005). As a result, they may elect or be expected to adhere to the cooperating teacher’s directives, to remain more passive in instructional and professional team meetings and collaboration opportunities, and to limit ongoing support from others in an effort to demonstrate autonomy as a mark of preparedness (Cornu & Ewing, 2008; Howey & Zimpher, 1999). If collaboration does occur in a traditional placement model, it is often with a cooperating teacher, faculty member, or supervisor whose experience is vastly different and who has an institutional and programmatic power over the student teacher. It is not a team of equals for purposes of collaboration, despite anyone’s best intentions. Any peer collaboration during a traditional placement would be without shared knowledge and experience with a particular classroom or its students, and paired placements only add the voice of one other student teacher, hardly what Dallmer (2004) called for with multiple social actions through collaboration.

With the shared student teaching model, the locus of collaboration and support extends from the cooperating teacher to the community of peers. The team of student teachers explores, chooses, executes, and reflects on instruction through ongoing collaboration that is structurally supported without being overly prescriptive. The student teachers in this model learned to work together. They made shifts in their habits of mind and performance to move from independent practices to delegation of responsibilities and shared accountability. This is evidenced by the
planning episodes in Critical Incident #2. This transition, the emergence of richer collaborative dispositions, took time and invited a number of setbacks early on, but the students discovered successful ways to plan and to teach together and developed a commitment to collaboration as a means to improved teaching and learning that will follow them forward in their professional lives. These collaborations were not without sacrifices, specifically in the relationships with the cooperating teachers, but I will discuss those in the limitations which follow.

Limitations on Learning

The shared student teaching model was not without complications, both in design and enactment. The model, as an intervention in student teachers’ learning, intended to address many of the problems with traditional student teaching, supported expanded learning for the student teachers as previously illustrated. Findings from this first iteration study support that. However, the implementation of the model also exposed a number of design flaws that unintentionally restricted student teachers’ learning. As an advocate for collaborative, peer-supported student teaching experiences, like this model, I can defend my claims of expanded learning by the participants in this study. Nevertheless, by honoring my commitment to also be a critic of the design, I also present a number of limitations on learning that warrant consideration for future modification and research.

Logistical concerns. Simply put, the placement process and scheduling of these student teachers with the various cooperating teachers was messy at best. Upon the request of the cooperating teachers, I created an individual schedule for each student teacher that he or she would be expected to follow for the duration of the semester. In order to provide the most exposure to different classrooms and time to work with different student teachers, it was common for a student teacher to only work with a particular educator, be it a cooperating teacher
or a student teacher, once or twice in the course of a school day. As a result, the participants complained that they had little time to interact with certain individuals. In addition, the cooperating teachers lamented only being able to see a student teacher deliver instruction once. Having provided them with feedback, albeit often hurried between classes, the student teachers were off to another classroom. The cooperating teacher did not have the opportunity to see that same lesson delivered again in the classroom by that student teacher to assess any adjustments to practice. While it might be possible to obtain feedback from their colleagues or even visit another classroom to watch the same lesson by the student teacher, the cooperating teachers did not readily avail themselves of either. This caused concerns during evaluations. The cooperating teachers did not feel like they had observed sufficient teaching performances, and they did not systematically gather feedback from other teachers to complete individual student teacher’s evaluations. They also resented having to complete the evaluation processes (written evaluations, face-to-face conferences) for more than a single student teacher.

Future iterations would be improved by attempting to design a schedule that does permit a single teacher to see a lesson taught more than once, in his or her classroom or through systematic observation of the student teachers in different spaces. The former might be possible by considering the assignment of student teachers to the same classroom, with a cooperating teacher, for up to half of the school day and then designing a fixed schedule across classrooms with varied arrangements of student teachers for the remaining part of the day. The consistency gained by sustained time with a given teacher might also return the stronger mentoring roles and the perception of belonging in collaboration that the cooperating teachers reported having lost in the harried rotations of the current design. Further investigation on how less exposure to multiple classrooms, teachers, and combinations of peers might impact the expanded learning
evidenced above would be necessary to see if this 50/50 hybrid would address the concerns while still supporting the new learning gains. The latter, asking teachers to visit other classrooms, is a major shift in the culture of most schools; teachers don’t frequently observe instruction in others’ classrooms, so this would have to be outlined as a responsibility of participating cooperating teachers and supported culturally within the school. The cooperating teachers in this study were as isolated in practice as their student teachers would have been in a traditional placement. Because they did not see their peers teach regularly and were not willingly to integrate themselves in other classrooms, they were often unaware of the different approaches the student teachers saw. As a result, they may have struggled to help student teachers mediate what they themselves did not know or understand.

Another logistical limitation of the design was the creation of the flexible/floating class period. Originally, I designed this time to allow each student teacher one class period of the day to move across multiple classrooms for single days or even for particular units of instruction. Without specific instructional obligations in a classroom that period, the student teacher could engage in specialized service including but not limited to peer observation, invited instruction, and other short-term engagement in several different classrooms. What I discovered as the participants in the study enacted these flexible/floating periods was that they often used the time for additional planning, grading, or other professional duties, or they remained in the same classroom daily, not often availing themselves of the chance to move in and out of instructional spaces. This, of course, was not the intention of my original design, and participants regularly saw this as unproductive, unstructured time, even when they used it for routine planning or other duties. It became another challenge to the relationship of the model to approximate “real demands” of a full-time teacher. The elimination of the flexible/floating period may offer
another opportunity to extend teaching time in a particular classroom, as recommended above; however, if the flexible/floating period was better explained at the outset of the placement with formal suggestions of activities that should be a part of that time, I believe it can be an additional value-added intervention in the clinical experience, one that could also be the subject of future research.

Challenges in co-teaching. Although I attempted to encourage various co-teaching strategies with my engagement and support, the student teachers who participated in this study had little to no familiarity with or experience co-teaching. While they quickly developed strategies to advance from rudimentary (divide and conquer) co-planning strategies to more sophisticated practices (creating collaborative instructional designs with individual class-specific modifications), they were unable to implement other varieties of co-teaching strategies beyond one teach, one assist. Even as this gave them the opportunity to work more closely with individual students and better manage the classroom, both highly favorable outcomes attributed to the model design, they regularly undervalued the instructional role of the co-teacher when the “primary” was teaching. The “secondary/supporting” student teacher was relegated to management; casual, impromptu interjections; and clerical tasks. The student teachers suggested more advanced forms of co-teaching, like parallel and stations teaching, but these ideas did not carry forward to actual elements of lesson design and execution.

The limitation of learning here is not in the use of co-teaching; they co-taught regularly, and doing so allowed for the targeted skill development I discussed earlier. The concern is that the student teachers were unable to implement other, more complex co-teaching strategies in their classrooms. In supporting roles, without clear, pre-determined instructional responsibilities, they were underutilized, and this decreased their teaching time. With less teaching time, the
student teachers did shift their focus to discovering more about their students, honing management skills, and learning by observing their peers. This unintended learning outcome is significant to the model, and it should be sustained. However, I still recommend the students also have opportunities to expand their co-teaching practices. To do so, participants must be better supported to learn about these strategies and to see them modeled prior to enactment. I suggest that all participants, cooperating teachers and student teacher alike, attend a co-teaching workshop prior to the start of the placement, receive continued support and guidance during the placement, and that the first episodes of co-teaching happen between student teachers and cooperating teachers during the gradual assumption of classroom instructional responsibilities before the full takeover period. Then, during the takeover period, student teachers should be explicitly encouraged to modify lessons to promote a variety of co-teaching where they share instructional duties, and they should be observed, by their cooperating teachers and university clinical supervisors, to offer continued support in implementation. All of these direct interventions appear necessary to assure that co-teaching continues and improves during the shared placement.

Finally, as a symbolic and critical modification, I would eliminate the distinctions of “primary” and “secondary” instructional responsibility to the student teachers assigned to each classroom. This distinction encouraged a rigid division of labor and false sense of authority that undermined greater equality in planning and instruction. The student teachers need to see themselves as equals with a shared responsibility for teaching the course. This should not discourage the student teachers from regularly observing their peers and using the time when others are teaching to hone other classroom skills. However, this can be done without creating unnecessary distinctions between co-teaching peers that suggest an imbalance in responsibility
for teaching and learning in a particular classroom. By eliminating the primary and second/supporting distinctions, the concerns over uneven instructional roles in a classroom should be minimized and appropriate rigor maintained for all.

**Unintended reduction in professional responsibilities.** The issue of rigor was not exclusive to the varied engagement of some of the student teachers during both early co-planning and ongoing co-teaching. There were also additional concerns, particularly among the cooperating teachers, regarding the overall individual professional responsibilities of the student teachers individually. With the confusion that occurred as student teachers moved quickly between classrooms, arriving just in time to teach, and disappearing right after the bell to get to their next classroom, the cooperating teachers struggled to find time to talk to them and to monitor their performance on classroom-specific duties. As a result, the cooperating teachers chose to retain some of these duties to insure they were completed accurately and in a timely manner. These included parent phone calls, serious discipline referrals, and grade entry and review. In general, the cooperating teachers expressed disappointment that, due to the challenges with communication among so many participants, certain job tasks were never fully delegated to each student teacher. They worried about them undertaking these responsibilities independently in the future.

To address this limitation in learning, I recommend two possible modifications, both of which were shared by cooperating teachers in this study. Mr. Walsh recommended the reduction of total student teachers by one, changing this particular ratio to 6:4. Doing this would reduce the number of student teachers circulating through each classroom and allow for more time for each student teacher to have independent practice with a number of these duties. To this, I add the suggestion of Ms. Neal to create a schedule of activities for the shared placement that list
important functions that each student teacher should undertake at particular moments of time during the semester. Inclusive of grading, parent communication, and required paperwork, the task list assures that responsibilities are introduced to the student teacher gradually and are not overlooked or retained unnecessarily by the cooperating teacher, thereby allowing each student teacher the chance to experience the full nature demands on the classroom teacher.

**Legitimacy.** Student teaching is a rite of passage in the profession (White, 1989). Every university-trained teacher had some sort of clinical internship period prior to full-time professional service. There are generally more similarities among these experiences than there are differences (Zeichner, 2002). Student teachers often bemoan the challenges of student teaching, from their relationships with their cooperating teachers to the sense of being constantly overwhelmed, and almost all of them acknowledge that they still had so much to learn when they began teaching (Valencia, et al. 2009). Despite their concerns, many of these same student teachers become cooperating teachers who offer the same experiences to their student teachers, mentoring them in ways that are less than ideal but in which they believe made them stronger teachers as a result (Hoffman, et al, 2015; Smith & Avetisian, 2011). And so the system of traditional student teaching perpetuates itself.

As a recognized rite of passage, any deviation from traditional student teaching immediately challenges the legitimacy of the experience. In this study, the four participating cooperating teachers were quick to acknowledge that the shared student teaching experience was not like their own and was not like the experiences of student teachers whom they mentored previously. As suggested earlier, they were concerned that the dependence of collaboration and shared responsibility would minimize the preparation of the student teachers to assume their own classrooms independently. They also worried about their diminished role as mentors, as the
students grew less dependent upon them for support and more reliant on their peers. In essence, the cooperating teachers and their activity system became undervalued during the study. As the cooperating teachers grew more removed from planning and teaching, giving rise to the functionality of the student teachers’ community of practice, they struggled to maintain control of the experience while they juggled numerous student teachers in more subsidiary roles. Even as the cooperating teachers began to identify some of the positive learning outcomes from the model, including higher quality lessons, more timely planning, variation in instructional strategies, emotional support and stability, and more assertiveness in professional meetings, none of them finished this experience without some concern that the student teachers might struggle with independent practice. They recognized the powerful learning that had occurred with each student teacher over the course of the semester and they confirmed their belief that each student was ready for a classroom of his or her own, still they felt uncertain about their participation in the design experiment and the learning outcomes of the student teachers.

Acknowledging such a drastic shift from the traditional student teaching model, I expected doubt about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the shared placement model. In future iterations I would recommend that information about the model—objectives, rationale, relevant research, and basic structure—be presented to participating cooperating teachers in detail. This should then extend to the university clinical supervisor and other school personnel. The supervisor was largely absent from this study as she performed her normal functions of observation and evaluation as she would have in a traditional placement. I elected not to interview her or observe her conferences with the student teachers, though I did review her observation reports and evaluations of each student teacher. I did this to more closely investigate the interplay between student teachers and cooperating teachers during the placement; however,
any future iterations of the model would do well to consider the role of the clinical supervisor, especially as an actor working across the activity systems of both the student teachers and the cooperating teachers, having legitimacy within each. Turning to other school personnel, I learned that, like the cooperating teachers, many questioned the legitimacy of this experience to adequately prepare student teachers for their own classrooms. This may have weakened any extended collaborative relationships that student teachers or the cooperating teachers had with others outside the study. By addressing how the model responds to some of the common concerns about traditional student teaching and how specific learning outcomes are enhanced by the structure, all educators may better understand the impetus for shared student teaching experience. This may alleviate many of the initial concerns and demonstrate the importance of rigor, relevance, and relationships in this altered learning activity. This alteration will make the entry of the student teachers into the school community smoother and strengthen the support system they might receive from their supervisor and other school personnel.

**Theoretical Refinement**

So far, I have discussed the learning outcomes related to the participants in this study, and I have offered recommendations to the design of the model to support a greater expansion of learning for student teachers. The modifications I have proposed may well impact the local outcomes of a future iteration of the design, and I hope they do. But, as a design experiment, this study should also consider the broader theoretical implications of the model to better understand how student teachers learn in the context of schools. In that regard, I focus a final discussion on peer activity systems in learning to teach.

Student teachers learn in the sociocultural context of schools. They learn through interactions with others, using tools and signs to mediate their understanding of classroom
teaching performances. In traditional student teaching placements, where they are individual guests in the classroom of their cooperating teachers, they join an activity system where they are expected to be submissive subjects held to the rules and division of labor among the community of cooperating teachers. Pre-service teachers, at best, have legitimate peripheral participation in the activities of the cooperating teachers, whereby they gradually gain responsibility but remain non-members of the community of practice, unlicensed and still students, until the conclusion of the experience. So then, as the student teaching semester progresses, still on the periphery, student teachers’ voice, if contradictory, may be dismissed by cooperating teachers’ or their colleagues or silenced in favor of historical practice. In an effort to better legitimate them, cooperating teachers offer student teachers their own instructional artifacts, so that they may appropriate them into practice under the norms of established performance in the classroom. While not necessarily discouraging innovation, the cooperating teachers privilege their own tools and encourage the student teachers, as apprentices, to imitate their performance within the bounded system already established.

As a generalization, the description above signals the root problem of traditional student teaching, namely the absence of a relevant activity system (Engeström, 2001) where the student teachers have full participation and can mediate their learning within their own community of practice, under rules and a division of labor that they have created collaboratively. This, in turn, permits the interaction of the activity system of the student teachers with that of the cooperating teachers. Student teachers gain support, professional and emotional, from their peers. Then, as communities of practice between student teachers and cooperating teacher interact and issues of multivoicedness, historicity, and contradiction arise, the student teachers can learn together the expanded learning that emerges from the interplay between activity systems.
Student teachers learn best when they learn together (Baeten & Simons, 2014). Expanded learning is possible through the shared student teaching model because of the systematic interaction of activity systems. As illustrated by the local participants, when not isolated from peers, student teachers rely on each other to address content and skill deficiencies, to create innovative lessons, to refine teaching skills, and to negotiate their limited roles as apprentices to their cooperating teachers. They do so in context and with intimate knowledge of the students they serve collectively, both critical to their situated learning (Barab & Duffy, 2000; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Through the formation, enactment, and reflection within their own professional community of practice, the student teachers learn to collaborate with peers, something that is not an expectation of traditional placements (Korthagen, 2010). Teachers no longer plan and teach in isolation; student teachers should not either. The design helps student teachers develop collaborative dispositions, and this will support their professional practice long after the student teaching semester.

By moving beyond paired placements of two student teachers in a single cooperating teacher’s classroom (Darragh et al., 2011; Gardiner, 2010), this design reflects the complexity of interpersonal relationships, multiple voices, and shared intellectual and performative tasks that inform contemporary teaching practices and the potential impact of these forces on expanded learning (Engeström, 2001). It further demonstrates the significance of a shared space for dialogue (Smith & Avetisian, 2011; Talvitie, et al., 2000), specifically online discussions (Alger & Kopcha, 2009), as a tool to mediate such complex learning. That space is critical to the near-peer interactions (Lave, 1991) that usher in full participation in the community of practice.
An Ending or a Beginning?

My experience having implemented my shared student teaching model and having studied it through a design experiment ends in much the same way it started—thinking about my own professional narrative, the chapters that have come before, those that will follow, and the present page. I have embodied the many roles of actors in clinical teacher education. As a pre-service teacher, I leveraged my experiences as a member of a cohort, as a participant in a yearlong grant program during my first practicum, and as a student teacher for two very distinctive cooperating teachers to expand my own learning. Even then, I realized I had done more and seen more than many of my peers. As a teacher, I mentored my own student teachers and frequently questioned if I was doing enough to support them, if they were learning enough from me, and if my expectations were appropriate and fair. As an assistant principal, I supervised and evaluated teachers. Through classroom observations, I watched powerful and not so powerful examples of co-teaching between regular and special educators, and I learned as much as I could about supporting my staff to do that work better. Now, as a teacher educator and administrator of clinical experiences, I teach methods course for future secondary social studies teachers, and I coordinate the field placements for hundreds of students in ten different teacher licensure programs. I interact with all stakeholders who have distinct and vested interests in preparing highly qualified educators to serve our children and their families around the world.

Each role I have played in these stories was significant to how I developed this design study. I attempted to respond to turn the clinical education of teachers upside-down (NCATE, 2010) as I considered them all. I believe that my experiences collectively have made me a better educator. Remembering those turning points of learning through my own story inspired me to
integrate as many similar elements in the shared student teaching model as I could. Supported by the literature and guided by the principles of design-based research, I set out to create an intervention that would advance the theoretical understanding of how student teachers learn to teach though collaborative peer support. Even more importantly though, in maintaining the dual roles of design experiments, I tested and now seek to further refine a model that ultimately expanded the learning of the participants, and it may do so better in future iterations. This work was practical and purposeful; it was done with deeply personal and professional convictions.

Significant design-based research is complex and requires extended periods of research. This first iteration study is but an initial contribution to the field. There is much more to be done. The data set from this design experiment alone could support other academic work, with analyses well beyond the scope of the present study. Then, there is the subsequent implementation of new iterations of the model that I hope will follow. As much as this marks the end of my work for this dissertation, I hope it is just a beginning.

I believe that, by pushing beyond the boundaries of traditional, vocational 1:1 apprenticeships, the shared student teaching model is a step in that direction. For far too long student teaching has been oriented from a narrowly conceived, top-down perspective. Teacher candidates taught in isolation as guests in the classrooms of their cooperating teachers, relegated to the periphery and subject to the idiosyncratic mentoring of the cooperating teachers. Perhaps in answering the charge of NCATE, we must grant primacy to the needs of the student teachers—their need to learn about teaching collaboratively as empowered participants of their own communities of practice where they can grow together and expand their learning through the ongoing interactions with the activity systems of their cooperating teachers.
REFERENCES


doi:10.3102/0034654312468619


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## APPENDIX A: STUDENT TEACHING INITIAL SCHEDULE

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jared Tulin</td>
<td>Team Plan (HN)</td>
<td>Social Std. Plan (HN)</td>
<td>World Hist. 551 (MS)</td>
<td>Mod US 655 (HN)</td>
<td>AVID 109 (WC)</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>World Hist. 551 (MS)</td>
<td>Mod US 655 (HN)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Yellow**: Primary course responsibility  
- **Green**: Supporting/shared course responsibility  
- **Pink**: Floating/Flexible
APPENDIX B: CONSENT AND PERMISSION LETTERS

December 14, 2012

Dear Teacher:

We are from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and we would like to invite you to participate in a research project. The project is being managed by Dr. Mark Dressman. The project is focused on a new model of secondary student teaching where, instead of placing a single student teacher with one cooperating teacher, multiple student teachers are assigned to a small group of available cooperating teachers in the same academic department.

If you agree, you will be invited to participate in three (3) separate activities between January 21 and May 3, 2013. Each is described below:

(1) An investigator (Jay Mann) will visit your classroom to observe instruction as delivered by you and your student teacher. He will specifically focus his observations on the performance of the student teachers but will schedule 6-8 observations during times when you are also present and teaching with the student teacher(s). Other observations will be scheduled when you may not be teaching. He will record his observations in writing; no audio or videotaping will occur. Class sessions will continue to occur as you would normally expect. No identifying information about you, the student teachers, or your students will be recorded in the written reports, and Jay Mann will give you an opportunity to review some of the observation notes and subsequent analysis. The purpose of this review will be both to ensure that the investigator is appropriately representing the classroom activities and to seek additional interpretations of various situations by you.

(2) An investigator (Jay Mann) will request that you to share copies of your ongoing written feedback with your student teacher(s). This feedback is a standard requirement of the student teaching experience.

(3) You will be invited to participate in three to four (3–4) interviews with Jay Mann. These interviews may be conducted individually or with small groups of other cooperating teachers and/or student teachers; all interviews will take place in a private location with the investigator (apart from non-research participants); however, when group interview occur, you will be asked to answer questions alongside other research participants. Each interview will take approximately one (1) hour and will be scheduled before/after school and always at your convenience. With your permission, each interview may be audio-recorded.

There is some risk involved in your participation in this research project, but it is minimal. Because data generated from this study occurs in your classroom and involves student teachers under your direction, there may be some added stress and/or risk. The aim of the study is to consider the performance of student teachers in this model of student teaching and the professional relationships that develop between you and your student teachers. Also, the group interviews may add some risk to your privacy if other participants elect to share information that you share with others, despite the request to respect the privacy of all participants.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All information provided will be strictly confidential. You can decide to stop participating at any time during the study. If you choose not to participate, any classroom observations where you would be teaching and all teacher interviews will cease.

The investigator plans to use this data in preparation of a doctoral dissertation and may use it for future conferences and publications.

In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether you wish to participate in this project and return this letter to the investigator by December 21, 2012.

We look forward to working with you and, together, learning more about this model of shared student teaching.
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@illinois.edu

Sincerely,

Jay Mann, M.Ed.
217-333-2561
jaymann@illinois.edu

Mark Dressman, Ph.D.
217-244-6815
mdressma@illinois.edu

******************************************************************************

For Teacher:

I have read the letter above, and I am willing to participate in the project as described:

_____Yes_____No, I agree to be observed while teaching with student teacher(s).

_____Yes_____No, I agree to share the weekly written feedback of my student teacher.

_____Yes_____No. I agree to be interviewed, individually or in small groups, by the investigator as described above.

_____Yes_____No, I agree to be audio-recorded during the individual interviews.

_____________________________________________________________________
(Print) Teacher’s name

_____________________________________________________________________
Teacher’s signature ____________________________ Date __________

232
December 14, 2012

Dear Student:

We are from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and we would like to invite you to participate in a research project during your Spring 2013 student teaching experience. The project is being managed by Dr. Mark Dressman and is focused on a new model of secondary student teaching where, instead of placing you with one cooperating teacher, we will assign you to a group of teachers in a single academic department. You will work collaboratively with other student teachers and with the cooperating teachers to plan, deliver, and reflect on instruction during the semester.

If you agree, you will be invited to participate in four (4) separate activities between January 21 and May 3, 2013. Each is described below:

(1) An investigator (Jay Mann) will visit the classrooms to observe you teaching. This will include times when you are teaching independently, as well as when you are working with peer student teachers and/or with cooperating teachers. He will observe you between ten and twelve (10-12) times during the semester. These observations are for research purposes and are not part of your formal student teaching performance evaluations as conducted by your assigned University supervisor. He will record his observations in writing; no audio or videotaping will occur. Class sessions will continue to occur as you would normally expect. No identifying information about you, the cooperating teachers, or your students will be recorded in the written reports, and the investigator will give you an opportunity to review some of the observation notes and subsequent analysis. The purpose of this review will be both to ensure that the investigator is appropriately representing classroom activities and to seek additional interpretations of various situations by you.

(2) An investigator (Jay Mann) will request that you to share copies of lesson plans, course assignments, and field journals, so that he can learn more about your experience in this new student teaching model. All of these items are requirements for every student teacher. You may elect not to share some or all of this information with the investigator.

(3) On four (4) separate occasions during the semester, you will complete a self-rating of your effectiveness as a teacher, using a published questionnaire. Only you and the investigator will have access to your responses.

(4) You will be invited to participate in three to four (3-4) interviews with an investigator (Jay Mann). These interviews will be about your experiences during student teaching and may be conducted individually or with small groups of other student teachers and/or cooperating teachers; all interviews will take place in a private location with the investigator (apart from non-research participants); however, when group interview occur, you will be asked to answer questions alongside other research participants. Each interview will take approximately one (1) hour and will be scheduled before/after school or during your release time.

There is some risk involved in your participation in this research project, but it is minimal. You may experience some stress associated with the student teaching experience, but no more than usual for such an experience. You might find some tension while working with certain individuals or under certain circumstances. The group interviews may also add some risk to your privacy if other participants elect to share information that you share with others, despite the request to respect the privacy of all participants. To minimize any negative effects, Jay Mann will meet participants frequently and continue to monitor the scheduling of the student teaching experience to encourage a supportive climate for teaching and learning for all.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All information provided will be strictly confidential. You can decide to stop participating at any time during the study. If you choose not to participate, all classroom observations, document review, and interviews will cease.

Jay Mann plans to use this data in preparation of a doctoral dissertation and may use it for future conferences and publications.
In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether you wish to participate in this project and return this letter to the investigator by December 21, 2012.

We look forward to working with you and, together, learning more about this model of shared student teaching.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Jay Mann, M.Ed.  
217-333-2561  
jaymann@illinois.edu

Mark Dressman, Ph.D.  
217-244-6815  
mdressma@illinois.edu

*********************************************************************************************

For Student:

I have read the letter above, and I am willing to participate in the project as described:

_____ Yes_____ No, I agree to be observed while teaching.

_____ Yes_____ No, I agree to share my course assignments and clinical work.

_____ Yes_____ No, I agree to complete the Teacher Sense of Efficacy questionnaire on four (4) separate occasions.

_____ Yes_____ No. I agree to be interviewed, individually or in small groups, by the investigator as described above.

_____ Yes_____ No. I agree to be audio-recorded during the individual interviews.

______________________________  _______________________________
(Print) Student’s name  Students’s signature  Date
January 14, 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Greetings from the University of Illinois! We would like to share some information about an upcoming research project that is going to take place in your child’s high school social studies classroom.

Your child’s teacher has agreed, with the permission of school administration, to be a part of a study that considers a new student teaching experience for pre-service teachers from our university. Every future educator is required to “student teach” with a practicing classroom teacher before he/she can be certified to teach. In all likelihood, you and your children have had other experiences with student teachers in previous school years.

This new model assigns several student teachers to the academic department, so that they can work with each other and with multiple teachers during the Spring 2013 semester. Traditionally, a single student teacher is assigned to just one classroom for the entire semester. In this model, more than one student teacher will often be present in the classroom, and they will work in two to three different classrooms over the 14-week experience. This affords teachers and student teachers to chance work with each other and with many more students during the experience.

As researchers, we are interested in how the student teachers perform during this experience. In particular we want to study how they work with each other and with the classroom teachers to provide educational experiences for your children. The information that we collect is focused on the interactions and practices of the teachers and their student teachers; it is not centered on your children or their performance in class. No children will be identified in observation notes. They will not be interviewed nor will they be asked to share information about their teachers or student teachers.

We do plan to interview the teachers and student teachers and look at the materials they prepare for the classroom. We also plan to visit the classrooms between ten and twelve (10-12) times to observe the teachers and student teachers while they teach. Part of this observation will likely include some written account of interactions between the teachers, student teachers, other children, and your child. We will not record any student identifying information about children and will only collect information that helps us better understand the performance of the teachers/student teachers. These observations will be in addition to the others that are a normal part of student teaching and are conducted by a University supervisor not associated with this project.

All high schools students will participate in normal classroom activities during this study. If you do not wish your child’s interactions in the classroom to be a part of the information gathered during class observations, please contact us by phone, email, or letter. For those children whose parents do contact us, although they will still be present in class, we agree to not record any information about their interactions with others during class time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Jay Mann, M.Ed.
217-333-2561
jaymann@illinois.edu

Mark Dressman, Ph.D.
217-244-6815
mdressma@illinois.edu
APPENDIX C: STUDENT TEACHER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Guidelines: [to be read before each interview]

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. We will be meeting in private, for approximately one (1) hour, while I ask you some questions about your present student teaching experience. You may choose not to answer any of my questions. I may ask some additional follow-up questions based upon your responses and/or reference situations that have occurred in class or that you or your cooperating teachers have shared with me.

[To be read during group interviews]: Today, while we are meeting in private, away from others who are not part of this research project, we will be meeting with others who are participating. While you may decide not to share some information while others are present, you have an opportunity to share your thoughts openly and to respond to the ideas that others offer. Please respect the privacy of others who share during this interview. Also, please be aware that I cannot control others’ discretion; some participants may attribute certain ideas/behaviors to you after this interview. For these reasons, you may choose not to participate in this type of interview.

With permission, I will be audio-recording today’s interview. I will use the recording to write out parts of our conversation. These recordings will be saved in a secure electronic file for three (3) years, after which time I will destroy the audio file. No one else will listen to the recording. You will not be identified by name and no specific identifying information will be used when I prepare reports from this research. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will type as much of your responses as I can during our interview.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about your current responsibilities in the classrooms where you are working.
2. Can you describe a recent experience with a fellow student teacher, a cooperating teacher, or student(s) that you feel was particularly successful? To what might you attribute that success?
3. In the reverse, can you describe a recent experience where you were frustrated or displeased with the outcome? How might you handle a similar situation in the future?
4. Based on your current responsibilities in your placement, please tell me about how you plan and prepare for your work.
5. What challenges have you encountered in planning and teaching, either individually or with others, during this phase of student teaching?
6. How have your students responded to your interactions with them? Can you share any particularly memorable experiences as of late?
7. How do you feel about working so closely with another teacher/student teacher in the same classroom? How do those interactions affect your teaching?
8. Has this experience been different than how you imagined student teaching to be? How so?
9. How do you feel your student teaching experience will impact your performance as a future classroom teacher?
APPENDIX D: COOPERATING TEACHER SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Guidelines: [to be read before each interview]
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. We will be meeting in private, for approximately one (1) hour, while I ask you some questions about your present experience as a cooperating teacher. You may choose not to answer any of my questions. I may ask some additional follow-up questions based upon your responses and/or reference situations that have occurred in class or that you or your student teacher have shared with me.

[To be read during group interviews]: Today, while we are meeting in private, away from others who are not part of this research project, we will be meeting with others who are participating. While you may decide not to share some information while others are present, you have an opportunity to share your thoughts openly and to respond to the ideas that others offer. Please respect the privacy of others who share during this interview. Also, please be aware that I cannot control others’ discretion; some participants may attribute certain ideas/behaviors to you after this interview. For these reasons, you may choose not to participate in this type of interview.

With permission, I will be audio-recording today’s interview. I will use the recording to write out parts of our conversation. These recordings will be saved in a secure electronic file for three (3) years, after which time I will destroy the audio files. No one else will listen to the recording. You will not be identified by name and no specific identifying information will be used when I prepare reports from this research. If you prefer not to be recorded, I will type as much of your responses as I can during our interview.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about the current arrangements in your classroom between you and your student teacher(s).
2. Can you describe a recent experience with a student teacher/student teachers (and) student(s) that you feel was particularly successful? To what might you attribute that success?
3. In the reverse, can you describe a recent experience where you were frustrated or displeased with the outcome? How might you handle a similar situation in the future?
4. How have your planning, preparation, and teaching changed during this phase of the student teaching experience?
5. What challenges have you encountered in planning and teaching, either individually or with others, during this phase of student teaching? How have the student teachers responded to these “shared” duties?
6. How have your students responded to your interactions with them and to the interactions with your student teacher(s)? Can you share any particularly memorable experiences as of late?
7. How do you feel about working so closely with multiple student teachers in the same classroom? How do those interactions affect your teaching?
8. How might you compare or contrast this experience to your previous work with student teachers?
9. What impact do you anticipate this experience having on your own teaching and learning and on future service as a cooperating teacher?
APPENDIX E: LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Name:

Date:

Grade Level/Subject:

Prerequisite Knowledge:

Approximate Time:

Student Objectives/Student Outcomes:

Content Standards:

Materials/Resources/Technology:

Implementation:

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening of lesson: (Objectives, hook, behavior expectations)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures: Include critical thinking questions and accommodations for individual needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Summary/Closing:</td>
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<td>Student Assessment:</td>
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Post Lesson Reflection:

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<td>Student Interest</td>
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<td>Student Motivation</td>
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<td>Teacher Knowledge</td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Organization</td>
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<td>Teacher Articulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Understanding</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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APPENDIX F: TEACHER SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE INSTRUMENT

**Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale**

**Teacher Beliefs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much can you do?</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Almost Entirely</th>
<th>Absolutely True</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
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<td>3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
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<td>9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<td>10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
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<td>11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
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<td>13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td>14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is falling?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
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<td>16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
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<td>17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?</td>
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<td>18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
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<td>19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?</td>
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<td>20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
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<td>21. How well can you respond to defiant students?</td>
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<td>22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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APPENDIX G: COMMON ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

1st Quarter Assessment
The Ancient World 458/459

Part I: ESSAY

Please DO NOT open this test booklet until you are told to do so by your teacher.

Teacher Code ______  Class Period ______  Student Initials: ______

Last Four Digits of Student I.D. Number: ______

458/459 Unit 1 Summative Essay SY12
Directions: Read the selection An Indian Father’s Plea. After you are finished reading, write an essay which includes the following:

- List the GRAPES of culture along with a corresponding example. Be sure to use a specific quote from the text!
  - Ie: Religion: “he was bonded to his mother and mother earth”

- Explain how this story is ethnocentric.
  - Discuss how letter relates to ethnocentrism.

Be sure to use information from the passage and your own ideas and conclusions to support your answer.

AN INDIAN FATHER’S PLEA

Condensed from Teacher Magazine, 2 (September 1990), 48-53.

Dear Teacher,

I would like to introduce you to my son, Wind-Wolf. He is probably what you would consider a typical Indian kid. He was born and raised on the reservation. He has black hair, dark brown eyes, and an olive complexion. And, like so many Indian children his age, he is shy and quiet in the classroom. He is five years old, in kindergarten, and I can’t understand why you have already labeled him a “slow learner.”

He has already been through quite an education compared with his peers in Western society. He was bonded to his mother and to the Mother Earth in a traditional native childbirth ceremony. And he has been continuously cared for by his mother, father, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended tribal family since this ceremony.

The traditional Indian baby basket became his “turtle’s shell” and served as the first seat for his classroom. It is the same kind of basket our people have used for thousands of years. It is specially designed to provide the child with the kind of knowledge and experience he will need to survive in his culture and environment.

Wind-Wolf was strapped snugly with a deliberate restriction on his arms and legs. Although Western society may argue this hinders motor skill development and abstract reasoning, we believe it forces the child to first develop his intuitive faculties, rational intellect, symbolic thinking, and five senses. Wind-Wolf was with his mother constantly, closely bonded physically, as she carried him on her back or held him while breast-feeding. She carried him everywhere she went, and every night he slept with both parents. Because of this, Wind-Wolf’s educational setting was not only a “secure” environment, but it was also very colorful, complicated, sensitive, and diverse.

As he grew older, Wind-Wolf began to crawl out of the baby basket, develop his motor skills, and explore the world around him. When frightened or sleepy, he could always return to the basket, as a turtle withdraws into its shell. Such an inward journey allows one to reflect in privacy on what he has learned and to carry the new knowledge deeply into the unconscious and the soul. Shapes, sizes, colors, texture, sound, smell, feeling, taste, and the learning process are therefore functionally integrated—the physical and spiritual, matter and energy, and conscious and unconscious, individual and social.

It takes a long time to absorb and reflect on these kinds of experiences, so maybe that is why you think my Indian child is a slow learner. His aunts and grandmothers taught him to count and know his numbers while they sorted materials for making abstract designs in native baskets. And he was taught to learn mathematics by counting the sticks we use in our traditional native hand game. So he may be slow in grasping the methods and tools you use in your classroom, ones quite familiar to his white peers, but I hope you will be patient with him. It takes time to adjust to a new cultural system and learn new things.
He is not culturally "disadvantaged," but he is culturally "different." If you ask him how many moons there are in a year, he will probably tell you 13—not because he doesn't know how to count properly, but because he has been taught there 13 planets in our solar system and 13 tail feathers on a perfectly balanced eagle, the most powerful kind of bird to use in ceremony and healing.

But he also knows that some eagles may have only 12 tail feathers, or seven, that they do not all have the same number. He knows that the flicker has exactly 10 tail feathers; that they are red and black, representing the directions of east and west, life and death; and that this bird is considered a "fire" bird, a power used in native doctoring and healing. He can probably count more than 40 kinds of birds, and tell you and his peers what kind of bird each is, where it lives, the seasons in which it appears, and how it is used in a sacred ceremony.

He may have trouble writing his name on a piece of paper, but he knows how to say it and many other things in several different Indian languages. He is not fluent yet because he is only five and required by law to attend your educational system and learn your language, your values, your ways of thinking, and your methods of teaching and learning.

So you see, all of these influences together make him somewhat shy and quiet—and perhaps "slow" according to your standards. But if Wind-Wolf was not prepared for your world, neither were you appreciative of his. On the first day of class, you wanted to call him Wind, insisting that Wolf somehow must be his middle name. The students in class laughed at him.

As you try to teach him your new methods, helping him learn new tools for self-discovery and adapt to his new learning environment, he may be looking out the window as if daydreaming. Why? Because he has been taught to watch and study the changes in nature. It is hard for him to make the appropriate psychic switch from the right to the left hemisphere of the brain when he sees the leaves turning bright colors, the geese heading south, and the squirrels scurrying around for nuts to get ready for a harsh winter. In his heart, in his young mind, and almost by instinct, he knows that this is the time of year he is supposed to be with his people gathering and preparing fish, deer meat, and native plants and herbs, and learning his assigned tasks in this role. He is caught between two worlds, torn by two distinct cultural systems.

Yesterday, for the third time in two weeks, he came home crying and said he wanted his hair cut. He said he doesn't have any friends at school because they make fun of his long hair. I tried to explain that in our culture, long hair is a sign of masculinity and balance and is a source of power. But he remained adamant.

To make matters worse, he recently encountered his first harsh case of racism. Wind-Wolf had managed to adopt at least one good school friend and asked his new pal if he wanted to come home to play with him until supper. That was OK with Wind-Wolf's mother, who was walking with them. But the other boy's mother lashed out, "It is OK if you have to play with him at school, but we don't allow those kind of people in our house!!" When my wife asked why not, she answered, "Because you are Indians, and we are white, and I don't want my kids growing up with your kind of people."

So now my young Indian child does not want to go to school anymore (even though we cut his hair). He feels he does not belong. He is the only Indian child in your class, and he is well aware of it. Instead of being proud of his race, heritage, and culture, he feels ashamed.

When he watches television, he asks why the white people hate us and always kill us in movies and take everything from us. He asks why the other kids in school are not taught about the power, beauty, and essence of nature or provided with an opportunity to experience the world around them firsthand. He says he hates living in the city and that he misses his Indian cousins and friends. He asks why one young white girl at school who is his friend always tells him, "I like you, Wind-Wolf, because you are a good Indian."

Now he refuses to sing his native songs, play with his Indian artifacts, learn his language, or participate in his sacred ceremonies. When I ask him to help me with a sacred ritual, he says no because "that's weird" and he doesn't want his friends at school to think he doesn't believe in God.
So, dear teacher, I want to introduce you to my son, Wind-Wolf, who is not really a "typical" little Indian kid after all. He stems from a long line of hereditary chiefs, medicine men and women, and ceremonial leaders whose accomplishments and unique forms of knowledge are still being studied and recorded in contemporary books. He has seven different tribal systems flowing through his blood; he is even part white.

I want my child to succeed in school and in life. I don't want him to be a dropout or juvenile delinquent or to end up on drugs and alcohol because he is made to feel inferior or because of discrimination. I want him to be proud of his rich heritage and culture, and I would like him to develop the necessary capabilities to adapt to, and succeed in, both cultures. But I need your help.

What you say and do in the classroom, what you teach and how you teach it, and what you don't say and don't teach will have significant effect on the potential success or failure of my child. Please remember that this is the primary year of his education and development.

All I ask is that you work with me, not against me, to help educate my child in the best way. If you don't have the knowledge, preparation, experience, or training to effectively deal with culturally different children, I am willing to help you with the few resources I have available or direct you to such resources.

Millions of dollars have been appropriated by Congress and are being spent each year for "Indian Education." All you have to do is take advantage of it and encourage your school to make an effort to use it in the name of "equal education." My Indian child has a constitutional right to learn, retain, and maintain his heritage and culture. By the same token, I strongly believe that non-Indian children also have a constitutional right to learn about our Native American heritage and culture, because Indians play a significant part in the history of Western society. Until this reality is equally understood and applied in education as a whole, there will be a lot more school children in grades K-2 identified as "slow learners."

My son, Wind-Wolf, is not an empty glass coming into your class to be filled. He is a full basket coming into a different environment and society with something special to share. Please let him share his knowledge, heritage, and culture with you and his peers.

By Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear)

Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear) is Associate Professor of Education specializing in Indian Education, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington.

[from Academic Search Premier, Ebsco Host, 2 June 2007]
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<thead>
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<th>Standard</th>
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<td>Understand the elements of culture and the role they play in the development of civilization.</td>
<td>- Student is able to demonstrate their knowledge of cultural elements through the identification and analysis of examples that exist implicitly in the document.</td>
<td>- Student applies their knowledge of cultural elements by identifying and describing examples of culture that exist in the document.</td>
<td>- Student applies some knowledge of cultural elements by identifying and describing examples of culture that exist in the document.</td>
<td>- Student applies little or no knowledge.</td>
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| Demonstrates historical literacy.            | Students will identify main ideas, analyze POV, and determine historical significance of written sources.  
   * Importance of document, precedence, original interpretation | Students will identify main ideas and point-of-view from written sources.  
   * Fact vs. conjecture, evidence v. assertion, bias, context. | Students will partially identify main ideas and point-of-view from written sources.  
   * Fact vs. conjecture, evidence v. assertion, bias, context. | Students need more help identifying main ideas and point-of-view from written source. |
APPENDIX H: INDIA CASTE SIMULATION

1.) **Brahmins**
   - You are the priests, spending most of your time in religious thought.

2.) **Kshatriyas**
   - You are the elite warrior class who rules over society.

3.) **Vaishyas (M)**
   - You are a merchant, who engages in long distance trade.

3.) **Vaishyas (A)**
   - You are an artisan, a creator of wonderful objects.

4.) **Shudras**
   - You are a laborer, who does hard work for society.

5.) **Pariahs**
   - You are the scum of society that performs religiously impure tasks.

Directions for Instructors:

1.) Future Employer

   Make sure to only “interview” the Vaishyas and Shudras, ignore the Pariahs. When talking to Kshatriyas and Brahmins make sure to treat them with a lot of respect and admiration. The Vaishyas are the more desirable hire and the Shudras would be the less desirable hire and make sure they know that. If a Pariah tries to interview just treat them like they don’t exist.

2.) Vendors

   When encountering Pariahs, treat them like they are thieves or like they don’t have enough money to buy anything. Offer them the day old food and not the fresh food. The Brahmins get treated with the most respect and you may offer them something for free or the most valuable food. The Kshatriyas are to be treated with almost the same respect but don’t offer anything for free just the most valuable food. The Vaishyas are to be treated as equals because you are probably from this particular class as well.
Activity

Rules

- Each person begins the game with 9 pieces of “money”.
- Each person will be assigned a number that corresponds with his/her role.
- Players may lose money for a number of inappropriate actions as well as buying necessities.

Examples:

  • Speaking to a member of a different caste, higher or lower.
  • Failing to show proper respect for individuals in higher classes.
  • Failing to complete the tasks assigned to you.

You will be split into groups and each group will rotate to stations where you will have the opportunity to interact with each other as well as future employers and vendors. You may use your “money” in whatever fashion you want. Make sure to read your personal description and follow it!