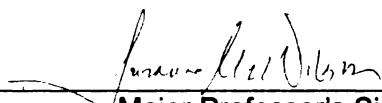This is to certify that the
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FREEDOM WITHIN LIMITS: PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND
FIELD INSTRUCTOR AUTONOMY

By

Susan Vander Veen Brondyk

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

FREEDOM WITHIN LIMITS: PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND FIELD INSTRUCTOR AUTONOMY

By:

Susan Vander Veen Brondyk

Field instruction remains a mainstay in most teacher education programs, but there is little empirical evidence as to its effectiveness—whether it contributes to better teachers or influences student achievement. Research says even less about how field instructors learn to do their work. The aim of this study is to describe and explain field instruction in four, university-based teacher preparation programs. This is a multi-site case field study with a nested design: field instructors were studied within each program. At the programmatic level, program leaders were interviewed, field instructor meetings observed, and program documents analyzed. Within each program, a minimum of two field instructors were interviewed and observed leading student teaching seminars.

This study describes the practices of field instructors--what they do and how they do them—and then examines the variability that exists among field instructors. The field instructors employ similar practices, but enact them in very different ways. Using an interpretive analytic approach, the theory of loose coupling offers one possible explanation for this variability. Weick's (1976) seminal work on loosely couple systems provides a lens for thinking about field instructor autonomy. In the language of Shulman (1983), loose coupling involves both obligating structures and autonomy. This provides a way to think about the relationship between program structures and field instructor autonomy. The loosely coupled nature of this relationship explains why the system functions so well, but it also highlights problems within the system. It points, for

example, to an inherent tension between coherence and adaptation. Field instructors are expected to perpetuate and adhere to program goals and expectations, while also remaining flexible due to the situatedness of field experiences. Field instructors frequently make judgment calls in the course of their work as they negotiate this tension. In some cases, these decisions deviate from program expectations.

The implications of this study include a consideration of future research on field instruction.

This dissertation is dedicated to all field instructors who work tirelessly to create experiences in which students teachers can learn about the complex work of teaching.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thought that writing the acknowledgements would be the easy part of this dissertation, but I find myself at a loss for words (no small feat). The problem rests in the fact that words cannot adequately describe my gratitude. The following is my modest attempt.

First, and most importantly, I want to thank the program leaders and field instructors from the four institutions in this study who willingly opened their practice to me. Not only did they give of their precious time, but their honesty and candor provided a window into this complex practice.

Writing a dissertation is an intellectual endeavor and no one helped me more with my scholarly pursuits than Suzanne Wilson. As my mentor and guide for the past six years, Suzanne challenged my thinking (especially my normative views) and helped me hone my writing skills. Her wisdom, counsel and friendship have been the best part of my graduate experience. I can only hope that I will approach my future work with the same integrity and grace that I have observed in her over the years.

They say that surrounding yourself with smart people makes you smarter. This is certainly true in my case. I am smarter for having surrounded myself with committee members who thoughtfully read my work, asked hard questions and challenged my thinking. From my first day on campus, Cheryl Rosaen has been an important part of my education. As a fellow Montessorian, parent, and commuter, she often provided sage advice. As my advisor, she helped me navigate the tricky road of graduate studies. Tom Bird brings his own, unique perspective to everything he does. I value his ability to think outside the box, while being firmly grounded in the realities of the work. His words of

wisdom never fail to push my thinking. And finally, Randi Stanulis, in addition to sharing freely her knowledge of and experience with mentoring, has given me the opportunity to ground my ideals in practice. As part of the Launch Into Teaching induction team, I have learned a great deal about mentoring in real-world, messy classrooms. Our wonderful team – Randi, Suzanne Robinson, Jan Prybys, Judy O'Brien, Sharon Schwille, Erin Wibbens and Sarah Little – exemplifies collegiality at its best.

I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to Sharon Schwille. I arrived at Michigan State seven years ago with one understanding of field instruction. Sharon, in her unassuming, persistent way challenged my assumptions, modeled good practice, and forever altered my vision of good mentoring. I have been heard to say that I want to be like Sharon when I grow up.

Two other folks bear mentioning as they have supported me in this journey. I credit (or blame, depending on the day) Dr. Andrea Smith for getting me into graduate study in the first place. Her motto "Just put your head down and go!" got me through many a day. My heartfelt thanks also go out to Dr. K.C. O'Shaughnessy for his sage advice about wading through the Ph.D. process.

From this experience emerged one of the dear souls in my life. Jennifer Rappin, my original cohort in crime, profoundly influenced my journey. We began as field instructors together (which is only fitting) and bonded through our work with Suzanne Wilson. Jen taught me what it means to be critical—to analyze and question. She has been my toughest critic, my most enthusiastic cheerleader, and through it all, has become one of my dearest friends.

To my good friends in life, I am eternally grateful for your patience. For seven years, spontaneity has eluded me and time has been limited (to say the least). Your love and friendship have helped me endure this worthwhile and often challenging experience.

Finally, I thank my family. Parents provide a foundation for all that we are. I grew up with love, with parents who believed I could do anything. My mother has always been my biggest fan—it's that kind of love that makes all things possible. I have also been blessed with in-laws who love and support me unconditionally. On a practical note, thank you all for being patient with me, watching the kids, and feeding us on numerous occasions.

What can I say to Kyle, Kate and Grace? When I started this journey you were eight and nine years old—you've grown into wonderful young adults along the way. You've tolerated numerous trips to campus and forgiven an absentee mom (on many occasions), but I also hope that you've learned that dreams take hard work and sacrifice. Know that as you chase your dreams, I will be there to support you (Kyle, I will even help you format your dissertation someday).

And finally, my husband, Dan. I left you for last because you are my rock and foundation. In our life together you have always believed in me—encouraging me to reach for my goals and supporting my efforts to impact children. You have weathered my distance and distraction with humor and patience. I can't imagine traveling this life with anyone but you, and just think...now we can talk about something besides my dissertation when we catch a few moments alone.

Thanks be to my Lord, through whom all things are possible.

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Chapter One

Background

What do prospective teachers find most valuable in their teacher preparation programs?

"the four semesters of student teaching"

"the fact that we were introduced to the classroom in our first semester of elementary education"

"you spent half the week in the class and the other half in the elementary school"

"almost every education class required work in the classroom"

"The final course in my reading degree was a six-credit, intensive practicum that involved both class work and working with a student. I think this was the most powerful aspect of my program for someone like myself who had never been in the classroom."

"I have learned more than I could have in any class and out of any textbook."
(Levine, 2006, pp. 41, 42)

Educational researchers (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Dewey, 1904; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995) substantiate the value of experience, describing the situational nature of learning to teach. "Since much of what teachers need to know can only be learned in situ, an important part of learning to teach involves learning to learn in context" (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995, p.78). According to Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999), "Teachers cannot learn to teach without engaging in the activities of teaching" (p. 25).

But not all field experiences are equal. Not everyone has a positive experience, learns the same thing, or is adequately prepared. Merely being immersed in a classroom does not ensure that learning occurs. Levine (2006) nominates several features that influence the quality of field experiences: length of duration, faculty involvement,

appropriate placements, and closer supervision, based on survey responses of principals, program alumni, faculty, and deans from 28 teacher education programs. The design features nominated above are primarily structural—programs should offer more clinical experiences, student teacher should be longer than one term, teaching faculty should be more involved in planning and facilitating field experiences, placements should be grade-level and subject matter specific and students should have more contact with their university supervisor. They say nothing, however, about the nature of the work—how the increased time should be spent, how faculty should be involved in field experiences, or what students should talk about and work on with their university supervisors. Implementing these features is certainly a worthwhile goal, but will not get at the heart of what constitutes a quality field experience.

I believe that quality teacher education programs design field experiences carefully, so that prospective teachers can both experience the real world of teaching and reflect on their experiences. The logic here is that only through experience and critical reflection of experience that new teachers acquire professional practice-based knowledge. The development of professional knowledge involves learning how to "read situations, the moves, the decisions – each of [which] is contextualized and shaded with subtleties of time, tone, person, topic" (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 12). Field support of this type involves opportunities to work on authentic teaching tasks with experienced educators who explain the thinking behind their decisions and help novices use the particulars of the classroom to generalize about teaching and learning. These experiences expose new teachers to analytic habits and allow them to practice learning from their practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001b).

These types of field experiences do not just happen. They must be intentionally planned and facilitated by field mentors who themselves embrace an analytic stance toward learning and teaching and who have been prepared to recognize and capitalize upon such learning opportunities in the field. These field mentors are the focus of this research. The purpose of this study is to describe and explain how four teacher education programs conceptualize and structure field instruction in their teacher preparation programs. In particular, it examines how programs design field instruction, how field instructors in four programs enact their roles, and the alignment (or lack thereof) between those.

What is a Field Instructor?

Before continuing, let's consider the term "field instructor," as it will be used throughout this dissertation. In the broadest sense, field instructors are considered mentors, a term which emphasizes the "wise counsel" character of the support, as Mentor was Odysseus's trusted counselor, in whose guise Athena became Telemachus' teacher. More specifically they are university-based pre-service mentors—employees of the program, who oversee field experiences (in this case, student teaching). Several terms are used in the literature to characterize these mentors and each indicates different underlying assumptions and expectations. The most common term is "supervisor" or "university supervisor" (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Enz, Freeman & Wallin, 1996; McIntyre, Byrd & Foxx, 1996; Slick, 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Zimpher et al., 1980), which is derived from the Medieval Latin word *supervidue* "meaning to 'look over and oversee'" (Slick, 1998b, p. 821). The language of "supervision" suggests a role of monitoring and overseeing, "to have direction over the performance of others" (www.dictionary.com).

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Another frequent use of the term denotes the managerial nature of the work and has led to such referents as: watchdog, gatekeeper, negotiator, troubleshooter, and sounding board. Slick (1998b) describes how as "a manager-type among the laborers, [the supervisor] is put in a position to assume the role of evaluator, judge, and gatekeeper" (p. 822). Some have proposed alternative terms that characterize the supportive nature of the role, like "advisor" or "helper" (Stone, 1987, p. 71). Others have used the language of coaching, evoking images of athletic coaches or, more recently, life coaches, individuals who often work one-on-one and who are in charge of training or teaching. Terms like "field instructor" (Denyer, 1997) and "university-based teacher educator" (Millwater & Yarrow, 1997) imply responsibilities and actions that are more educative in nature. Denyer (1997) views the word "instructor" as key since it encompasses the heart of the role – "a person who will engage in instruction in the field, a person who will teach...teacher candidates about teaching, a person who will learn from teaching" (p. 39).

The term "field instructor" will be used throughout this dissertation in reference to all university-based mentors. Of the four programs in this study, only one actually uses this term. The others use either "field supervisor" or "university coordinator" (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Field Instructor Terms

Program	Term
Thomas College	Field Supervisor
Cross College	Field Supervisor
Southern Midwest University	University Coordinator
Midwestern University	Field Instructors

Mentoring and Learning to Teach

This study rests on several assumptions about learning to teach. The first has to

do with experiential learning and the belief that experience alone is not a sufficient

teacher. Rather, field experiences are one part of a larger program that has been designed

to provide various types of learning opportunities, none of which is intended to stand

alone. Courses teach students about educational theories, subject matter knowledge, and

pedagogy, while field experiences provide opportunities for students to meld theory and

practice in authentic ways under the guidance of knowledgeable others. Bransford,

Brown, and Cocking (1999), who have extensively researched how people learn,

challenge the notion that novices can learn to teach merely by engaging in the act of

teaching, stating that "people often need help in order to use relevant knowledge that they

have acquired, and they usually need feedback, and reflection so that they can try out and

adapt their previously acquired skills and knowledge in new environments" (p. 203).

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) also found that "classroom experience alone,

whether past or present, cannot justify what teachers do, nor teach teachers to think about

their work" (p. 61). They contend that learning to teach involves more than acquiring

content knowledge and a repertoire of skills, it requires developing reflective habits in which teachers analyze their practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Schon, 1983).

The second assumption relates directly to this view of learning and has to do with type of support student teachers receive. Learning to teach is difficult, especially if we expect people to teach in new ways, and requires specific kinds of learning opportunities. Based on Dewey's (1938) notion of an educative experience, Feiman-Nemser (2001b) first conceptualized "educative mentoring." If an educative experience is a learning experience that promotes future learning, then educative mentoring means attending to student teachers' immediate needs without losing sight of their long-term goals. Feiman-Nemser (2001b) describes how mentors do this by using knowledge and expertise to assess which direction students are headed; inquiry is used to help guide them in that direction. Mentors use probing questions and examples of practice to help students learn from their practice. All of the work rests on a mutually understood "vision of good teaching" that focuses on pupil learning (p. 18).

Consider an imaginary example. A student teacher is introducing a 4th grade unit on Michigan history. To peak the students' interest, she has set up centers. On separate tables, she has placed the following items: a map showing where the various Native American tribes lived, a beaver pelt, samples of buffalo meat, and old black and white photographs of a logging port on Lake Michigan. Once the students have visited each center, she directs students back to their desks. She begins the discussion by asking, "In the next few weeks we are going to be learning about the history of our state. From what

you saw today at the centers, what do you think life was like in Michigan in 1620?" The discussion continues for about 15 minutes.

The following examples represent two field instructors debriefing this same lesson. They illustrate the difference between a more traditional approach to mentoring (example #1) and educative mentoring (example #2).

Example #1 – Traditional Mentoring

> Field Instructor 1 (FI1): So, how do you think it went?
>
> Student Teacher (ST): Pretty well. I think that they really enjoyed going around to all of the centers. They seemed enthused about learning more about Michigan history.
>
> FI1: I agree. They especially loved trying the buffalo meat. Where did you find it?
>
> ST: My brother knows someone who raises buffalo.
>
> FI1: So, this was the introduction of the unit. What else do you have planned?
>
> ST: Well, the textbook has a story about Jean Nicolet and the French fur traders who claimed the land, which I thought that we would read next week. My cooperating teacher gave me her packet of materials to look through.
>
> FI1: Good. I taught Michigan history for years and have lots of ideas I can share with you too. One year we did a wax museum where each of the students learned about someone influential in Michigan history (like Father Marquette or Marie Therese Cadillac). They researched their person and made costumes. Parents were invited to visit the 'museum.'

Students dressed up like their character and recited a five minute speech that they had memorized. Everyone loved it. It wasn't just all fun, though. During the weeks of preparation, we charted when each historical person lived on a timeline, where they lived on a map, and how they contributed to the development of the state. It is so important to put that kind of information into context.

Example #2 – Educative Mentoring

Field Instructor 2 (FI2): So, how do you think it went?

Student Teacher (ST): Pretty well. I think that they really enjoyed going around to all of the centers. They seemed enthused about learning more about Michigan history.

FI2: I agree. Tell me what you wanted students to learn from that lesson.

ST: Well...I really wanted to grab their interest and get them thinking about their state.

FI2: Did you?

ST: Yea.

FI2: How do you know? What evidence can you point to?

ST: I overheard their conversations as I was walking around. They were asking good questions.

FI2: Did you write any of them down? I recall that one of the goals that you set for yourself was to collect evidence that would inform your planning and teaching? It seems like this would be a great opportunity to do that.

Look at your notes a minute. [ST gets her notebook.] What can you

determine about what they already know and what they still need to learn?

ST: It was clear that the students knew that Native American tribes lived in

Michigan before the fur traders arrived, but I think they might have some

misconceptions that will need to be cleared up. They also seemed

surprised about the size and scope of the logging cities along the Great

Lakes.

FI2: OK. So you have some information about what they still need to learn, but

we need to make sure that we tie these into the standards. Tell me the *big*

ideas you have identified for this unit. Then let's talk about how you can

use those, along with the state standards and the information that you

gathered today to plan the entire unit.

Notice in the second example, the features of educative mentoring. The field

instructor placed student learning at the forefront of the conversation, by asking: What

did you want them to learn from the lesson? She asked questions like this, throughout the

conference, as a way to get the student teacher talking about the thought processes behind

her planning and teaching. She then asked the student teacher to support her claims with

evidence, using her observation notes as a record. The field instructor did not just ask

questions, but used her knowledge of good social studies practices (big ideas) to guide

the student teacher. She also related the student teacher's goals to this particular lesson,

melding the immediate lesson with her long range goals.

Educative mentoring, like the claims about the contributions of field experiences, are largely normative. That is, scholars and teacher educators hold these visions as ideals, or self evident truths. I now turn to the existing empirical evidence.

Considering the Empirical Evidence

We know very little about the quality and character of field experiences and how institutions try to structure them. We know even less about the practices of field instructors and how they learn that role.

Earlier Works

An earlier body of research on field instruction dates back to the 1970s, with the bulk of the literature being published in the early 1990s. It provides some empirical evidence about field instruction, but most are small-scale cases that lack rigor, having been described as "extremely thin" (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005, p. 287). While a few studies (Slick, 1997, 1998b; Zahorik, 1988) describe *who* field instructs (retirees, graduate students), most of the cases (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Enz, Freeman & Wallin, 1996; Hawkey, 1997; Slick, 1997, 1998; Zahorik, 1988) address the various roles assumed by field instructors. These include offering emotional support (Enz et al., 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986; Little, 1990; Wang & O'Dell, 2002), technical support (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987, Freibus, 1977; Hoover, O'Shea, & Carroll, 1988), and evaluating (Slick, 1997, 1998b; Stone, 1987; Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980). While much of the pre-service mentoring literature attempts to label what field instructors do (Slick 1997, 1998b), it often fails to address the complexity of the role. Field instructors are called upon to assume multiple, and often conflicting, roles, like assessor and assistor (Boydell, 1986; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Slick, 1997). This research does not

go much beyond a listing of various roles. For example, Boydell (1986), Feiman-Nemser (1996), and Slick (1997) illustrate the problems that arise when field instructors act as both assessor and assistor, calling into question the field instructor's ability to assist the development of the student teacher, while also assuming responsibility for evaluating his/her progress. The former requires emotional support and trust, while the latter involves judgment. Navigating a role that involves both can be complicated, yet it becomes increasingly an issue in an age that calls for teacher quality and accountability. There is no empirical research, however, on the qualities of good assistance, nor does the research demonstrate that student teachers who have mentors who enact these various roles develop into high-quality teachers or produce higher student achievement.

A second theme in the pre-service mentoring literature describes challenges that complicate the work of field instructors. A large portion of the pre-service mentoring literature examines the beliefs and attitudes of student teachers, as this is relevant to teacher educators who seek to challenge or build on novices' assumptions and beliefs about how students learn and teachers teach (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Clift & Brady, 2005; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1989; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). A second challenge describes the inherent tension between university teacher education programs and K-12 schools (Dewey, 1904; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985; Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999). And, a final challenge that relates directly to this study describes the lack of coherence across teacher preparation programs (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Clift and Brady (2005) describe studies that demonstrate the negative ramifications and potential benefits of having congruence between the program and the field, especially in establishing a shared understanding

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between supervisor, student teacher, and cooperating teacher. Allexsaht-Snider, Deegan, and White (1995), for example, examined a university-school partnership in an early childhood program. They found that when university faculty and field supervisors collaborate, they are able to reduce the discontinuity between coursework and field experiences for pre-service teachers. The participants in this study viewed disconnect as an opportunity for learning and in the process, both the university and the K-12 schools influenced one another in positive ways. For example, student teachers found discontinuity between literacy instruction at the university and literacy in the classroom. The university educators, classroom teachers and the student teachers acknowledged this dissonance during their regularly scheduled collaboration sessions and made attempts to align university class work and school practices. From these efforts, everyone involved came to new understandings of the tensions and issues, as well as literacy instruction. This type of collaborative effort is rare and in many instances, the disconnect between field experiences, courses, and early field experiences is due, in part, to limited efforts on the part of some teacher preparation programs.

The concept of educative mentoring emerges in the mid 1980s, as researchers propose a shift from thinking of prospective teachers as survivors to learners (Feiman-Nemser, 2000; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995). A few studies explore the complexities and potential of educative mentoring as they apply specifically to university-based field instructors. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1987) conclude from their observations of student teaching conferences that field instructors are in a unique position to guide conversations in certain directions and to connect field experiences with coursework:

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As an outsider to the setting, the university supervisor can help the student teacher relate the specifics of the classroom to larger frames of reference such as disciplinary knowledge, societal mandates, research on teaching, a broader view of learning to teach. (p. 272)

Although there is a growing consensus that mentoring of this type has the potential to improve teaching and student learning (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Fletcher, Strong, & Villar, 2004), this optimism must be met with caution. First of all, there remains little empirical evidence to support these normative views. Second, according to a five-year, Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study of over 700 teachers and teacher candidates conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (NCRTL), "the presence of mentors does not in and of itself guarantee that teachers will become more skilled at teaching or more thoughtful about their work than they would be without mentors" (NCRTL, 1992, p. 2). Not all mentors share the same understanding of teaching and learning and therefore not all mentors enact the role in the same way. Reformers claim that educative mentoring has the potential to influence teacher learning, but they also agree that mentors will not likely adopt this ideology and practice without intentional, on-going preparation and support. In sum, the literature advocating for this kind of mentoring is best understood as based on "best practices," not findings based on rigorously conducted education research. There is little empirical information on the affects of such mentoring on new teacher learning or new teacher quality.

The research on the preparation of field instructors is even more limited. That which exists lacks methodological rigor, in that it tends to be small-scale, single-case qualitative studies that are not based on relevant theoretical frameworks, lack full methodological descriptions, and rarely focus on student and teacher learning. These studies typically represent "voices" or "case studies of individuals or the experiences of

small numbers of teachers or students" (Levine, 2006, p. 53). In a case study of a student

teaching triad (student teacher, cooperating teacher and field instructor), for example,

Slick (1997) concluded that field instructors need special types of support, like the time

and opportunity to understand the goals and expectations of the program and the practices

of field instruction. Given the fact that this study included only one case, the most we

can take from it at this point is a desire for additional research that expands on the content

and structure of learning opportunities that might support field instructors. In the mid

1990s, a number of unpublished studies were presented at AERA (Giebelhaus, 1994;

Glanz, 1996; Keller & Grossman, 1994; Lamont & Arcand, 1995; Page, Page, Warkentin

& Dickinson, 1994) that describe the role, function, and preparation of field instructors.

Theoretical descriptions of training programs are also available (Appelt-Slick, 1995;

Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 1995; Portner, 2001), but there remains a glaring

lack of research that describes what new field instructors actually learn as a result of

training or that link the preparation of mentors with student learning.

Research on Induction

While mentoring and field instruction in teacher education programs is different

from mentoring in induction programs, given the blurred line between when teacher

preparation ends and induction begins, there is much we might learn from research on

mentoring in induction programs. The phrase "mentors are not born, but made" led

Achinstein and Athanases (2006) to consider what mentors need to know and be able to

do (p. 10). Drawing on the work of the Leadership Network for Teacher Induction

(LNTI)—a network of induction program directors, mentors, university-based

researchers, and teacher educators—the authors suggest that "much of the mentoring

literature still tends to provide a technical/manual approach that reduces the mentor to a technician and mentoring to strategies and tips, rather than situating mentoring in complex contexts where issues collide and compete" (p. 8). They contrast this with new visions of teacher learning that "cast educators as reflective practitioners" (p. 8). The technical model of training that is indicative of much of the mentoring literature fails to take into account the complexity and situated-ness of experiential learning. The authors propose that "making mentors need to be cast as a deliberate act that rests on a knowledge base for effective mentoring" (p. 10). In other words, there are things that mentors need to know and be able to do that must be intentionally taught. Learning to mentor involves understanding and applying theory and skills in local contexts, which supports a training model that is on-going and provides multiple opportunities and settings to learn.

Based on what kind of evidence, the Leadership Network for Teacher Induction researchers found that mentoring new teachers requires new domains of knowledge that include "formative assessment, pedagogical learner knowledge, antiracist mentoring, mentoring stances, adapting curriculum to local needs, subject matter expertise, curriculum of mentoring, political literacy, and leadership development" (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 178).

Little (1990) and Gold (1996) take a different approach, examining the relationship between the selection process and preparation. They discuss the fact that mentors are most often chosen because they are considered "expert" teachers (although the teacher-experts themselves are not often observed when these determinations are made). The challenge then becomes determining whether these qualified educators need

special training and if so, what they need to learn. In this sense, the selection process dictates the type of preparation that programs need to provide. After examining studies of state and district level programs in Connecticut, Toledo, and California, both Little and Gold agree that preparation is most successful when the roles and goals of mentoring are clearly defined and made explicit to prospective mentors. They support the idea that classroom teachers who become mentors need well-designed preparation in order to enact the role of teacher educator, especially since many of them may hold contradictory views of teaching and learning, although they provide no empirical evidence to support this claim. (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1994). Using data from the Teacher Trainee Program in Los Angeles and the Graduate Intern Program in Albuquerque, Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1994) claim empirically that "the contexts of mentoring shape the perspectives and practices of mentors" (p. 715). This means that mentors in intentionally designed programs, like Los Angeles, are more likely to assume the roles, strategies and skills valued by the program.

This small, but growing body of literature establishes a case for the preparation of induction mentors, although much more needs to be said about the specifics of the learning opportunities, as well as the effects of different kinds of induction mentoring on teacher effectiveness. Nonetheless, a logical argument can be made that, if preparation is required to develop effective induction mentors, the same should hold true for pre-service mentors, including field instructors. It is not know whether this assumption has influenced teacher preparations programs work with field instructors (who can be thought of as pre-service mentors). Historically, it has often assumed in teacher preparation programs that knowledge of teaching is sufficient preparation for field instruction,

although a few researchers have suggested otherwise (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1987; Slick, 1997).

Having explained the problem and theoretical framework, I now turn to an overview of the dissertation.

An Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters that describe both the process and product of the study, which began in the fall of 2006. *In c*hapter 2, I describe the methodology used in the study, including the research question, study design, data collection, analysis, and limitations of the study. *In c*hapter 3, I present the four teacher preparation programs in this study, including the field instructors who served as embedded cases from each institution. It concludes with some thoughts about the differences and similarities across the cases. In chapter 4, I describe the practices that field instructors use in their work with student teachers. I draw a distinction between *what* field instructors do and *how* they do it. Using vignettes based on the data, the second half of the chapter maps the various way that field instructors implement these practices.

Chapter 5 uses loosely coupled systems as a framework for thinking about the relationship between field instruction and the broader teacher preparation program. I begin by making the case that the four programs in this study function as loosely coupled systems and then move to a consideration of the benefits and constraints of this relationship between program structures and field instructor autonomy. Finally, in chapter 6, I consider the study's conclusions and implications, especially as they relate to teacher educators who design field experiences.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

This chapter is about how I designed the study and why. My original question

was: How do field instructors—hired by universities to oversee student teaching—learn

to mentor pre-service students during their student teaching field experience? This is not

the question that I ended with: How do teacher education programs conceptualize and

structure field instruction in their teacher preparation programs? Both of these questions

are rooted in my personal history, and so I will begin there.

In the words of Geertz (1973)—I am a "native." Since 1999, I have been

intimately involved in field instruction for two teacher preparation programs—a four year

program with the traditional 14 week student teaching placement and a fifth year, nine

month internship placement. I have thus worked with about 50 student teachers. The

culture of field instruction is familiar to me, as are the language and practices. As such, I

entered into this study with preconceived notions about field instruction. I believe that

field instruction is beneficial—that student teachers become better teachers, due to the

efforts of field instructors. I also brought to this study a particular vision of the work. My

normative view of mentoring—stemming from the likes of Feiman-Nemser (1996, 1998,

2001a, 2001b, 2003) and Schwille (2008)—was not the typical, "Here's the copier. Let

me know if you have any questions." Rather, I came with the view that field instruction is

a practice, with knowledge and skills that need to be learned. The research question

stemmed from my desire to know how field instructors learn to ask probing questions,

analyze student work, and make their thinking explicit. As a result, I set out to examine

the places and materials designed to inform field instructors about their work—field

instructor meetings, orientation sessions, and program documents. I knew from the outset that these assumptions would both obstruct and enable my research, issues I return to shortly.

Research Design

Field experiences are an essential—and common—feature of teacher education and the use of university-based field instructors is a familiar practice in most teacher preparation programs. I designed a multi-site case study—with embedded field instructor cases—to examine the learning opportunities provided by teacher education programs. I chose a case study approach to examine this familiar phenomenon, because it allowed me "to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 1994, p. 2). By recording the discourse and practices of field instructors, I hoped to "turn [them] from passing events, which exist only in the moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists…and can be re-consulted" (Geertz, 1973, p.19). Immersing myself in these programs, allowed me to step back and consider accounts of events—the complexities of the practice were more visible from a distance. Geertz explains this process: "Cultural analysis is guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (p. 20). The analytic processes common to case study research—considering theoretical propositions, writing case descriptions— permitted me to look at field instruction holistically, to consider and reconsider my suppositions.

"The case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence "(Yin, 1994, p. 8). Data collection involved interviewing program leaders and field instructors; pouring over program materials like handbooks and course syllabi; and,

100 hours were spent observing field instructor meetings and student teaching seminars. These multiple sources allowed me to corroborate facts. In particular, they permitted a comparison of program expectations and what actually happened in the field.

I opted to examine multiple teacher preparation programs, in part, because "the evidence from multiple cases is considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (p. 46). Selecting multiple cases increased the "possibility of direct replication...and expanded the generalizability" of my findings (p. 53). Using Yin's (1994) theoretical replication logic, I thought it important to compare contrasting cases, and so I chose two large and two small institutions as sites. Another reason for choosing multiple programs was that this allowed me to look for examples of program variation across the cases; to consider how program size and philosophy influence field instruction.

This study has an embedded design, because it has more than one unit of analysis (see Figure 2.1). The larger unit of analysis is the teacher preparation program and particularly, the learning opportunities provided for field instructors. Embedded within each of the four larger cases are subunits—individual field instructors. Wanting to examine field instructor learning, I needed to look at both the learning opportunities and what was actually learned. For this reason, I chose a minimum of two field instructors from each program to interview and observe leading a seminar. Early in the design process, I nominated two "places" where I might see evidence of learning: student teaching seminars and post-observation conferences. I chose to observe seminars for two reasons. First, I suspected that programs might offer more opportunities to learn about leading seminars (in both field instructor meetings and program documents) and seminars

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afforded me more opportunities to compare what programs intend to what actually happens in the field. Secondly, it was logistically more feasible to observe seminars, because they occurred at regularly set times; access and consent issues were also less complicated.

<div align="center">Research Sites and Participants</div>

Teacher Preparation Programs

Program variation was an important consideration in choosing the teacher education programs for this study. Four teacher education programs were selected from a larger pool: the Michigan Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE) Institutions. The members of this organization represent a variety of institutional types – large, medium (with doctoral students) and small; research and teaching based; public and private; religious and secular; four and five year teacher education programs. For practical reasons, the choices were geographically limited to those institutions on the western side of the state. Program leaders from qualified institutions were contacted by phone in spring of 2006. Midwestern University, Southern Midwest University, Cross College and Thomas College were chosen, based on these conversations, because they are actively engaged in the practice of field instruction and provide their field instructors

Figure 2.1 Embedded Cases

Thomas
College

Cross
College

Teacher Preparation Context: School of Education	Teacher Preparation Context: Education Department
Field Instructors: Tony Terri/Tracy	**Field Instructors:** Chris Carrie

Southern Midwest
University

Midwestern
University

Teacher Preparation Context: School/University Partnership Team	Teacher Preparation Context: Lansing Area Elementary Team
Field Instructors: Stan Simon	**Field Instructors:** Mimi Martha Marissa Maggie Melinda

with opportunities to learn about the practice. These four programs vary in significant ways (see Table 2.1). Two of the programs are located in small, private colleges, while the other two are part of large, research institutions. The programs range dramatically in size. Cross College, for example, places approximately 25 elementary student teachers per semester, while Southern Midwest places as many as 500.

Table 2.1 Program Information

	Type of Institution	Number of Students	Certified Students per Year*	Length of Program/Student Teaching
Thomas College	private Catholic college	2300	332	4 year program/ 14 week student teaching placement
Cross College	private Christian college	4200	310	4 year program/ 16 week student teaching placement
Southern Midwest University	public research University	25,000	1891	4 year program/ 16 week internship
Midwestern University	public research university	45,000	905	5 year program/ nine month internship

*Data taken from the MTTC Summary Results, 2006/2007. These numbers include elementary, secondary and special education students.

The programs also vary with regard to philosophy (see Table 2.2). The programs differ regarding the extent to which they have conceptualized and articulated the goals, concepts, and expectations that guide their work. Some programs, like Midwestern University and Cross College, have fairly well articulated goals and theories that guide the programs. They regularly revisit the concepts and standards that define their work. On the other hand, the program leader at Thomas College is relatively new. He is in the initial stages of defining and articulating the principles that will guide the program. Southern Midwest University is currently in a time of transition in which the leadership is trying the re-capture ideas and skills that were set in place 15 years ago, but have been

lost over time. These differences in design and philosophy are described in chapter 3.

2.2 Program Philosophies

	Program Philosophy
Thomas College	no stated philosophy
Cross College	to develop responsive and transformative educators
Southern Midwest University	developing reflective practitioners
Midwestern University	developing professional educators

Field Instructors

I identified field instructors from each institution. A minimum of two field instructors from each program were chosen, because studying the practice of more than one field instructor decreased the likelihood that the one case would be unusual or extreme (Yin, 1994, p. 53). These individuals were selected from a list of volunteers, who were identified in the following way: Program leaders from each program allowed time for me describe the study and solicit volunteers, who indicated their willingness to participate on a sign-up sheet that was passed around during the meetings. The sign-up sheet asked volunteers to describe their K-12 backgrounds field instructor experience. From these volunteers, two field instructors were chosen from each program. Attempts were made to choose field instructors with varying backgrounds—one with K-12 teaching experience, the other with little to none, for instance. This contrast provided a way to think about the various learning needs of field instructors and how program directors account for those needs.

Table 2.3 Field Instructor Information

		K-12 Experience	Field Instructor Experience
Thomas College	Tony	31 years elementary, middle and high school teacher; coach and counselor; assistant principal	2 years
	Tracy	35 years French secondary teacher	6 years
	Terri	2 years elementary	5 years
Cross College	Chris	5 years elementary	7 years
	Carrie	5 years elementary and middle school; assistant principal	9 years
Southern Midwest University	Stan	10 years elementary, middle school, and secondary	36 years
	Simon	35 years elementary	2 years
Midwestern University	Maggie	3 years elementary	1 year
	Mimi	34 years elementary	2 years
	Melinda	none	1 year
	Martha	34 years elementary	2 years
	Marissa	10 years elementary	6 years

Data Collection

Teacher Preparation Programs

To understand field instruction at the programmatic level, I gathered data in multiple ways: observing all formal activities provided by the program, interviewing the

program leaders who conceptualized and guided field instruction, and collecting documentation that articulated the program's intentions and expectations.

Observations. All four programs hold regularly-scheduled meetings for their field instructors, in which they meet as a group to discuss logistical matters and engage in topics planned by program leaders (see Table 2.4). These meetings are the primary means for field instructors to learn about the work. [1] I attended every meeting at each institution for at least one semester.[2] During the meetings, I took detailed field notes, collected documentation as it was available, and on rare occasions, participated in planned activities (although, I tried to remain removed so that I could observe). Three of the programs—Cross, Southern Midwest, and Midwestern—assign mentors (experienced field instructors) to new field instructors. These mentors act as guides, who offer suggestions, clarify program expectations, and provide resources. Interview questions provided insight into the work of these pairs.

Interviews. Program leaders from each institution were interviewed. A formal protocol included informational questions about their educational background, program details, and their expectations for field instructors. Questions and scenarios were designed to encourage them to share their assumptions and understanding of related ideas. For instance, the question—"What do you think every field instructor in your program should read and why?"—was intended to reveal their understanding of what

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[1] All of the programs also offer orientation sessions for new field instructors. These tend to be informal sessions with one or more of the program leaders. I was not able to observe any of these meetings, because the occurred before I began collecting data, I was not given access or there were no new hires.

[2] I chose to attend additional meetings at Southern Midwest, because the program leaders were talking about mentoring and Midwestern, because I was attending in another capacity (course instructor).

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Table 2.4 Field Instructor Meetings

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Frequency/ Duration	5 meetings/semester 2 hours each (10 hours total)	4 meetings/semester 2 – 3 hours each (12 hours total)	3 meetings/semester 4 hours each (12 hours total)	12 meetings/semester 90 minutes each (18 hours)
Number of Field Instructors	13	6	20	18
Topics	Logistics • Business Cards • Mileage Reimbursement Technology • on-line portfolios, LiveText • Integrating technology into courses and seminar • PowerPoint for the student teacher orientation New evaluation forms Message from the new department chairperson Observation forms Attracting and retaining students to Thomas	Logistics • Placement issues in districts Technology • Knightvision Plan for whole group seminars • Differentiation Instructors talk about course assignments Review of semester assignments Lesson planning	Logistics • Certification • Placement issues • Career and employment issues • Handbooks revisions Program Reports • Dean describes the upcoming NCATE program evaluation process • The State of SUPT report by the Partnership Director • Declining enrollment – increased secondary Presentations by Coordinators • Pre-internship panel • Orientation Session suggestions • Classroom Management presentation:	Logistics • Subbing clarification ASSIST website • Teachers and the Law • Mid-Semester Assessment conferences • Resumes • Planning CT workshop Discussions about interns • Field instructors talk about what is happening in field during the first week school. • Discussion of interns working on routines and lesson plans for routines • Communication between interns and

Table 2.4 Field Instructor Meetings continued

		Glaser's choice theory • Discussion about motivation Mentoring • Introduction to educative mentoring • Article discussions: Feiman-Nemser and Stanulis Binda Project review, panel discussion, video, discussion	• CTs • Portfolios • Field instructors share dilemmas 800-level course instructors describe their course and assignments TEAC observation rubric practice sessions with video clips Special Education and Inclusion Presentation		

field instructors need to know and be able to do (see Appendix A). These interviews were semi-structured, in that specific questions were designed for each individual based on prior phone conversations, field notes, and program documents. For example, the handbooks at Cross College describe the department's conceptual framework in great detail and I asked the director to explain the role the framework plays in the program—how it manifests itself in practice. Another example—the partnership director at Southern Midwest was asked to expand on her vision of a "mentoring culture"—a phrase which she used regularly during meetings. Each of the interviews was audio-recorded and later transcribed and coded. All interviews were conducted during the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters.

Program Materials. Documents pertaining to student teaching, field instruction, and the preparation of field instructors were collected from each program. Copies were collected during field instructor meeting when possible. Other materials were obtained from program personnel, field instructors, and the Internet. Documents included: job descriptions, handbooks, program standards, course syllabi, meeting agendas, and any articles or reference materials used by program leaders. Not all documents were available for every program (for example, Thomas doesn't have a handbook for supervisors).

Field Instructors

Field instructors were selected as cases from each teacher preparation program. Student teaching seminars served as the context for examining field instructor learning. One justification for this decision comes from the literature on the roles and responsibilities of field instructors, which lists "leading student teaching seminars" as one of the common duties required of field instructors (Enz, Freeman & Wallin, 1996; Slick,

1998; Tigchelaar & Korthagen, 2004). In addition, seminars are common requirements in all four programs and were easily accessible.

Seminar Observations. Field instructors in all four programs are expected to meet regularly with their student teachers as a group. These tend to be informal gatherings (food is usually involved). The purpose of each seminar varies depending on the field instructor, students' needs, and program requirements. Often these take on the feel of a support group, although some are more formal (with agendas and tasks). Each field instructor was observed leading at least one seminar. Of those field instructors who created formal agendas for their seminars, most were willing to share agendas for the entire semester. In some cases, field instructors plan and lead seminars with another field instructor. When access was granted, the planning sessions and informal conversations were observed; all were asked about planning in their interview. Detailed field notes were taken at each seminar and copies of all documents were collected, including agendas, articles and resources provided by the field instructor.

Interviews. Each field instructor was interviewed informally before the seminar observation and formally afterwards. Pre-observation conversations usually occurred by phone or email. Post-observation interviews were conducted shortly after the seminar when possible. The timing was planned as such so that field instructors would be better able to recall events. Interviewing the field instructors after the seminar observations also allowed me to construct questions specific to each person, in addition to the formal protocol that included common questions about their educational background and field instruction practice (see Appendix B). The interview with Tracy and Terri, for example, included a question about lesson planning and was based on an incident that occurred

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during their seminar observation. Interviews were audio taped and later transcribed and coded.

Data Storage

All data, including audiotapes, field notes, and documents were stored and locked in my office at home. The dissertation director and I were the only researchers who had access to the data throughout the dissertation process. Upon completion of the study, the data will be saved for three years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis

Stage One: Data Analysis during/after Collecting Data

Data were collected simultaneously from all four teacher preparation programs, beginning in August 2006. The final interview occurred May 8, 2007. Initially, the cases were analyzed separately. Field notes and interview audiotapes were transcribed and coded using categories derived from the research questions. Categories were revised and adapted based on reading of the preliminary transcripts; all field notes and transcripts were coded according to the following broad categories: field instructor learning, source of knowledge, mentoring philosophies, use of professional judgment, vision of good teaching, professionalization of the role, connections between field experience and course work, the use of stories to explain or exemplify, and student teaching seminars. Coding helped to organize the data, but did not prove to be particularly fruitful in terms of helping me understand field instructor learning. It became apparent that I needed to broaden the scope of my thinking and try to understand field instruction at each institution and how it relates systemically to the larger teacher preparation programs.

After reading about different analytic approaches commonly used in qualitative

research, I began to take a more interpretivist approach. A shift occurred in my thinking along several veins. This approach required recognition that my personal experiences with field instruction influenced my perception of the data. My eight years of experience as a field instructor created certain understandings, convictions, and conceptual orientations and these influenced how I had collected and interpreted the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also realized from my readings that, in many instances, data collection was a collaborative interpretation of meaning between me, as the researcher, and the subjects being interviewed. I tried to remain neutral and distant, but often the interviews became more of a conversation than interview. My experiences and knowledge resulted in different kinds of conversations. I attempted, therefore, to hear the social actors' descriptions and understandings of field instruction, while also acknowledging my biases. Knowledge is a social and historical product. This is certainly true of field instruction. Those with experience in a program have established understandings and habits that define their practice. New field instructors bring ideas and questions to the process as they seek to make sense of the work. This often prompts discussions that result in better understandings for everyone. Interpreting these interactions can be tricky for a researcher. "We begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematize those" (Geertz, 1973, p. 15).

Interpretivists seek to build theories that will help explain the phenomena in question, in this case, field instruction. The aims of the analysis, at this point, were to account for events, to explain the structures that produced them, "to find individual or social processes, a mechanism, a structure at the core of events that can be captured to

provide a causal description of the forces at work" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 4).

The approach I took was to continue reading the data in its entirety, along with outside

theoretical materials that pushed my thinking and led to "a practical understanding of

[the] meanings and actions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). I kept a journal throughout

the process to record ideas and connections between field notes, interview transcripts, and

ideas from my reading. In addition, initial case descriptions of each program were

written. Yin (2003) refers to this analytic technique as explanation building, because it

uses narrative descriptions to explain phenomena and to look for causal links.

Stage Two: Writing-up Cases and Linking Data to Theory

Thinking about field instruction systemically led to me to thinking about loosely

coupled systems, an organizational theory that helped me think about field instruction --

an extremely familiar practice -- in a new way. My encounter with this theory helped me

articulate the question my data could answer: How do teacher education programs

conceptualize and structure field instruction in their teacher preparation programs? My

secondary analysis of the data began with a more in-depth study of loose coupling. Terms

and concepts, based upon Weick's (1976) seminal work, were applied to each case to

determine whether the programs actually functioned as loosely coupled systems. The data

were re-coded. Programmatic structures that guide field instructors were noted, as were

common field instructor practices across the cases. From these frameworks, incidences of

field instructor variation were mapped for each institution (see Appendix C). Once the

data were organized in these ways, I was able to establish that each teacher preparation

programs functions as a loosely coupled system and what this might mean for program

leaders.

Stage Three: Checking Validity

A common criticism of the case study methodology is that "subjective judgments are used to collect the data" (Yin, 1994, p. 35). Utilizing multiple data sources—observations, interviews, and program documents—allowed me to more accurately and richly depict field instruction in each program. They also contributed to the development of "converging lines of inquiry" (triangulation), because multiple sources of information were used to corroborate facts (Yin, 1994, p. 97). Specifically, they allowed comparisons to be made regarding program expectations and what field instructors actually did.

Establishing internal validity is especially important for explanatory case studies like this. Two analytic strategies proved useful. Theoretical propositions were central to this study. Relying on theoretical propositions narrowed my focus, allowing me to reduce the data—concentrating on some elements, ignoring others. During this period of analysis, I was also engaged in developing case descriptions for each program. This process of building the cases and reading new materials led me to adopt a new conceptual framework—loosely coupled systems. Theoretical propositions became even more important, as they served as the framework for explaining my data.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

As a method of empirical inquiry, case studies are often criticized. The most common complaint is that they lack rigor.

> Too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has allowed equivocal or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. (Yin, 1994, p. 10)

This case study, in particular, is fraught with issues given the content and design. There are limits as to what I can say, and what conclusions I can draw. The previous chapter

described the mentoring literature, highlighting the lack of empirical correlation between mentoring and student achievement, between mentoring and student teacher learning. The design of this study did not attempt to tie field instruction to student achievement in any way. I did, however, look for evidence that teacher preparation influences student teacher learning. I found no programmatic data demonstrating whether programs produce quality teachers and if such data existed, it would be literally impossible to disaggregate the variables enough to claim the exact impact of mentors. Measuring student teacher learning is in and of itself problematic. How do we measure student teacher learning during a field experience? Programs often rely on subjective tools like portfolios, which generally rely on self reflection. Evaluations by cooperating teachers and field instructors tend to be more objective, when they are based on some sort of external standards. Here again, it is virtually impossible to determine which variables influenced learning. Proving that field instructors impacted learning is even more challenging due to the removed nature of their work—they are not typically involved in the day to day workings of the classroom and have limited access to student teachers.

Another limitation was my status as a native—this forced me to walk a tricky line at times. In no way could I be construed as one of the actors in this study—those would be the program leaders who guided the work and the field instructors who did the work. Neither was I, however, an outsider with no knowledge of the subject, dependent only on what my informants led me to understand (Geertz, 1973). Although this familiarity gave me cultural access (an insider's perspective), it also had the potential to blind me. Being too close to the practice, I worried about objectivity – an elusive stance at best – and my ability to see nuances and subtleties. I tried to be aware of this situation and found that

talking to non-education folks—those with no knowledge of field instruction—proved helpful, as did regular meetings with my dissertation director who played the role of skeptic throughout. Describing my observations and ideas forced me to explain what seemed obvious; outsiders' perspectives, at times, illuminated what I could not see or took for granted.

I end this study with a clearer vision of the research I should have designed. I can't count the number of times the phrase "a mile wide and an inch deep" ran through my mind as I was analyzing my data. Despite the fact that I acquired a considerable amount of data, I found myself wishing that I had asked one more question or gone deeper in certain areas. The data was limited to some extent by the design of the study— field instructors were interviewed and observed leading student teaching seminars. Data were not collected during any one-on-one mentoring sessions with student teachers. As a result, there were no opportunities to personally witness certain forms of mentoring. Rather, I relied on descriptions from interviews for some of this information. In hindsight, observing post-observation conferences in addition to the seminars would have afforded me a broader view of their mentoring practices and prompted different questions, specifically those aimed at the intentionality of their "moves."

Chapter Three

Case Descriptions: Program Tours

Throughout this study, I have become increasingly aware of the benefits and drawbacks of examining something familiar. I chose to study field instruction because it is near and dear to my heart, having done the work for eight years. I wanted to understand what makes a good field instructor and how field instructors learn to do the work. This required that I immerse myself in programs where field instruction was alive and well—where people were thoughtfully engaged in creating a practice, in developing effective teachers. This meant attending to all things related to field instruction at each institution. Given the constraints of undertaking such a task by myself, I chose four different programs—in size and ideology—fairly close to home (or at least on my side of the state). The four programs described below fit the bill. Each has a decent reputation for preparing new teachers (a few are exceptional) and field instruction is a prominent component of field experiences and student learning. They range in size, governance, and philosophy.

In this chapter, I give you a tour of each program. For those familiar with the work of field instruction, there will be few surprises. My goal in the analysis, however, is to examine field instruction through a lens that makes this familiar, to paraphrase Geertz (1973), strange.

Table 3.1 Cast of Characters[1]

	Program Leaders	Field Instructors	Fictitious Characters
Thomas College	Director	Tony (plans/leads seminars with Tom) Tracy Terri	Ted
Cross College	Director Carl – faculty, literacy instructor and field supervisor	Carrie Chris	Christy
Southern Midwest University	Director of Placement Director of the School/University Partnership	Stan Simon	
Midwestern University	Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program Faculty Leader Team Coordinator	Maggie Mimi Martha Marissa Melinda	

Program Tour: Thomas College

It's a sunny, fall day. Colorful maples line the old, narrow streets that surround

Thomas College. The entrance is nestled among stately homes; the driveway winds

through shaded forests, past ponds covered with swans and ducks. Classes have just

ended and many of the 2300 students make their way across the 107 acre campus. The

college's Dominican heritage is evident in the statuary reverently placed on the grounds

and crucifixes adorning the old brick buildings. A plaque describes the college's origin as

a novitiate normal school for young women in 1886. Thomas became a four year college

in 1941 and now offers both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in 58 majors

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[1] Throughout the study, field instructors have been given pseudonyms. Using alliteration as an organizing device, the first letter of each name corresponds to the first letter of the name of the institution. For example, Tony and Tracy work at Thomas College. Program leaders, however, were not given names. They are referred to by their title.

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(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_College). Needing to get directions, I park next to a large building that seems to be the center of activity. Once inside I stop to admire displays set up by students about their recent mission trips to Oaxaca, Mexico and Appalachia, Kentucky. One young woman explains that the college encourages students to volunteer somewhere in the world as part of their liberal arts education. Underneath a picture of the school's mascot, Nelson the St. Bernard, is a campus map. After locating the School of Education, I get back in my car and head to the Browne Center.

The Browne Center is actually an old house that has been converted into academic offices and meeting spaces for Thomas' active Emeritus College, which promotes life-long learning through a series of non-credit courses. The second and third floors are home to the School of Education. After making my way up the cramped stairs and down the creaky, carpeted hallway, I am greeted by Ted, an education student who has agreed to show me around. "I know I'm probably not what you expected—bald and old," he jokes.[2] "A large number of students at Thomas are second career people like me. The college tries to accommodate us with evening and weekend classes; their emphasis on career preparation attracted a lot of us to the college" (www.Thomas.edu/about/). He explains enthusiastically that this is his fourth year in the elementary teacher preparation program; he is scheduled to student teach next semester in a fourth grade class at a local charter school. He knows the principal and requested to be placed there. Placements at Thomas are made by the Director, but students are free to request placement in a school

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[2] In this chapter of the dissertation *only*, I have constructed conversations to enliven the description. These are based on real conversations, but are not direct quotes. Ted is a fictitious character, but most of the others are real individuals who were interviewed for this study (see Cast of Characters). All of the dialogue is constructed from interviews and observations. Other quotations are taken directly from documents.

of their choice. As a result, student teachers are placed in a wide range of settings: public and private schools, traditional and alternative education, in schools located all over Michigan and beyond. This range makes supervision a challenge for the 13 field supervisors who work for the School of Education (www.Thomas.edu/education/under-graduate/field_placement.html).

Ted goes on. "I can't believe I'm almost done. It seems like just yesterday that I was taking the Inquiry and Expression course required of all freshmen. Now I'm finishing the final three classes that I need for my Language Arts major. After I teach for couple of years, I might even come back and get a Master in the Art of Teaching degree, but for now I'm glad to be done"

Thomas College offers a traditional four-year undergraduate, initial certification program resulting in a Bachelor of Arts degree, in addition to non-degree certification. It also offers three graduate degrees: the Master in the Art of Teaching (M.A.T.) degree, the Master in Education (M.Ed.) degree with initial certification, and the Master in Science Education (M.S.E.) degree. Thomas College requires that all freshmen take Inquiry and Expression, "a course that emphasizes written and oral communication, research methods, critical thinking and basic quantitative reasoning" (www.Thomas.edu/ab-out/academics.html). Sophomores are required to take humanities courses and juniors enroll in a course called, Religious Dimensions of Human Existence. There are also second language requirements for all traditional-age students. Students seeking certification are encouraged to declare a major, take Introduction of Education (EN 201) and meet with an advisor either late in their freshman or early in their sophomore year, because the bulk of their credits are in their major (32-75 credit hours) and minor

(minimum of 24 credit hours) areas. Students are required to take a minimum of 45 credit hours in education. For elementary certification, students take theoretical courses in areas such as Educational Psychology, Human Growth and Development, Application of Learning Theories for Elementary Classroom Teachers, Multicultural Issues, Inclusion, History of Modern Education, and Philosophy of Education. In addition, all elementary candidates take methods courses in literacy and mathematics. Science and social studies methods courses are taken from a selection of electives. Directed Student Teaching (EN 495) is taken in the final semester

Ted and I begin the tour in the main office, where Ted gives me copies of the two handbooks that contain written information about teacher preparation at Thomas College. The *School of Education Handbook* contains program information about topics such as advising, majors/minors, certification, and field placements prior to student teaching. Field components are considered a valuable part of teacher education at Thomas and begin as early as Introduction to Education. Eighty percent of courses in the School of Education have some type of a field component and the culminating field experience is a 14-week student teaching placement (*School of Education Handbook*, TC). The *Student Teaching Handbook* addresses topics directly related to student teaching, like the phases of student teaching, lesson planning, the sub policy, and creating a portfolio. This handbook briefly describes the requirements for field supervisors; although the secretary behind that desk explains that the Director of Student Teaching is working on a third handbook specifically for field supervisors. "This is only his second year in the position, but it is on his list of things to do." As we walk down the hallway past doors plastered with flyers, jokes, and inspirational sayings, Ted points out many of the 10 full time

faculty members. "They teach all of the theory and methods courses, which is not small task considering that the school certifies over 330 students each year" (MTTC Summary Results, 2006-2007). He continues, telling me that the content courses in science and social studies are taken in departments across the College.

We stop outside the Director of Student Teaching's office. Two male voices drift through the open doorway. After knocking gently on the door, we enter the softly lit office. The Director, sitting at his messy desk, appears to be a throw back from the 1960s, with his casual dress and quiet unassuming demeanor (the peace sign around his neck is another dead giveaway). It is easy to imagine him as the principal of an alternative high school (which he was for 28 years). Another man, Tony, is sitting with the Director. Tony is in his mid-sixties and his mannerisms and speech exude confidence. It was later explained to me that Tony has worked in nearly every aspect of K-12 education. He was a classroom teacher for 31 years in a large, urban district on the east side of Michigan. He taught elementary, middle and high school. He also worked with youth in various capacities outside of school, as a coach and counselor. When Tony moved to the west side of the state in 1998, he became assistant principal in a city high school. Since retiring from K-12 education, Tony has been supervising for Thomas and teaching science education courses at another university in the area (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC).

The two men are finishing a conversation. Tony continues: "I really prefer working with another supervisor—I was so disappointed when Theresa quit last year. Things seem to be working out fine with Tom though. We meet once a week for coffee to plan our seminars; we seem to have similar ideas about what student teachers should know, yet each of us brings different resources and contacts to the table. Mind you, we

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don't always agree—that happened just last week. We ended up planning separate

seminar activities and gave students the option to attend one or the other.[3] In general, I

think combining the two groups is better for the student teachers. A small group is fine,

but sometimes it is too limiting in terms of conversations. Student teachers feel that if it's

too intimate, they can't relax and unwind. Whereas if you have a nice group of 10 - 12

people, across the board they see some of the issues going on—it's not just unique to

them" (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC).

Ted makes introductions, explaining that Tony is one of the program's 13 field

supervisors who oversee their elementary and secondary student teachers in all of the

content areas, including music, art and foreign languages. The two appear to have an

easy, professional relationship. "Tony is one of my favorite supervisors," the Director

confides. "I inherited most of them when I became director and haven't needed to hire

any new ones yet (although the previous director hired two new supervisors last year).

This is a veteran group. I believe all of them are retired K-12 classroom teachers or

administrators and many have been supervising at Thomas for years—two of them for 13

years" (Field Supervisor Meeting field notes, 9/16/06, TC).

"Yea, it's a good group," interjects Tony. "A lot of us still want to be active in

the education community. I'm retired, but don't want to stop cold turkey. If you look at

our group, there's a vast wealth of experience – different levels, different backgrounds,

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[3] Field supervisors at Thomas College conduct weekly or biweekly student teaching
seminars that are intended to support student teachers (*Student Teaching Handbook*, p.
22). Field supervisors generate their own agendas and content for these seminars, as there
are no written requirements. During field supervisor meetings, the Director occasionally
offers suggestions of possible topics that could be relevant and timely. (Field Supervisor
Meeting, 10/4/06, TC)

different perspectives" (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC). He continues talking about the group, explaining that two supervisors in the group oversee student teachers for other local programs. One of them invites his student teachers from both programs to certain events. For example, he holds mock interviews session each semester and invites student teachers from both programs. In addition, field supervisors are expected to attend field supervisor meetings five times per semester, each of which lasts approximately two hours. Some of these meetings also include the Introduction to Education (EN 201) field supervisors. The Director of Student Teaching conducts the meetings. The time is spent planning for the large group seminars, talking about relevant topics, refining tools, and clarifying logistics (Field Supervisor Meeting field notes, 9/6/06, 9/19/06 and 10/4/06).

"I'm really proud of my supervisors," says the Director. "I want them to be valued for the work they do. Right now they are not being treated like the professionals that they are. I'm working to change that. They have a new resource room at their disposal. I am ordering business cards for each of them, and most importantly, we are working with the college to find rooms where they can meet for their seminar 'classes'. Just last week, the new Chairperson of the School of Education came to one of our meetings and shared her vision for the future. The supervisors really appreciated being included" (Field Supervisor Meeting field notes, 9/19/06 and 10/4/06, TC).

Looking at his watch, Tony excuses himself, explaining that he doesn't want to be late for a midterm evaluation conference with one of his student teachers. Field supervisors are expected to evaluate student teachers twice during student teaching. Cooperating teachers are responsible for writing the midterm evaluation, which the field supervisor and student teacher use as a basis for a discussion. Field supervisors are

required to complete a final evaluation form during the last week of the placement. The form used by supervisors is much less detailed than the one filled out by the cooperating teacher. The Director uses both of the final evaluations, along with other artifacts of practice like the portfolio, during an exit interview with the student teacher. Field supervisors are expected to help student teachers prepare for the Exit Interview, by collecting artifacts and conducting a Pre-Exit Interview (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, pp. 23-24) He mentions to the Director how much he likes the new evaluation forms that they have been working on, as he rushes out the door.

The Director invites Ted and me to have a seat for a moment. I ask how he is settling into his new role (we had talked briefly on the phone the previous fall during his first week on the job). "For the most part, things are going well. My experience as an administrator prepared me for most of the work—evaluating people, negotiating relationships, that sort of thing. Arranging placements is a pain, but I know a lot of principals in the area. The biggest challenge has been figuring out what student teaching is all about at Thomas, and in particular, what supervisors are supposed to do to support student teachers. The School of Education does not have clear guidelines."

He goes on to explain that the program has a general mission statement—to empower [their] students to be capable, compassionate and committed educators with integrity—but no conceptual framework to guide coursework and field experiences (www.Thomas.edu/education/about/philosophy.html). The *Student Teaching Handbook* provides a general vision of student teaching, acknowledging that it is often considered "the most significant part" of teacher preparation—the place where "intellect, personality, knowledge, and theory are put into practice" (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, p. 5).

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Student teaching at Thomas is not a static experience, but one in which students are expected to develop and evolve. Program leaders support this by providing a comfortable atmosphere. They have pledged themselves to making student teaching a "real" experience by downplaying the traditional "academic class" format in favor of one that is supportive, allowing students to devote their energies to the on-site demands made of a student teacher. (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, p. 2)

"What makes my job particularly difficult is that there is no course associated with student teaching. They have asked me to design one, but as a non-tenure track instructor, I do not have the time or inclination" (Director Interview, 11/29/06, TC).

The program has seven program standards that align with their courses, observation, evaluation forms and portfolio assignments:

Standard 1: An understanding and appreciation of the liberal arts (the humanities, the social sciences, the mathematical and natural sciences, and the arts)

Standard 2: A commitment to student learning and achievement

Standard 3: Knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy

Standard 4: The ability to manage and monitor student learning

Standard 5: The ability to systematically organize teaching practices and learn from experiences

Standard 6: Commitment and willingness to participate in learning communities

Standard 7: An ability to use information technology to enhance learning and to enhance personal and professional productivity (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, pp. 34-36)

The portfolio assignments are a backbone of the student teaching experience. They

include a First Two Weeks of School assignment, for which student teachers interview their cooperating teacher and get to know their school. Also included are five lessons using the program's lesson plan format (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, pp. 17-21). The Director explains: "These portfolio assignments are all the 'official' guidance supervisors receive at this point; otherwise, they are on their own when it comes to planning seminars. I hope to change this. I'm working on a new handbook. In our meeting last week, I asked supervisors to share what has worked for them in the past— best practices, speakers, events. I will incorporate these into the new handbook" (Field Supervisor Meeting, 10/4/06, TC).

The Director also wants to create a written job description and hiring protocol for field supervisors since the program currently does not provide any specifications. He described his image of a good field instructor:

> It has to do with the quality of interactions, the experiences that they have had, the personal experiences, and with their own an elementary teacher. [A good supervisor is] a teacher, an educator. It has to do with the inspiration that they provide to their students, the compassion they have for the problems they are encountering, their ability also to identify weaknesses and possibly candidates who shouldn't be teachers. All of those things come into play. (Director Interview, 11/29/06, TC)

From the Director's point of view, Thomas's culture is one in which supervisors do their own thing. He explains, "Most of it's all right. I've spent much of the past year getting a handle on who does what." The Director shares an example that involves two of his supervisors who job share. They have a unique situation, because Terri actually works for Tracy, rather than the School of Education. They agree that it is more fun and relaxing working this way, but that this type of arrangement is not for everyone (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

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"I'm actually headed down to meet with them about a struggling student teacher—she and her cooperating teacher don't get along. I spend a lot on my time putting out fires," he says with a chortle. The three of us walk down to one of the conference rooms where the Director introduces us to Terri and Tracy.

Tracy was a high school French teacher in a diverse, urban district in West Michigan for 35 years. She is now retired. Tracy is a widow in her mid-sixties, who lives just down the hill from her supervising partner, Terri (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC). Tracy has been supervising student teachers for Thomas College for six years. She was hesitant to take the job, because "the pay isn't great," but she thought that "it might be interesting" (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/1/07). She also didn't like the idea of conducting seminars. One of the veteran supervisors offered to have her student teachers attend his seminars. Tracy has always run her seminars with another supervisor. Tracy used to take groups of student to France each summer, as part of the school's international exchange program. She stills travels to France each year, which is partially what prompted her to look for someone with whom she could job-share.

In her mid-fifties, Terri is one of the youngest supervisors at Thomas College. Terri's husband is in the military and, as a result, they have moved around a lot. Terri taught elementary school for short stints in Germany, Panama, and Puerto Rico. Her only experience teaching in the United States was first grade in Arizona for two years. There is also quite a time gap since she last taught in a K-12 classroom (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC). Terri has a passion for young learners and she understands the developmental needs of early elementary students. This is another factor that prompted Tracy to work with her and in this way they complement one another.

Terri tells us a story about one of their co-observations in a secondary classroom. The teacher walked around as she was passing out a test. Afterwards, Terri made the comment that the teacher should have had a student pass out the papers. Tracy explained that the teacher did this because she was making sure that there was nothing else on their desks (like a cheat-sheet). Terri said, "Oh, it's a different level. I wouldn't have even thought of that. Second graders don't cheat" (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC). They seem to have developed a practice that reflects their past experiences, personal strengths and understanding of the work. For example, when they observe a student teacher, they each go in with separate purposes: One of them points out positives (what went well); the other offers suggestions (what to work on) (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

Field supervisors are required by the School of Education to make four observations at regular intervals during the 14-week placement. These visits are most often pre-arranged, but can be unplanned at the supervisor's discretion. The purpose of these visits is two-fold. They give the supervisor and cooperating teacher a chance to share their perceptions of how the student teacher is doing. As importantly, they provide opportunities for the field supervisor to give feedback and make suggestions in a post-observation conference. This coincides with a statement in the *Student Teaching Handbook* about the value of observations: "An essential aspect in learning to become an effective teacher is to have the opportunity to discuss what one is doing, why one is doing it, and to be told how things are going" (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC, p. 22). There is a form on which supervisors take narrative field notes during observations and subsequent conferences. The Director has recently created an observation form based upon Michigan's entry-level standards for new teachers. The supervisors piloted the

form last semester and are in the process of giving him feedback.

Voices are heard coming down the hall. Ted and I say our goodbyes and slip into the hallway as the cooperating teacher and (visibly agitated) student teacher arrive for the meeting. Ted suggests that we make our way back to the main office. Along the way, he points out the faculty lounge and work room and describes other faculty members as we pass by their offices. He explains that the all education classes are held in other buildings; the Browne Center contains only offices. We stop to chat briefly with one—of the many—adjunct instructors hired by the School of Education to teach courses. She is making copies for her class that evening. When we reach the office, I thank Ted for the tour and wish him all the best with his student teaching.

Program Tour: Cross College

As I prepare to visit, my mind wanders back more than two decades to a summer spent taking a New Testament Greek course at Cross College. At the time, I was attending another Christian liberal arts college in Western Michigan that was similar in size (approximately 4200 students per year) and ideology (both institutions have strong roots in the historical doctrines in the Reformed tradition). Attending Cross, for even three months was challenging, because our schools were fierce rivals in basketball—our goal each year was to crush the Knights (I wore a great deal of orange and navy that summer just to stir up trouble). Despite the sports rivalry, I was quite at home at Cross, because the *feel* was strikingly similar to my own school. A Christ-centered faith pervades every aspect of both institutions; at Cross, this includes faculty requirements, student life, and course requirements. For example, students at Cross College must take a course called Developing a Christian Mind (IDIS 150) and either Biblical or Theological

Foundations as part of their core competency requirements; The college motto is: "My heart I offer to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely" (http://en.wiki-pedia.org/wiki/Cross_College).

Cross College is fairly land-locked, despite having moved three times since its conception in 1876 for expansion reasons. A quiet neighborhood of modest homes borders one side of the 390 square acre campus; the other three sides are bounded by busy streets, including a divided highway. The first thing I notice, as I approach, is that the campus has spread across this major thoroughfare—an expansive covered walkway now alters the skyline, leading students to a large new conference center, and additional housing. The core of the campus remains basically untouched, with a few of the 1970s-era buildings, including the seminary, having received facelifts over the years. Flowers line the winding entry, taking me past the stately home of the college president and directly to my destination—the Spoelhoef Center, named after the former president who was responsible for moving the college to its current location.

Sunlight is streaming through the wall of glass windows that comprise the entrance to the Spoelhoef Center, sending rays of lights into the open, airy atrium with its oak and wrought iron staircase. A friendly greeter sits behind a large desk and points me to a young, perky blonde. Christy is a junior in the Education Department and was asked by the Director—who is just finishing up a class—to give me a brief tour.[4] Christy apologizes for being out of breath, explaining that she ran across campus from one of her math courses. She enthusiastically tells me that she wants to be an elementary math teacher, because she loves helping kids solve problems with manipulatives. Noticing the

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[4] Christy too is a fictitious character.

puzzled look on my face, Christy explains that although the Education Department (with

its 17 full-time faculty members) is located on the second floor of the Spoelhoef Center,

the preparation of teachers is spread throughout the campus. She takes her math courses

through the Math Department; each disciplinary department has a content director who

oversees content and methods classes in that discipline. The faculty in the Education

Department only teach general pedagogy, literacy and social studies courses. The

Director later explained it to me this way:

> So, we have in essence, a school of education, so to speak, that is scattered across
> the campus. So, it isn't just the content instruction that happens over in science,
> but it is science education ... These are people who have sort of embraced the
> notion of K-12 science education and so we have one with a physics, one with a
> chemistry, one with a biology and one with an earth science background ... They
> consider themselves 'science educators' ... So they're part of this teacher
> education program. I have world language education, English education, math
> education, all that kind of things are in the departments across the campus. And
> then the Education Department is a part of that umbrella organization – the
> teacher education program. And the Education Department basically is in charge
> of general pedagogy and literacy. But then the content instruction, even at the
> elementary level, is not held within the Education Department ... Otherwise, my
> math education, science education, language education, English language arts, all
> of those are house in the disciplinary departments (Director Interview, 12/19/06,
> CC).

As Christy leads me up the plushy carpeted stairs, she explains that teacher

education holds a prominent place in the college—right behind theology—as Cross began

as a preparatory school and has been training teachers since 1925. Giggling, she remarks

that her grandfather wasn't even born in 1925. Navigating our way through the maze of

hallways, Christy tells me about the degree programs offered by the Education

Department.

The Education Department at Cross College offers initial elementary and

secondary certification, in addition to non-degree teacher and a Master in Education

(M.Ed.) program. They certify just over 300 students per year (MTTC Summary Results, 2006-2007). Undergraduates in the initial certification program typically enter the program in their sophomore year. Cross College is a liberal arts college and as such, requires 108 credit hours that comprise the College's Core Competency Courses. The aim of these is to introduce students to a variety of disciplines. In addition, the teacher preparation program requires elementary education students to take the Elementary Education Course Sequence, which includes Introduction to Education, The Learner in the Educational Context: Development and Diversity, Societal Structures and Education as a Social Enterprise, Curriculum and Instruction for Diverse Learners, Curriculum and Instruction: Practicum, and Integrative Seminar: Intellectual Foundation of Education. (*Student Teaching Handbook*, CC, p. 14)

Christy's favorite part of the program so far is the field experiences, which are part of most methods courses. Last semester, she tutored students in an after school program run by one of the churches affiliated with the college for one of her literacy courses. Before that, she assisted in a third grade classroom at a local Christian school. "I really feel like I will be prepared to student teach next year, because we spend so much time in classrooms in different kinds of schools." (Students are placed in one of the 200 public and parochial schools that the Department has developed partnerships with over the years.) She tells me that although a lot of her fellow students do their 16-week student teaching in small Christian schools, she hopes to be placed in an urban public school. "One of the things that attracted me to this program is their commitment to social justice issues and urban education. The Department's goal is to develop responsive and transformative educators" (*Student Teaching Handbook*, CC, p. 13). Christy turns into a

large, tidy office area and grabs a copy of the *Student Teaching Handbook*. Flipping

through, she finds the section that explains the Department's conceptual framework. The

conceptual framework provides the foundation for all who work with students in the

Education Department and is based upon The Mission of the Institution, which is to

provide a liberal arts education, engaging in Christian scholarship, and applying this

knowledge in service to the world at large (http://www.cross.edu/about/mis-sion.htm).

This framework is introduced to students early in their coursework, specifically in EDUC

302-303 (*Student Teaching Handbook*, CC, p. 12). The framework guides the

assignments, observations and evaluations. The Director later described how it plays out

heavily in the program's assignments, especially the expanded unit plan, which is

carefully constructed around justice issues. (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC). There is

a heavy emphasis on social justice issues that threads through the program.

From this broader philosophical framework, the Department has articulated the

"specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that shape the work of the initial Teacher

Education Program." These are spelled out in The Teacher Education Program's

Professional Goals and The Teacher Education Program's Knowledge Bases. The

Professional Goals outline what the students will learn in terms of what it means to a

responsive and transformative educator and how they should respond as professional

educators. For example, one of the goals states that candidates will develop an

understanding of the developmental, neurological, and socio-cultural factors that

influence student learning and classroom climate. Based upon this understanding, the

candidates respond by developing a positive, productive learning community and creating

learning experiences that are meaningful for all students. The various theoretical

knowledge bases that provide the foundation for the Professional Goals are theology, philosophy, psychology, curriculum theory, political theory, economics, sociology and anthropology, the liberal arts, and specialized disciplines (*Student Teaching Handbook*, CC, pp. 14-19).

"Oh good, I see that you are getting a tour from my favorite guide. I often ask Christy to show prospective students and faculty around," the Director says as she breezes into the office. Although in her mid 50s, she appears to have the energy of a teenager (which I'm sure she needs as Associate Dean for Teacher Education, a tenured faculty member with a moderate teaching load AND a field instructor for three student teachers). "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. My Societal Structures class ran longer than expected." After thanking Christy again for the tour, the Director suggests that we chat in her office. "We have a few minutes before the Field Supervisor Meeting begins. I've arranged for you to talk with one of the supervisors after the meeting. Carrie has been with the program for nine years. She did her undergraduate certification work in elementary education at Cross, so she knows the program inside and out. She has teaching experience in a large, urban Christian school system (fifth grade and middle school) and also served as an assistant principal for two years. Carrie has taken on some additional responsibilities for me this year. I asked her if she would mentor our two new field instructors. I know that she's a busy person, with two young children and her work on the Teacher Quality Grant in mathematics education, but I really needed the help" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

The Director clears a space at the round table in her office by moving a few of the many stacks of books and papers to another corner of the room (which is equally

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cluttered). Handing me a picture, she beams: "I'm third generation at Cross, following in the footsteps of those two wonderful women—my mother and grandmother—who both went through this program and became teachers before me. I had hoped one of my children would come to Cross and become a teacher, but no such luck. Instead, my daughter is off saving the world in South Africa."

As we sit down with our coffee, she offers to give me some background before the meeting. "I know that you are interested in learning about field supervision at Cross. Let me tell you, it looks very different than when I first arrived. "My background is in Special Education (Emotionally Impairments, Learning Disabilities and Gifted and Talented education) and through my work with students who didn't 'fit the norm,' I discovered that I love to design programs to empower people. You'll notice during the supervisors meeting, for instance, that everyone has a voice. Whether it's redesigning an assignment or planning for a large group seminar, I want everyone to participate and have a say. Sometimes I intentionally take a back seat and let them lead; notice how much they talk with one another" (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC).

The phone rings and she checks the caller ID, "Excuse me, this will just take a minute." While she is talking, my gaze wanders out the large window, past beautiful, old trees to the rolling green campus beyond, with its crisscrossing sidewalks. Hundreds of students make their way from class, some lie in the grass enjoying the fall sunshine. It strikes that here is one thing that has not changed much in two decades: the student population. Cross College, with its Dutch heritage, attracts a relatively homogeneous population—the blond hair/blue eyed jokes are countless (I would know, being Dutch). Religion has a lot to do with this, as many students attend Cross because of its affiliation

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the Christian Reformed Church of North America, which has large pockets in Western

Michigan, New Jersey and Iowa—much of the population comes from these areas

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Reformed_Church_in_North_America). Hanging

up from her call, the Director apologizes, explaining that it was one of the field

supervisors who is going to be late because of childcare issues.

"Now, where were we? Oh, I was telling you about field supervision at Cross. I

also did my doctoral work at Michigan State and ended up working there for a few years

with folks like Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Bill McDiarmid. These amazing thinkers in

teacher education really shaped my understanding of pre-service education and

mentoring. I have tried to bring many of those ideas to the program at Cross, but it has

been like swimming upstream at times" (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC). She

continues, explaining that when she joined the Cross faculty, student teaching supervision

was organized and run by a part-time person; it had very little connection to the teacher

preparation curriculum and consisted of two seven-week placements. "After two years, I

asked to assume responsibility for student teaching and have gradually been transforming

it into what it is today":

> It has taken that long to get people away from what I call the performance model
> of student teaching into a real clinical education model, where they look at this as
> a semester in which they get to know their learners, they get to know the context,
> they understand how to connect context. So, it required quite a change in climate
> in terms of that whole experience. (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC)

"It was hard at first because the part-time coordinator stayed on as a supervisor

for a few years and that caused some tension. But now I really have a really great,

dedicated group of supervisors." She explains that there is a core group of five fixed-

term, adjunct faculty members who supervise student teachers— two are retired public

school teachers (one taught in a public school for 30 years and the other in a parochial school); two others are women in their mid-thirties, who both taught elementary school before they decided to stay home and raise their children (both attended Cross's teacher preparation program and were hired because of their connection to the program); another supervisor works in the technology Department and also supervises student teachers each semester (he taught briefly in a parochial school before coming to Cross). The full-time, tenure-track faculty members take turns supervising when they do not have a full load— this semester one of the literacy professors is supervising.

"As you can see, most of my supervisors come with firsthand knowledge of the program, either because they attended Cross or they had student teachers from Cross in their classrooms. I recently hired two new supervisors for next semester because our numbers are up. In my search, I tried to fill in some of our gaps, so I looked for someone with middle school experience and an English as a Second Language person." When I asked the Director what she looked for when she interviewed people for the position, she responded:

> Someone who was a successful mentor of student teachers when they were a classroom teacher. This time around, I looked specifically for people who had gone through our Masters program, because I know they've been challenged to think about schooling from a justice and equity stand point. So that's another important variable for me. I want to hire people who understand our mission and are really committed to thinking very openly about diversity kinds of issues (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC).

Looking at the clock, she suggests that we head down to the supervisor's meeting. As we walk, she describes her expectations of supervisors. "Supervisors are required to observe each student teacher at least six times throughout the semester and conference with them after each observation. I stress the importance of helping students reflect on

their teaching during these conversations. The program recommends that supervisors attempt to observe an entire lesson if at all possible. Written notes are taken during each observation using the Cross College observation form. These notes are shared with both the student and cooperating teacher and are handed in to the Department at the end of the semester. (*College Supervisors Handbook*, CC, p. 2).

Supervisors also lead weekly seminars (90-120 minutes) with their student teachers (except on weeks when the large group meets). There is a syllabus for EDUC 345/6 with assignments that need to be completed during the semester. These provide some content for the seminars. There is also a list in the *College Supervisors Handbook* of potential topics for seminars, but supervisors are expected to plan the seminars in response to the needs of their student teachers (*College Supervisors Handbook*, CC). Field supervisors at Cross College receive guidance from the written documents that clearly describe, not only the philosophy of the program, but also the expectations for everyone involved in teacher preparation. These documents provide details about the work and nature of field supervision. In addition, field supervisors learn about the work of supervision from the Director and fellow supervisors. There are two primary places where this happens: Field supervisor meetings and mentor pairs.

There are written materials that define the work of field supervisors at Cross College. Three separate handbooks relate to teacher preparation: *The Student Teaching Handbook*, *The Handbook for Cooperating Teachers*, and *The Field Supervisors Handbook*. Hardcopies of these are given to the appropriate people; they are not available on the Education Department's website. The *Student Teaching Handbook* outlines the course that corresponds with the student teaching semester (EDUC 345/346). The course

content is covered in student teaching seminars and the supervisor is responsible for assigning the grade. The course includes a range of assignments. During the first weeks of school, the students are required to do activities aimed at helping them get to know the students, parents and curriculum of their placement school. Other assignments are intended to help student teachers reflect about their planning and instruction. For example, they are required to videotape a lesson and write a reflection. They are also asked to complete self-reflection forms periodically throughout the field experience that involve setting goals. In direct response to the program's goal of Developing Responsive and Transformative Educators, students are asked to conduct numerous surveys during the semester. They survey the parents, students and special needs students, in addition to conducting a Culturally Responsive School Environment Survey. The idea is to help student teachers understand the families and students in their classroom so that they can teach responsively. The assignments for EDUC 345/346 are set by the program. They are designed (and redesigned each year) by the Director of student teaching and the field supervisors (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

The handbooks also provide field supervisors guidance regarding the nature of supervision. Student teacher learning is the goal for supervisors at Cross College and therefore influences the nature of their work. They are expected to observe student teachers and provide feedback. The *College Supervisors Handbook* suggests language that field supervisors can use to help their student teachers reflect about the lesson. "Begin the session by asking what the students were doing, e.g. Did the students learn what you wanted them to learn? How do you know?" (*College Supervisors Handbook*,

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Elementary, CC, p. 2) The program also specifies its view of teacher learning in the

College Supervisors Handbook.

> Your challenge this semester is to assist a novice teacher in beginning the process
> of learning to teach. Student teaching is not the time when students 'sink or swim'
> while performing what they have learned in their education classes. It is the time
> when students begin to integrate and apply what they have learned in the classroom
> setting with the help of two expert teachers – you and the classroom teacher.
> (*College Supervisors Handbook*, CC, p. 2)

These suggest that the student teaching field experience is an opportunity for

learning and field supervisors should use their time with students to help them develop

reflective practices and professional attitudes.

I really want them to work on things that will encourage their student teachers to

think (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC). Evaluation is another piece of the work, but I

don't want that to dominate what they do. Field supervisors participate in a mid-term

evaluation conference with the student teacher and cooperating teacher, but are not

responsible to produce a formal written evaluation until the end of the semester. Field

supervisors determine each student teacher's grade at the field experience. These are all

pretty typical aspects of the parts of the job, I believe."

Stopping outside the conference room where we are going to meet, she pulls me

aside and lowers her voice. "I also ask them to work with their cooperating teachers—to

teach them about the program and how to mentor beginning teachers. This is not always

successful, because some of them don't see themselves as teacher educators. My only

frustration with this group has been their reluctance to embrace this aspect of the role.

Last year, for example, I bought them each a copy of *Preparing Teachers for a Changing*

World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do (2005) by Bransford, Darling-

Hammond, LePage, Hammerness, and Duffy. I was hoping that we could have great

conversations around learning to teach. Do you think I could get them to read it? No!"

The Director stops to greet a few of the supervisors who are arriving for the meeting. She suggests that we go inside telling me, "This group meets four times each semester for approximately 2 – 3 hours. I try to schedule these meetings so that they coincide with the large group seminars—it's hard for some of the supervisors to arrange childcare and this way they don't have to come to campus as often." As the last few people get settled, she starts the meeting. "On our agenda today, we need to finalize our plans for the large group seminar next week. I believe some of you are working on a presentation about differentiation, but we need to plan the remainder of the seminar. I also want us to spend a little time today re-working the Culturally Responsive School Environment Survey that we are asking students teachers to give to their pupils in a few weeks. Recall that the idea is to help them understand their families and pupils better, so that they can teach responsively. I think some of the questions still need some work. Since, Carl (one, of the faculty members, who is currently supervising) is here today and I thought that he could share with us what students learn in his *Curriculum and Instruction for Diverse Learners* course. We might be able to make some connections. Carrie, you mentioned that you were having issues with one of your student teachers. I think that I would prefer to discuss that privately. I have some time later in the week if you are going to be around." (Field Supervisor Meeting, 9/26/06, CC)

Chris begins the meeting by showing the other supervisors how to use Blackboard. Recall that Chris is the supervisor who also works in the technology Department. Chris went through the elementary teacher preparation program at Cross College and did his graduate work at Northern Michigan University. Chris' student

teaching experience was in an urban school. He believes that this helped prepare him for his work as a supervisor, because he uses his knowledge of diverse learners to help his student teachers understand their students (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). Chris taught sixth grade for five years in a suburban Christian School. He now works in the Information Technology Department at Cross College, in addition to supervising student teachers for the Education Department. Chris also does some adjunct teaching for the Education Department at Thomas College. Chris has been a field supervisor for seven years and at the time of this study, he was supervising five student teachers. Chris is in his mid- thirties. He admits that when he began supervising, he felt ill-equipped to work with veteran teachers due to his age and limited experiences. Now he realizes that he is not expected to be an expert, but rather a facilitator (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). It is evident that Chris is a learner. He values constructive criticism and actively seeks it out. He clearly wants his practice to improve (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). Chris is married and has a son who is gifted and talented. He often draws upon his experiences as a parent in his work with student teachers (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC).

Using an LCD, Chris shows the other supervisors a folder on Blackboard that he recently created where they can share ideas for seminars. As an example, Chris included an idea for starting small group meetings that he uses in his seminar. Any of the other supervisors are free to use the materials (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). A conversation breaks out in which the supervisors brainstorm possible ways that they can use Blackboard.

The meeting continues for the next few hours with the group wrestling over specific language for the survey and potential topics for the upcoming seminar. Carrie

later confides that it would be quicker to plan things individually, but she always learns something from these planning sessions. She likes the team feeling among the field supervisors—how they ask one another for help and learn from one another. "I think my practice has really improved from working with other supervisors and I also find it valuable to work with faculty course instructors, because they provide a different perspective" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

Carrie spends time with me after the meeting, talking primarily about her work with the new supervisors. "I can't believe how much time I spend talking with them—late at night on the phone, Saturday sessions at the library and I don't even want to count the e-mails! I answer their questions about seminars, observations, evaluations and specific student teachers. Of course, I share my resources with them. For example, I gave them each copies of my EDUC 345/6 syllabi and assignments and told them that they could change the dates and use them for now. Eventually, they will want to create their own, but this gives them somewhere to start. The thing that surprises me the most about being a mentor is how much time I spend translating the expectations of the program. I went to one of their seminars last week strictly to answer the students' questions about an assignment. I am always telling them, I do it this way because.... The other thing that I have had to learn is how to mentor two very different people. They are at different points in their careers and need different things from me. "It's sort of like teaching, in that respect" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). Carrie and I spend the remainder of the time talking about her two mentees—one is from Honduras and has never taught in the United States and the other has little kids at home and is a bit overwhelmed. When we reach the parking lot, I thank Carrie for her time. She apologizes for having to dash off to pick up

her children. Giving me her phone number, she offers to talk more at a later date (which we do).

Program Tour: Southern Midwest University

Exiting the freeway, onto a busy city street lined with gas stations and convenience stores, MapQuest leads me to the West Entrance of main campus with its divided boulevard, grassy roundabout, and brick signs that read: Southern Midwest University, Established 1903. Winding through streets crowded with vehicles and pedestrians, my impression is of a mixture of old and new. Buildings with expanses of metal and glass sit next to stately brick ones covered in ivy. A large portion of the buildings hail back to the 1960's, having been built shortly after the school transformed from Southern Midwest College of Education to a state operated, public research university. Southern Midwest began as a state normal school and became a teachers college in 1927. It now offers 254 degree programs through nine colleges. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South-ern_Midwest_University). Many are due for a facelift, including the Bernard Center and Sangren Hall (my destinations). As is the case with most large institutions, parking is an issue. Even with a temporary permit, finding a space takes multiple trips around the block. Setting out on foot, I join the 25,000 students on their trek around the campus. The Bernard Center seems to be a hub of activity, housing a food court, cafeteria, bookstore, post office, computer labs and conference facilities. My destination is one of the largest conference rooms on the second floor (*huge* is the only word that adequately describes the scale of this room); the space is befitting the size of the group. Three large boxes are perched on a table outside with a folder for each participant. Scanning the sign-in list, I estimate that the group consists of

close to 100 mentors. A few people are already seated at long rectangular tables; some are getting coffee and donuts. I settle at the end of an empty table about halfway from the front. Getting out my papers, I notice that most of the folks appear to be retirees and many seem to know one another. Snippets of conversations about specific interns or plans for seminars drift my way.

A small crowd is gathering around a woman in her late forties, with brown hair and a big smile. She jokes with some, makes plans with others. Spying me, she makes her way over and introduces herself as the Director of Field Placements. She has been my contact over the past few weeks, having talked on the phone numerous times. From our conversations, I know that she has no background in education, yet is responsible for placing close to 500 student teachers (interns) each semester. The Director of Field Placements makes arrangements for both the pre-internship and internship. She tries to place students with the same teachers for both field experiences, but at the very least, both placements are in the same building.

Refilling her coffee from the nearby table, the Placement Director tells me, "I think that our cluster-site model is quite unique. During their final two semesters in the program, students participate in a pre-internship and internship (ideally in the same classroom) and are placed in one of 23 public schools or districts that have entered into a partnership with the program. During their pre-internship they take a course on classroom management; a two-credit hour seminar is taken simultaneously with the 16-week internship, for combined 18 credit hours.

> A Cluster Site is a school serving diverse student populations in which a group of interns – typically numbering 5 to 12 – is placed to participate full time in studying, practicing, and reflecting about teaching under the guidance of mentor teachers. The Cluster Site provides a setting for the intern to experience the

diversity and challenges faced by the professional teacher today. (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1, p. 8)

The advantage is that we build relationships with the schools and we use the same mentors year after year, so they really get to know the program and what we expect. Having multiple interns in the same building allows them to support one another and develop professional relationships."

From the literature that she sent to me, I know that this group—called the School/University Partnership Team (SUPT)—is part of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies. The College of Education consists of three separate departments that prepare teachers and administrators: the Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology, the Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies, and the Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies. These departments offer fifteen education-related undergraduate programs and seven graduate programs leading to both Master's and Ph.D. degrees. These departments certify close to 1900 students per year, with over half of those coming from the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Studies (MTTC Summary Results, 2006-2007). The Elementary Education program is housed in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies, along with Early Childhood and Secondary initial certification undergraduate programs. In addition, the Department offers Master of Arts in the Practice of Teaching and Master of Arts in Socio-Cultural Studies of Education degrees. The University requires students to take a minimum of 58 credit hours in Intellectual Skills Development courses (Language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts). This includes three credit hours in Human Development. The majority of these courses (at least 35 credit hours) are taken prior to being admitted to The Elementary

Professional Education Program and are offered in Departments outside of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies. Students who are admitted to the Upper Professional Level of the Elementary Professional Education Program are then required to take 36 additional hours of education courses, including educational psychology, technology in the classroom, school and society, learners with disabilities, and content courses in literacy, mathematics, social studies and science. These courses are taught by the 23 ranked faculty members in the Department, which include five full professors, 12 associate professors, four assistant professors, two term instructors and one faculty specialist (http://www.smich.edu/coe/tles/facts.htm).

Pre-interns and interns are supported by both university mentors (referred to as university coordinators) and K-12 classroom mentors, "who have committed themselves to the goals of the program" (http://www.s-mich.edu/coe/intern/intern_teaching prg.htm). In each building, one K-12 mentor is chosen to act as a mentor coach, who supports the other mentors and acts as the liaison with the university (Simon Interview, 1/25/07, SMU). "All of our university coordinators are retired public school teachers and administrators, with between 25 and 30 years of experience behind them, so "they come with this incredible expertise and experience" (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). There are also two fixed-term faculty members, who supervise interns, but I don't know how willing they will be to talk with you—they are extremely busy.[5] I would say that of the 100 or so people in this room, about 20 of them are university coordinators." This number varies from semester to semester, depending on the number of student teachers.

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[5] I did not have access to details about the background information of the university coordinators and had to rely on my observations of the School/University Partnership meetings and information from the Director.

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In response to my question, the Placement Director informs me that this group meets together like this once a month throughout the school year to get information about the program and learn about mentoring.

"Oh, here's one of my favorite coordinators now." A man, who can only be described as colorful, with gray spiky hair, red-rimmed glasses and flowered shirt, embraces the Placement Director like an old friend (which they are). "Simon is one of our best." He blushes profusely as the Placement Director lists his accomplishments: Simon was a phenomenal fifth grade teacher for 35 years in a small, rural district in southeastern Michigan until he retired in 2006; he was awarded Social Studies Teacher of the Year in Michigan in 1994 and served on the committee that developed the state's Standards, Benchmarks and Grade Level Content Expectations; and, he is extremely active in his community, serving on numerous non-profit boards and city committees. I also learned that Simon is in his late 50s, has never been married and has no children. (Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU). "Although this is only Simon's second year as a university coordinator (and his first experience as a university-based mentor), we have recruited him to mentor one of the new coordinators." New university coordinators are assigned a mentor, who is a seasoned coordinator. Mentors are compensated for their time. This relationship serves as a major source of learning for new coordinators. Mentor pairs are free to meet on their own time and many communicate by phone and email. School/University Partnership meetings also provide mentor pairs the time and place to meet together. Mentors share their practice with new coordinators. Simon recalled how his mentor "opened doorways" by describing what he did with his interns and in his seminars (Simon Interview, 1/25/07, SMU). Together, they set

priorities and shared resources. This provided Simon a structure with which to begin. As his practice developed, he gradually deviated from that initial structure and made it his own, based on the needs of his interns. Simon said that gradually he was able to make professional connections and apply his knowledge of teaching and learning to this new practice. Simon now shares what he does with his mentee, in much the same way that his mentor shared with him.

Simon admits that he was a bit reluctant when they first asked him, but now feels reassured because she (pointing at the Placement Director) "feels confident in my skills" (Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU). They grin at one another. "I have had interns from Southern Midwest in my classroom over the years and so I am familiar with the program. But I think she really hired me for my peace-keeping skills." When describing the qualities of a good university coordinator in a later conversation, Simon said:

> They need to be peacemakers. They need to practice peace and by that I mean they need to be able to be that public relations person that has a personality that people feel at ease with. They need to have the ability to bring people together. (Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU)

The Placement Director excuses herself, explaining that the meeting will be starting soon. Simon settles next to me, as we are joined by others. He introduces the mentor coach and classroom mentors who work with him in his building. Hugs, jokes, words of encouragement, and confidential whispers make it apparent that he has a strong, warm relationship with his colleagues. He leans over and whispers to me, "We have weekly mentor meetings at school where we deal with situations. I am trying to develop a mentoring culture in the building. The directors really want us to make serious changes

in the mentoring mentality and work to improve their mentoring abilities" (Director of

Placements Interview, 12/8/06, SMU).

Simon is interrupted by an announcement that the meeting is beginning. Using a

public address system, the Director of the School/University Partnership welcomes

everyone to the first meeting of a new school year. I learn later that the Director has been

with the program since its inception 15 years ago. She was part of a group, led by Sandra

O'Dell that designed the cluster-site model and placed a heavy emphasis on mentoring.

The teacher preparation program at Southern Midwest has a clearly defined conceptual

framework: preparing the reflective practitioner. This framework was adopted in the

1990's under the guidance of Sandra O'Dell, who was the visionary and initial architect

of the School/University Partnership program. The vision included a strong conceptual

framework, based on Schon's (1983, 1987) idea of a reflective practitioner:

> A reflective educator is one who is committed to improvement in practice;
> assumes responsibility for his/her own learning; demonstrates awareness of self,
> others, and the surrounding context; develops the thinking skills for effective
> inquiry; and takes actions that align with new understandings (York-Barr et. al.,
> 2001). (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1, p. 10)

This conceptual framework is articulated in great detail in the *Intern Coordinator*

Handbook. Student teachers also encounter it in the Intern Teaching Seminar and Intern

Teaching Field Component (ED 410/470) course syllabi. It is an integral part of teacher

preparation at Southern Midwest:

> Since the early 1990's, SMU's teacher education programs have reflected the
> theme "Preparing the Reflective Practitioner," based on the work of Zeichner &
> Liston (1987), Shulman (1987), and Schon (1983). The task of bringing the
> Conceptual Framework into the 21st Century has been predicated on the belief
> that the "reflective practitioner" continues to be a valid and dynamic focus for
> teacher preparation. Materials used throughout the teacher education programs
> reflect the theme, its sources, and the broad goals it implies for the preparation of
> professionals for the schools. (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 2, p. 2)

Six outcomes have been created that support the implementation of this conceptual framework. Reflective practices permeate the following areas: teaching practice, understanding learners, assessment, professional conduct, professional understanding, and diversity in the school environment.

The original conception of the School/University Partnership included a mentoring stance based on the work of Sharon Feiman-Nemser.[6] After this initial, conceptual work with the partnership, the Partnership Director assumed other teaching responsibilities in the Department, until the fall of 2005, when she took over as Director of the School/University Partnership. She now serves as the visionary for the program and is committed to reclaiming some of the fundamental concepts that the partnership was originally based upon, like developing a mentoring culture. She is the only full-time, tenure track faculty member involved in the School/University Partnership program at this time.

The meeting begins with up-dates about school placements, certification requirements and career placement issues. The Partnership Director explains that in the coming months, various university coordinators will be sharing their expertise and providing information on relevant topics, such as seminar planning and classroom management strategies (Field Notes: 9/26/06, 10/2/06, 12/12/06, 3/13/07, /24/07). She invites anyone who would like to share to contact her. Next, she enthusiastically introduces the special speaker for the morning, the Associate Dean, who talks about the

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[6] Educative mentoring involves creating "opportunities and conditions that support meaningful teacher learning in the service of student learning" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b, p. 18). These mentors look for openings in which they can use inquiry to push their mentees thinking. This practice differs from other types of mentoring, which merely answer questions, share resources and offer suggestions.

history of the program and describes the current state of the College of Education. "Our

mission reflects the university's reputation as a student-centered research university;

teaching, research, and service combine to improve the human condition"

(http://www.smich.edu/coe/about-us/index.htm). She spends time giving examples of

ways that the college uses research to inform its practice, which then extends into

numerous outreach programs and community partnerships.

Following a smattering of applause, the group takes a break. Standing in line to

get some juice, a friendly voice (attached to a large affable man in his late sixties) booms,

"You're a new face around here." After making introductions, Stan begins to tell me

about himself (being the shy guy that he is). You might say that Stan is an educational

jack-of-all-trades. He is certified in and has taught elementary, middle school, and

secondary. The majority of his K-12 teaching was done in the 1960s in middle and

secondary schools, where he taught in a mid-sized city on the eastern side of Michigan

for 6 years. Stan has also worked for two large State universities. The first experience

involved working in the Instructional Media Center at a large, Midwestern University for

10 years. In 1970, Stan took a position at Southern Midwest University in the

Educational Resource Center. It was at this point that he began mentoring student

teachers for the university. He liked this initial arrangement, because it allowed him to

use his technology skills at the university and to be in K-12 schools the other half of the

time. Since coming to Southern Midwest, Stan has taught every course offered by the

teacher preparation program (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU).[7]

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[7] Stan is in his late 60s and did not share much about his family or personal life.

"I've also mentored student teachers in every district in the southwest section of Michigan, except for one (which he clearly laments). I try to use these connections to match districts and teachers." Before the cluster-site model was implemented, he worked hard to place his student teachers in schools with particular needs.

> One elementary principal called me and said, 'Stan, could you get me a student [teacher] that speaks Spanish?' He says, 'I don't speak Spanish, but I've got a lot of Spanish people and I don't have a teacher that speaks Spanish. And, could she student teach in the third grade, because it's right across the hall from my office?' (Stan Interview, May 8, 2007, SMU)

Stan also uses his contacts with principals to "recruit students to jobs," but he claims that that has become more difficult since they have moved to the cluster-site model, because "those connections are gradually going away," now that he works in a limited number of schools (Stan Interview, May 8, 2007, SMU).

University coordinators are responsible for many logistics related to the internship. Although it is not part of the written job description, it is expected that they will assist in the placement process. This is done in conjunction with the Director of Placements. University coordinators help by matching interns with classrooms mentors within the schools that they work. Occasionally, they are called upon to find placements in non-cluster site schools when a need arises (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). University Coordinates communicate in writing with each intern about placement information (including starting date) and program requirements. University coordinators provide an orientation session for their interns, as well as a farewell at the end of each semester. They also schedule meetings regarding certification and career development.

As the meeting is reconvened, Stan agrees to meet and talk some more. Giving me his business card, he encourages me to 'be in touch.' The Partnership Directors prepares

the group for the next activity (she shared with me later that she tries to combat the size

of the group by including small group activities). This morning, the group is viewing

video excerpts of exemplar teachers teaching a lesson and then reflecting on their

teaching. These segments are available for the mentors to use with their interns; the goal

of the activity is to brainstorms ways to use the clips. Small groups (of 25) rotate around

the room. As with any meeting of that size, side conversations occur with regularity. Of

those I heard, some had nothing to do with the topic being discussed, others were direct

responses to the discussion. Not all were negative, but some were complaining about the

activity. One particularly verbal coordinator called it a 'waste of time' and eventually

left the meeting (School/University Partnership Meeting field notes, 9/26/06, p. 5).

Before adjourning, the Partnership Director takes an opportunity to look forward.

With her long, gray-streaked hair swinging and passion in her voice, she shares her goals

for the group. "I want to reclaim the original vision of the School/University Partnership,

which has faded over the years. During our meetings this year, we are going to be

learning about mentoring. This will involve reading articles and discussing ideas that will

hopefully challenge our thinking about our work." In subsequent meetings, she shared

with the members about educative mentoring, using Feiman-Nemser's (2001b) article as

a basis for the discussion. She defined mentoring and talked about what the literature

says about the mentoring role. The group then identified characteristics of a good mentor.

She concluded by talking about seminars as the place to "rekindle the vision."

(School/University Partnership Meeting, 12/12/06, SMU) On another occasion, the

Director had the group read and discuss the "classic" Stanulis (1994) article, *Fading to a*

whisper: One mentor's story of sharing her wisdom without telling answers. She told the

group, "Mentoring is very subtle. We all need to get better – to understand the subtly and the power of mentoring" (Director, School/University Partnership meeting, 4/24/07, SMU). The coordinators and mentors then broke into small groups and discussed central questions: What does it mean to be a mentor? What is the difference between a mentor meeting and a mentor seminar? In her interview, the Director told me that the person in her role has to fight every day to keep this model alive (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). The meeting concludes on this note. As we pack our bags, Simon agrees to let me join his group at future meetings. We also set a time to meet to talk about his practice as a university coordinator.

The group trickles out slowly. Many stop to talk with one or both of the directors. Waiting until they are both free, I finally meet the Partnership Director in person. She suggests that we walk down to the cafeteria and grab some lunch while we talk. It is evident that she is still wound up from the meeting. "I just feel so passionate about this group and the work that we should be doing. This model started with such a strong vision, but the emphasis has shifted away from learning. I'm going to change that if I can."

After making our way through the cafeteria line, we settle at a quiet table in the corner. I ask both directors to tell me about the university coordinators. "We both hire new coordinators. When possible we interview potential candidates together, but most are hired by one or the other of us," says the Partnership Director. She views the interview as an opportunity to hear about their educational experiences and to tell them about the coordinator position and the cluster-site model. Both Directors agree that most of their new hires are recommended by other educators and generally come with a sense

of the program and what the job entails. The Partnership Director admits that she is always looking for good university coordinators, even when she doesn't have an opening. The most important quality that she looks for is strong public school teaching experience (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). The Director of Field Placements also looks for K-12 teaching experience, in addition to mentoring experience, buy-in of the School/University Partnership cluster site model, good interpersonal skills, negotiating skills, and a network of connections in K-12 schools (Director of Field Placement Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). "I agree, the relational piece is so important to this work," says the Partnership Director. "Facilitating the socio-political terrain between all of the stakeholders in the Partnership is one of the key components of the job (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). University coordinators need to be able to communicate with mentors, interns and principals in the schools *and* with those of us at the university."

As we finish lunch, they tell me about some of the expectations for coordinators, which (they remind me) can be found in the formal job description in the *Intern Coordinator Handbook*. Coordinators are expected to observe their interns teaching lessons and provide feedback, with "a minimum of one formal observation before mid-term and another after mid-term" (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1, p. 18). Coordinators are also expected to "*assist* interns and mentors with evaluations, collect and turn in self-reflective and mentor mid-term and final evaluations" (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1, p. 18). Coordinators plan and lead weekly student teaching seminars "that help interns interpret their experiences and provide opportunities for sharing ideas" (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1, p. 17). There is a syllabus for ED 410, Intern Teaching Seminar, which includes assignments that offer

some structure for these seminars. University coordinators are expected to use their expertise and network of colleagues to provide topics and speakers that pertain to the needs of the interns.

> SMU has a certain number of things that they need to do, but depending on what the coordinator is interested in or what their background is or what their networking is about, they will bring other things as well. There is certain amount of fluidity and they can kind of do things in different order. (Director of Placement Interview, 12/8/06, SMU)

The Partnership Directors suggests that we walk next door to her office in Sangren Hall so that I can get copies of the program's handbook to take home and read (although it can also be found on the website). "Some of the written information about teacher preparation can be found in the *Undergraduate Catalog* (which I believe the Placement Director sent to you), but the primary source of information about the pre-internship and internship is the *Intern Coordinator Handbook*. This handbook is relatively new and we are in the process of reviewing and revising it" (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). They inform me that the handbook contains information for interns, university coordinators and mentor teachers about the reflective practitioner conceptual framework, the structure and rationale behind the cluster-site model, and job descriptions expectations for everyone involved in the partnership. It also includes a description and sample copy of both the ED 410, Intern Teaching Seminar and ED 470 Intern Teaching ~ Field Component syllabi. As we arrive at the placement office, I ask specifically about seminars. Flipping through the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the Partnership Director has me read the following:

> The seminar will be directly related to the student's classroom experiences; it will further the student's practical understanding of research on effective teaching and effective schools, help to refine their techniques of effective classroom management and curriculum design, and enhance the students' sense of their own teaching style. The seminar will build the students' self-images as professionals as they are encouraged to take professional responsibility and to practice

professional ethics. It is in the seminar that the ongoing Teaching Portfolio will be completed and reviewed by faculty committee. (*Undergraduate Catalog*, SMU)

"At this point, there are no common reading assignments required for the seminars, except that interns are expected to download and read the handbook from the College of Education website. Coordinators assign and grade a number of mandatory assignments as part of seminar—Madeline Hunter's ITIP lesson plan format, portfolio, iWebfolio, Reflective Journal, Final Self-reflective Evaluation and the Impact on Student Learning assignment. These provide opportunities for interns to reflect about their practice and to provide evidence of their learning. Seminar time is sometimes spent working on portfolio artifacts, which relate to the seven entry-level standards for new teachers. The Reflective Journals are often used as a source for seminar topics too. This is really the extent of guidance that coordinators receive regarding seminars." The Partnership Director suggests that I visit a few seminars and I explain my arrangements with Simon and Stan. She assures me that they will be representative of the coordinators. As students bustle in and phones ring off the hook, I know it is time to let them get back to work. Thank them both for their time and for letting me attend the School/University Partnership meeting, I make my way down the hallway and into the bright sunshine. It occurs to me that this is a well-utilized building, with its unadorned walls and linoleum floors. At the moment, it is a flurry of activity as classes change (earning its standing as the busiest hall on campus). After making my way back to the car, I decide to take a little detour on my way home. I have always wanted to see the bronze statue of the Bronco (SMU's mascot).

Program Tour: Midwestern University

University towns have a certain feel. Perhaps this comes from the intellectual (often left-wing) thoughts that fill the air or the youthful culture that spills into the city,

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resulting in streets like Grand River Avenue, with its mixture of coffee shops, book stores, ethnic restaurants, eclectic clothing shops, fast food joints, and bars. The mid-sized Midwestern city in south, central Michigan that houses Midwestern University is no exception, perhaps because the 2000 acre campus dominates much of the city. Driving around campus, the uniqueness of this large, public research university becomes evident. A brick and concrete sign informs visitors that Midwestern University was the pioneer land-grant institution (established in1855). Beaumont Tower (which marks the site of College Hall, the first building in the United States dedicated to teaching scientific agriculture), Farrall Agricultural Engineering Hall, the Dairy Store and *Farm* Lane all point to the university's agricultural roots—although, it now "has over 200 academic programs offered by 17 degree granting colleges" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-westernUniversity#Land_Grant_pioneer). The bronze Spartan statue (MU's mascot) stands in the shadow of the football field and basketball arena, representing the pride of legions of Big Ten fans. Crossing over the Red Cedar River, I notice a clear demarcation in age and appearance. Winding down curvy, tree-lined roads, the northern portion of campus appears older and statelier with its Collegiate Gothic architecture; the southern campus seems more modern with its perpendicular streets and post-World War II architecture (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midwestern_University).

Finding a place in one of the visitors' parking lots, I decide to make a quick detour on my way to Erickson Hall. Standing in line to get coffee in the International Center, I am reminded that Midwestern is an international oasis plunked down in the middle of the Midwest. The sights, smells and sounds make me acutely aware that a sizable portion of the 45,000+ students at Midwestern are international students—

especially the graduate students (http://www.msu.edu/vsa/CollegePortrait.pdf);

Midwestern is the eighth largest university in the country. This international emphasis

coincides with the university's mission to educate students so that they may contribute to

society as "globally engaged citizen leaders" The university's mission also includes a

commitment "to conduct research in order "to expand human understanding and make a

positive difference," and to advance outreach efforts that "lead to a better quality of life

for individuals and communities" (http://president.mu.edu/mission.php).

The lobby of Erickson Hall is bustling with activity. Students are spread out,

studying or whispering with colleagues in the petitioned areas of the lobby; others meet

with faculty members in conference rooms or the technology lab. Down a short flight of

stairs, people are sitting in booths or high tables (both inside and outside along the river)

reading or talking over an early lunch. The College of Education is home to the

Department of Teacher Education, the Department of Kinesiology, the Department

Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education, the Department of

Educational Administration. The Department of Teacher Education offers undergraduate

initial certification programs in elementary and secondary education, a Special Education

endorsement in learning disabilities or deaf education, and a Post Bachelor certification

program. Approximately 900 teachers are certified from Midwestern each year (MTTC

Summary Results, 2004 – 2007: Summary 2006-2007). The Department of Teacher

Education also offers graduate degrees: a Master's program in Curriculum and Teaching,

a Master's program in Literacy Instruction, and a Ph.D. program in Curriculum, Teaching

and Educational Policy. In addition, the Department has specialty programs in

mathematics and science education: Master's of Science in Physical Science, Master's of

Science in Biological Science, Master's of Arts: Teaching in General Science for K-8

Teachers, Master of Science in Mathematics Education and Ph.D. in Mathematics

Education. (http://www.educ.mu.edu/programs/)

I am scheduled to meet Maggie, a doctoral student in the Department of Teacher

Education. The elevator doors open to reveal a vivacious, smiling brunette in her late

twenties. "Hi, I'm Maggie. Sorry I'm late. I just finished teaching class." I know from

our prior emails and phone conversations that Maggie does not have a teaching degree or

certificate, but became interested in education when she took an intern position as an

educational lobbyist in Washington D.C. She has teaching experience as a kindergarten

teacher in a private Catholic voucher school in Washington D.C. She described the

situation as difficult because she didn't know what she was doing. "I'd never student

taught, nothing. [It was] trial by fire" (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Maggie returned

to graduate school and moved to Chicago, because she was interested in urban education.

In order to get alternative certification, she volunteered for a teaching program through

Loyola University, in which students are placed in a struggling, inner-city Catholic

school while working toward their initial certification and a Master's degree. Through

this program, Maggie taught first grade for two years.

"Thanks for letting me shadow you today," I offer as we start down the hall.

"No, problem. I love talking about field instruction (this is Maggie's first year as a

field instructor). As you know, I never had a student teaching experience. My first year

in the classroom, I was mentored by another classroom teacher and a field instructor from

Loyola, but I didn't really receive much support from the field instructor, despite the

structures that were in place, like scheduled post-observation conferences and regular

seminars with her field instructor and other student teachers. I received the most support from my three roommates, who were also in the program. We were in the trenches together." Maggie tells me that she left the classroom after two years to come to Midwestern to pursue her doctorate, but she is concerned about losing her connection to K-12 teachers and students. She hopes that field instruction will help her maintain that connection.

As we walk down the hallway, I peek into one of the large classrooms, where some sort of video conference is in progress—the two groups (the one on the screen and the one in the room) are engaged in a lively discussion. The right side of the hallway is a wall of glass that looks out onto green space where students are walking to class or enjoying the unseasonably warm day. Walking through a set of doors, we enter the epicenter of teacher preparation at Midwestern. Signs announce the secretaries for LAET and DAET. Seeing my confused look, Maggie introduces me to the LAET secretary who explains: Elementary teacher education is divided into two groups in the Department of Teacher Education: the Detroit Area Elementary Team (DAET) and the Lansing Area Elementary Team (LAET). LAET (which is the focus of this study) is structured by clusters during the internship year. Interns are placed into one of the area elementary schools that work with the program. There are ideally five or six interns per school, although this number can vary. Schools are then assigned to a cluster, along with 3 -5 other schools. Each cluster has a cluster leader and associates with a particular section of 800-level courses. For the 2006/2007 internship year, there were 29 school groups that were formed into six clusters led by three cluster leaders. It is the responsibility of cluster leaders to oversee the interns, collaborating teachers and field instructor in their

clusters and also to liaise with the principals regarding the progress of the interns. Field

instructors meet weekly with their cluster leader to discuss specific issues related to their

interns. Course Instructors are assigned to work with a particular cluster and are

expected to communicate with the Cluster Leader and field instructors about the course

content and any issues that arise with students. It is the intention of the program that

cluster leaders act as the bridge between the K-12 schools in their group and the

University.

> The Coordinator cannot be on top of every intern and what's happening out in
> those schools, so they went to the cluster leader structure because the cluster
> leaders' role is to be on top of what's happening in those schools and they have a
> small enough group so that they can do that on a regular basis. So, we've found
> them to actually be a very valuable role in the program "have the pulse of the
> schools" (Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program Interview, 12/15/06,
> MU).

Cluster leaders also work with teacher education liaisons from each school. Teacher

education liaisons are teachers or principals, who work to foster the partnership between

the school and the university. Their primary function is to support and communicate with

all of the constituents involved in the internship. Together, the cluster leaders and teacher

education liaisons assist in placing juniors, seniors and interns with collaborating teachers

for their field experiences.

All of the field instructors in this study work in the Lansing Area Elementary

Team, which includes a small cluster of interns and teacher educators who work on the

western side of the state.[8] LAET offers courses and field-based experiences to

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[8] Marissa is a field instructor for the Grand Rapids Cluster. (She was interviewed
separately for this study, because she rarely comes to campus.) Marissa was an
elementary teacher in a small rural town in western Michigan for 10 years. She left the
classroom to stay home with her children. After being out of the classroom for five years,
she began supervising student teachers for another large university in western Michigan.

approximately 150 juniors, 150 seniors, and 130 interns" each year (http://ed-

web3.educ.mu.edu/te/elementaryteams/LAET/ElemTeamSite/ContactInfo/Organization.h

tm). Students typically apply for admission to the program early in their sophomore year.

Prior to admission, students can take two courses (Reflections on Learning and Human

Diversity, Power and Opportunities in School Institutions) that give them an overview of

students as learners and schools as social institutions. During junior year, all students are

required to take a 4-credit hour course called Learners, Learning and Teaching in Context

that "addresses classrooms as productive learning environments, literacy teaching and

learning, motivating students to learn, and lesson planning" (http://ed-

web3.educ.mu.edu/TE/elementaryteams/LAET/ElemTeamSite/JuniorSeniorYear/GettoK

nowLAET.htm). Seniors take a 400-level course each semester for an accumulated 11-

credit hours that address teaching and learning in the four content areas: Teaching of

Subject Matter to Diverse Learners and Crafting Teaching Practice. These are content

area specific methods courses, in which students begin to consider planning and

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The position appealed to her, because she "wanted to be in the classroom, but not all the time" (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU, p. 1). The following year, she was approached about being a field instructor for Midwestern and after interviewing with the cluster leader, assumed the position. This is her sixth year at Midwestern. She still works for both institutions. Marissa admits that there were challenges when she made the transition from classroom teacher to field instruction. She initially approached field instruction through the eyes of a teacher. She would make suggestions based on her experiences in the classroom. This became problematic when she began working for Midwestern, because she was unfamiliar with the issues that are specific to teaching diverse learners. Her experiences teaching in a small, homogeneous, rural district did not prepare her to help her interns work with diverse, urban student populations. Another challenge that Marissa faced was shifting from teacher to teacher educator. When she began at Midwestern, the seminars that she was supposed to lead each week were guided by a course syllabus that was heavy on reading and unfamiliar content. She felt ill-equipped to cover so much new and complex material, especially when she really just wanted to spend the time talking with her interns about their teaching experiences. This issue has resolved itself over the years as the content of the seminar courses (TE 501 and TE 502) have become more coherent (and manageable) across the clusters.

instruction for diverse learners. In addition to these courses, which are required by the Department, students also take courses in fulfillment of either an Integrative Teaching Major (taken within the College of Education), an approved Disciplinary Teaching Major (taken outside of the College of Education), or two approved Teaching Minors. Students must also complete mathematics and technology requirements before qualifying for their internships.

"Who teaches all these courses?" I wonder.

"Courses within the Department of Teacher Education are taught by over 20 full-term faculty members, graduate assistants and fixed-term instructors," Maggie informs me. "Students take courses in their specific discipline in disciplines across the university. Field experiences are an equally important part of teacher preparation and are incorporated into all of the courses required by the Department. The 300-level course places students in a K-12 classroom for approximately two hours each week; 400-level courses have a four hour per week component. Student teaching in the Department of Teacher Education takes the form of a fifth-year internship, which lasts from the end of August to the last week in April. Interns are placed in K-12 schools that have established partnerships with the Teacher Education Department and these schools are located in five, diverse districts near the University (with four additional districts located on the western side of the state). Within each school, interns work alongside mentor classroom teachers, called collaborating teachers. This term is purposely used to communicate equal status with field instructors. The program prefers to work with the same collaborating teachers year after year, as this provides consistency because the teachers understand the expectations and goals of the program."

Maggie continues, telling me about the role that field instructors play in the internship. "Interns also work closely with faculty from the university. In addition to the course instructors who teach the 800-level courses, interns are supervised by university mentors (like me), called field instructors. Most of us are graduate assistants or fixed-term instructors, but occasionally full time faculty members field instruct. The group changes every year, depending on the number of interns and how many graduate assistants are available. I think that this year (2006/2007) we have 18 field instructors—ten graduate assistants, one full-time faculty members, and seven fixed-term employees. Of the two full time faculty members, one is a tenure-track professor with little K-12 experience, who wanted to better understand teacher learning at the pre-service level and the other works full time for the Department as a cluster leader, a field instructor and a literacy instructor. Most of the seven fixed-term field instructors have been with the LAET program for years. They all have extensive K-12 classroom experience—six are retired classroom teachers. The remaining field instructor chose to leave the classroom to stay home with her children and is relatively younger than the others.

Hiring field instructors in a program of this size and complexity is a multi-person task. Three teacher educators, all of whom have been involved in teacher preparation at Midwestern since the inception of the fifth-year internship model, lead the LAET program. Although their roles and functions differ (the Team Coordinator takes care of logistics; the Faculty Leader and Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator serve as visionaries for the group) leading this large and complex program requires that they work together and communicate regularly.

The Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program provides vision for the

group and assists with the overall organization of the program, but is not directly involved in the everyday workings of the team unless troubles arise that require problem solving. One of her direct involvements with the program is that she is responsible for identifying graduate assistants who would be qualified to field instruct. She also teaches a course on mentoring that is required of all new graduate students who are hired as field instructors. This makes sense since the Coordinator has been involved in field instruction since coming to Midwestern in the early 1990's and much of her research has been about mentoring.

The Faculty Leader of the LAET program became interested in field instruction when she was getting her Master's degree at Midwestern. This eventually led to her doctoral work and position in the Department. She has been part of the conversations around the team culture and educative mentoring for a long time and because of this she plays an important visionary role for the LAET team. Although she does not necessary need to be directly involved with the field instructor, she chooses to go "to the meetings because she wants to be a part of what's going on. She wants to know what's happening in that particular piece of the program" (Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator Interview, 12/15/06, MU). During these meetings, the Faculty Leader participates in intentional ways, by focusing the group on big picture ideas and steering the conversations away from procedural issues to deeper discussions about teaching and learning. "I want to bring a layer of more...'Let's discuss the substance of the program on a more sustained basis" (Faculty Leader, 1/10/07, MU). The other important function of the Faculty Leader is to work closely with the Team Coordinator to organize the team: who is teaching the courses; who is field instructing; which K-12 schools have interns,

etc.

The Team Coordinator also became involved in the program while working on her Master's degree at Midwestern 12 years ago. She believes that one of the best changes in the program over the years has been the addition of the clusters and the subsequent placement of schools into small groups, because it has allowed the program to be connected to the K-12 schools in ways that it wasn't before. In fact, it is this connection with the schools that is a primary responsibility of the Team Coordinator. She not only works closely with the cluster leaders, but also spends considerable time with the interns and school principals.

> I mean I sound like I sit in this office all the time, I don't. I do go out into the schools. I feel it's very important to maintain this relationships and I'm very possessive of those relationships, because I worked hard to get those schools...It's very important, because you have long standing agreements with people that are unwritten and unspoken basically, but you know how they operate. And what you do in one school, you don't do in another. You have these whole 20-some schools that you are working with, but you know how each one works and who you need to go to and there's a long-standing relationship and you don't want to mess that up. (Team Coordinator Interview, 12/4/06, MU)

The Teacher Preparation Coordinator begins the hiring process by matching graduate students and positions across the entire program. It is her responsibility to interview new graduate assistants and determine who might be able to field instruct. She looks for people with experience in K-12 schools, because "it is difficult for people with no K-12 experience to make entry into the school and to have credibility" (Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator Interview, 12/15/06, MU). She admits that some graduate student take the position, because they think that it is easy.

> We've all seen someone sitting in the back of the room taking notes. What could be so hard about that? We've been through the experience ourselves and our supervisor would sit us down and talk to us about stuff and I know how to teach.

So what could be so hard about that? (Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator Interview, 12/15/06, MU)

Being a graduate assistant not only subsidizes graduate students' education, but provides field instructors, like Maggie, with valuable experience in K-12 schools and in teacher education. The result, however, is that there is a fair amount of turnover in the group, as graduate students complete their degrees or look for alternative experiences in the Department.

Hiring the fixed-term field instructors is a coordinated effort between the Faculty Leader and the Team Coordinator. When interviewing potential candidates, the Coordinator relies quite heavily on feelings. She wants field instructors to have a love for teaching and some K-12 experience. She notes that some of the people she interviews have very little teaching experience, which makes it difficult to do the work. By talking to people and asking them about their experiences, the Coordinator can determine the quality of their teaching and whether they have passion for the job. During the interview, the Coordinator also communicates with potential candidates about the program's goals and expectations:

> But this is a whole process of developing a person from the beginning of their practice as a teacher, as an intern, to as they walk out the door in April to be that novice teacher that they wanted to be in the fall. And so it's not just a job of supervising or of observing or 'is that a good lesson or not?' It's a process of developing a person to be a professional in the classroom, out of the classroom and to develop good teaching practices that they need to have. (Team Coordinator Interview, 12/4/06, MU)

"Here are two of the field instructors now." Sitting at one end of a large oval conference table, Martha and Mimi are eating their lunch (they often meet before the weekly field instructor meetings to talk about interns and share ideas). Maggie makes introductions and I learn that these two have a lot in common. Mimi was an early

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elementary teacher in a district near Midwestern for 34 years. During that time, she had at least 15 interns from Midwestern placed in her classroom. She is now retired and has been field instructing for two years. Mimi became a field instructor because of conversations with the Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator, who field instructed many of the interns in her classroom. Mimi likes the flexibility associated with field instructing, because family matters necessitate that she travel every other month or so. While she is away, she stays in regular contact with her interns through emails and phone calls. One of the goals that Mimi has for her practice as a field instructor is to ask better questions.

> And I try to get at better questions. I think sometimes I still deal too much on the surface and it is way too easy for me to say, 'Oh that was really good. Or, you should do this or why didn't you...?' So, I really try and think about, 'What's another way that you could have done that? Is there another way you could have handled that besides doing what you did?' And so, I'm getting better but I still feel like I have a long way to go. (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU)

Martha is a graduate of the teacher preparation program at Midwestern. She taught at a local elementary school before retiring two years ago. She became interested in field instruction through conversations with a teacher friend who was a Midwestern field instructor. Martha never had interns in her classroom, but she did have two student teachers from another large university. In a later interview, one of the program leaders pointed to Martha as an exemplary field instructor, who is serious about developing her practice. She described how Martha introduced new ideas into her practice, because she saw a need that was not being met by the curriculum.

> She's got her own practice going and it's not ignoring the program, she does what the program wants, but she thinks that – just this past Monday she was talking about trying to help [interns] develop a repertoire of things that they can pull at the last minute, if needed... And I think she is just incredibly thoughtful and I think she started out last year, being very overwhelmed with her role and unsure

of what to do and she's really turned a corner. (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU)

"While I have you all together, would you mind telling me about field instruction at Midwestern?" I ask. "What do you do? What does your work with the interns look like?" They explain: Field instructors at Midwestern receive sustained, detailed support from the program, both in the form of written materials and in organized learning opportunities. The primary written source of information is the *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship Handbook*. This is available electronically on the program's website and in CD form. The guide provides information for everyone involved in the internship. Much of the information is practical and relates to the logistics of the internship and expectations of the participants, but the guide also offers a theoretical framework, intended to shape the practice of the mentors (field instructors and cooperating teachers) who work with interns. The first two sections of the guide provide details about the schedule and structure of the program. The responsibilities of all the participants in the internship are described in detail. Field instructors, for example, can find a list of responsibilities that outlines how much time should be allocated for certain aspects of their work. This can help them prioritize their time. The list also indicates with whom field instructors are expected to communicate. In a program of this size it is important that participants understand their role in information sharing and bridging the school university partnership.

"Working with our interns is the top priority," says Mimi. "We meet individually with each intern about two hours per week to do things like sharing resources, planning together, and looking at student work. We regularly observe interns teaching lessons and then conference with them afterwards "regarding the planning and teaching of each

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observed lesson" (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*, MU, p. 13). In addition to giving them written feedback at these conferences, we also are expected ask questions that encourage them to think and talk about their teaching."

"Another part of our job is to be the go-between," interjects Martha. "We used to be called liaisons, which was pretty fitting. Field instructors are expected to inform program leaders, especially their Teacher Education Liaison, about what's happening in their schools and any situations related to specific interns. We also work with course instructors, because the interns are always asking us to interpret the assignments. Communication goes the other direction too. Some principals want to talk with us about the interns or they have questions about program expectations. We field lots of those types of questions. The program also expects us to work with the cooperating teachers." This reflects one part of the College of Education's mission. The leadership principle promotes preparing teachers and administrators to be effective leaders in schools is central to the College of Education. They seek to improve education through learning, research, policy reform, and partnerships with communities and schools. This is all accomplished within a scholarly community that views learning as a life-long professional pursuit. (http://www.educ.mu.edu/college/mission.htm)

Martha continues. "We are expected to communicate with them about logistical matters and intern development. Plus we are supposed to meet with them as a group every 2 -3 weeks to support their professional development as mentors—"to support innovative and educative mentoring practices and problem solving" (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*, MU, p. 12). "I don't know about you guys," adds Maggie, "but I don't feel comfortable leading these meetings. I don't know enough

about mentoring yet, to teach someone else." The Faculty Leader later confirmed that these meetings do not always take place. She thinks that this is because "some people are better than others at making those meetings more than announcements and things like that, but it's too much of a leap for some of the field instructors" (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU, p. 6). She also admits that time is an issue. She recognizes that field instructors might have to eliminate something from their practice in order to accommodate these meetings.

"Of course, we (along with the cooperating teacher) are also responsible for evaluating the interns, but this is not the focal part of our job," continues Martha. "Field instructors are expected to organize at least five conferences with each intern and cooperating teacher throughout the internship. The first conference occurs sometime in early September. The purpose of this one is to "confirm responsibilities, negotiate working relations, and plan the intern's learning" (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*, MU, p. 13). Evaluative conferences are schedule in the middle and at the end of each semester. In preparation for the evaluative conferences, each of the members completes an intern assessment form in which they record the strengths and goals for the intern related to each of the standards. These forms are the impetus for the conference discussion. We are also required (often with the help of the cooperating teacher) to complete final reports, called Exit Performance Descriptions, for each intern. These are narratives that describe the intern's strengths in relation to each standard. They are snapshots of where the interns are in their professional development."

"Oh, and don't forget about seminars," says Mimi. "We lead weekly (60-90 minute) student teaching seminars with our group of interns. These are intended to help

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interns "reflect upon their current experiences and plan for their ongoing professional

learning" (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*, MU, p. 13). Topics for

seminars are suggested during field instructor and cluster meetings; TE 501 (fall

semester) and TE 502 (spring semester) syllabi provide readings and topics as well.[9]

These courses offer structure in terms of goals, scheduled time together, and suggested

topics that relate to issues that interns normally face when they learn to teach. A weekly

schedule provides us with specific tasks to cover in each seminar. During seminars, it is

expected that we will work with interns on certain things, like lesson planning and what it

means to be a professional. However, there is some flexibility in terms of the content of

the seminars—we can come with our own topics based on what is happening in the

interns' classrooms. This means that we are free to read about or invite a guest speaker to

address topics of interest. Assignments, like the portfolios, also provide structure for

seminars. Interns are expected to create a professional portfolio that demonstrates their

learning and growth. There are assignments that interns need to complete in the first

weeks of the internship that relate to getting to know their students, the school, and the

content that they are expected to teach, like the sub folder, which allows them to organize

their thoughts about the workings of the classroom. During the fall semester, interns are

expected to videotape themselves teaching a lesson and then write a reflection about their

teaching. We help them with these during seminars. Although there is an agenda for each

seminar, seminars are supposed "to be safe places where interns can bring issues to the

group and get some help…and to start to see their peers as their colleagues" (Faculty

Leader, 1/10/07, MU). Seminar is a time for interns to talk about their practice with a

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[9] Course syllabi can be found on the CD provided by the program and on the LAET website.

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mentor and colleagues."

As we chat, other field instructors file into the room. Soon the table is full, the room overflowing. Maggie leans over laughing and whispers, "We forgot to tell you about field instructor meetings. We meet every week for 90 minutes, although as the year progresses meeting are sometimes changed to every other week. We meet as a whole group for 60 minutes and then as cluster groups for the remaining 30 minutes. The content of the meetings varies from week to week, but we usually talk about logistical stuff and then something related to our practice. For example, we often have visitors. Last week the instructors who teach the 800-level literacy and math courses came to talk about the assignments and what we can do to support what the interns are learning in those courses." The Faculty Leader later admitted to me that she would like to structure these interactions differently: "We have at time had instructors come in and I wanted it to be more sustentative, but it tends to be more procedural. I think it might have to do with what we ask them to do when we invite them to come. And instead of having them come and talk very globally and generically across 'They're planning a unit.' 'They're doing this.' What if they saw it more as an opportunity to spend a half hour helping the field instructors connect with a key idea that they're working on in their course or something?" (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU)

Side conversations cease as the meeting is called to order by a vivacious woman with short spiky hair and a raspy, no nonsense voice (the Team Coordinator), who greets the group warmly. Sitting next to her is the Faculty Leader. The Team Coordinator is responsible for organizing all aspects of the program and much of this work is done in conjunction with the Faculty Leader. Together they place interns, identify course

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instructors, and hire and train field instructors. While it is technically the Team

Coordinator's responsibility to lead the field instructor meetings, the Faculty Leader also

has input into the agenda and content of the meetings. One of the main functions of the

Coordinator is to "monitor the field instructors, help them with their job, and pull them

together regularly for meetings" (Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator Interview,

12/15/06, MU).

As part of her welcome, the Team Coordinator introduces some visitors. In

addition to the field instructors and cluster leaders, various visitors join the group

throughout the year: course instructors, guests presenting on special topics, and

researchers. This reflects another principle from the College of Education' mission

statement: scholarship. The mission of the Department of Teacher Education reflects the

University's commitment to improving education. The Department seeks to do this

through "the preparation of teachers, the study of teaching and learning, and the study of

teacher education" (http://ed-web3.ed-uc.mu.edu/te/about-te.htm). Across the

Department, faculty and students engage together in activities involving research and

teaching with the intent of understanding how people learn and how teachers can impact

student learning. These efforts often include collaboration with K-12 practitioners.

The Team Coordinator begins the meeting with some schedule changes and

reminders about the upcoming mid-term evaluations. "How has it been going with the

Field Instructor Feedback Forms? Have you been using them? Are the interns finding

them helpful?" A discussion ensues about the challenges of using the form, but in the end

the consensus is to keep trying. During the course of this study, field instructor meetings

had a special focus. In order to collect data for TEAC accreditation, the program was in

the process of developing an observation form (Field Instructor Feedback Form) to be used by all field instructors when observing interns teaching a lesson. The first page of this form is the Reflection and Analysis sheet, where performance (either talked/written about or observed) is coded as either beginning, expanding, connecting, refining/extending (rare) or not considered/no opportunity to observe. The second page is the Observation and Evidence sheet on which field instructors record narrative notes during the observation. Copies of these are given to the intern after the post-observation conference. These forms are a work in process. Considerable time was spent in field instructor meetings, clarifying the language, understanding the scoring process, and using video clips to practice using the tool. In an attempt to become more reliable in their scoring, they spent time discussing their individual results. One of the benefits of this exercise was that it forced the group to have discussions about important ideas like their vision of good teaching and how development and standards relate to one another.

"Let's move on to the next item on the agenda," suggests the Team Coordinator. "What are you seeing in the field?" Field instructors are given the opportunity to talk about what they are seeing in intern classrooms and to think about this in terms of *where* interns are developmentally. The Coordinator believes that "field instructor meetings should be a safe place…for people to bring their frustrations, because we learn from these. These experiences can enrich our practice, because there's always another person in that room who says, 'Right, that's happened to me'" (Team Coordinator Interview, 12/4/06, MU).

After people are given a chance to share, the Coordinator introduces a group of Special Education teacher educators who talk about inclusion, and in particular how field

instructors can help interns make adaptations for students with special needs. The presentation not only develops the field instructors' knowledge about special needs students, but also provides them with information that can be shared with interns.

As I observe this meeting, it strikes me that this group functions as a community of professional learners. The leaders have created an environment that values a diversity of ideas (field instructors disagree with one another and with the leaders) and yet they are working toward a common goal: the development of new teachers who realize a deep understanding of subject matter, embrace diversity and learn to establish learning communities, participate in the improvement of schools and the profession, and develop reflective practices (http://www.educ.mu.edu/college/mission.htm). The Faculty Leader, in her unassuming, intellectual way, steers this work by interjecting ideas into the discussions and grounding the group in the program's professional learning standards:

- Employing a liberal education

- Teach a subject matter

- Work with students as individuals

- Organize a class

- Use an equipped school

- Join a faculty and school

- Engage guardians community

- Teacher as professional and reflective learner

These standards are organized into broad categories (Knowing subject matters and how to teach them; Working with students; Creating and managing a learning community; and, Working and learning in a school and profession) and are implemented in the program in

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multiple ways. They are incorporated into the content of TE 501 and TE 502 and the observation and evaluation forms used by field instructors align with the standards. Section five of the *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship Handbook* is devoted to the Teacher Education Professional Standards. It begins by describing each of the eight standards. The descriptions include expanded definitions of what each standard involves. For example, the standard about working with students involves treating students in certain ways, adapting the curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of all students, planning instruction and using multiple strategies to engage and motivate students, and continually assessing students and adjusting instruction based on what students need to know. The second half of this section deals with evaluation. It includes a description of when the evaluation conferences should occur, how to use the standards to focus on development, and the forms to be used. For each evaluation conference, the intern, cooperating teacher and field instructor fill out a form called the Assessment of Intern Progress: A Tool for Discussion. Comments are made regarding the intern's progress toward each of the eight standards and these are used to guide the discussion. After each conference, a Professional Learning Plan is created that describes the intern's strengths, sets goals, and outlines a plan for meeting those goals. This section concludes with an explanation of the final report (Exit Performance Description) that is written for each intern. This document is again organized around the program standards. All students in the LAET program are held to professional teaching standards and there is a strong emphasis on developing professionals, who will not only be effective teachers, but who will serve as leaders in their schools, which This reflects the third principle in the College of Education mission statement: service in education (http://www.ed-

uc.****.edu/college/mission.htm).

As the inclusion discussion winds down, the Team Coordinator checks her watch. After thanking the presenters, she suggests that they break into cluster groups for the remainder of the time. I am invited to join the Cluster C group, which has three field instructors (including Mimi). The leader explains to me that cluster meetings are more intimate, providing opportunities for field instructors to talk about their work with specific interns. The conversation is at once, lively and personal; field instructors give updates about on-going situations, new dilemmas are raised and suggestions are offered. The leader has a calm, pragmatic approach, modeling specific language that might be helpful, sharing past experiences as examples. One field instructor dominates the conversation a bit with her questions, many of which are about process and procedures. Melinda is a full time, tenure track faculty member in the Department of Teacher Education in her late 30's. This is her fifth year at Midwestern. Her educational background and research are related to science. Melinda is not a certified teacher, which means that she has a limited understanding of field experiences and mentoring. Nor does she have extensive K-12 teaching experience, although she has had opportunities to teach science courses to students of various ages over the years and is currently providing professional development for area sixth grade teachers. Her current interest in teacher learning motivated her to field instruct for this year. She is trying to understand how to support teachers at various stages in their careers. Melinda is a very thoughtful practitioner who later admitted to me that it surprised her "how much work it takes to be really good" at field instruction (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU). It is apparent that Melinda takes feedback seriously and uses it as a catalyst to think about her practice.

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During this meeting, she talks about feedback that she received from her interns and her recent 'aha' moments. Melinda rarely tells stories to her interns, a fact that more than one of them pointed out on the feedback form—she is not quite sure whether this is due to her personality or lack of K-12 experiences. She talks to her cluster group about how field instructors commonly use stories to illustrate points, as ways to offer suggestions, and as a source of credibility. Interns want to hear examples from real classrooms. Melinda understands that she thinks in certain ways. She is very specific, logical and structured; she "thinks in terms of frameworks" (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU). She has made attempts to incorporate more stories into her conversations with interns, but admits that it often feels contrived. This has brought home to her the fact that field instruction is a personal practice that is based, in part, on personality and experiences.

After all three of the field instructors are given the chance to share experiences from the past week, the cluster leader makes arrangements to visit their schools the following week. The group continues chatting as they pack up their things. Maggie comes over to find me. As we make our way back to the lobby, she asks if I have any questions. "One of the field instructors referred to a co-planning assignment during the meeting. What was that about?" I ask. Maggie explains that all graduate students who are field instructing for the first time are required to take a practicum course on mentoring called Practicum on Mentoring Beginning Teachers. Taught by the Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator, the course is also offered to the fixed term instructors, although most do not participate. Maggie tells me that the course meets for two hours every other week throughout the academic year. It introduces field instructors to the mentoring literature and helps them develop a stance toward their work and the skills

needed to help novices learn to teach. In addition to keeping a journal and writing a final

reflection, participants in the mentoring course are expected to complete assignments

where they practice mentoring strategies, like co-observation, co-planning, and analyzing

student work. The course also helps with practice things, like writing the Exit

Performance Descriptions. In the practicum, students write an EPD for their focal intern

under the guidance of the instructor.

"I have learned so much about mentoring from the practicum. The material is

really worthwhile. I just wish that the course was a pre-requisite to field instructing.

Doing them at the same time is too much sometimes" admits Maggie (Maggie Interview,

1/29/07, MU). "If you want to know more about mentoring at Midwestern, the *Guide to*

the Elementary and Middle School Internship (sections three and four) is helpful. Here,

you can borrow my copy," she offers, handing me a CD. Later, when I have a chance to

look at it, I notice that the mentoring guide begins with a consideration of the goal of

mentoring—to help interns develop Productive Habits of Practice, which are described as

"ways of habitually thinking and acting that are consistent with the four program

standards" (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*, MU). A diagram

shows how different elements of the internship – classroom experience, 800-level

courses, intern seminar – all work collaboratively to support the development of these

habits. The mentoring guide then provides an overview of the Internship Phases and the

bulk of this section details what should be expected during each phase. For example,

during the first eight weeks of the internship (Phase I), interns learn about context: What

curriculum does the school use? Who are the students as people and as learners? Which

instructional strategies does their cooperating teacher use and how is the classroom

arranged to accommodate these strategies? There are corresponding lists of activities

designed to support learning during each phase. In this way, all of the mentors work

toward the same goals. Section four draws upon the mentoring literature and describes

various mentoring practices that cooperating teachers can use in their work with interns.

Although this section is targeted toward cooperating teacher, most of the information is

equally valuable for field instructors. One of the key ideas that guides this section, is that

"mentors are *teacher educators* who must provide appropriate guidance and support for a

novice teacher whose professional practice is still developing" (*Guide to the Elementary

and Middle School Internship*, MU, p. 56). Mentoring, in this sense, is a form of

teaching in which mentors are not experts, but co-learners who think together with interns

about teaching and learning. This section contains descriptions of "core mentoring

practices" based on the work of Sharon Feiman-Nemser, like co-planning, co-teaching,

probing novice's thinking and focusing on student learning. It also has specific

information about how to make observations and conferences productive, how to foster

reflection in interns, and ways to support the creation of professional portfolios. The

Faculty Leader for LAET has tried to make mentoring a part of the conversation since

she assumed the leadership role for the program. She describes how she convened a

group of K-12 mentors early on in order map out a trajectory for mentoring. She says

that mentoring has become part of the literature of the group, but that the "deep

conversations about what any one of those phases really means and how any one of us

actually engages our practice, including field instructors, are still missing" (Faculty

Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU). It is her hope to revisit some of the mentoring literature

with the group and to create better structures for facilitating conversations. She believes

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that Cluster meetings might be one place to do this, if she provides the leaders with a focus to guide their discussions (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU).

A supplementary document, which can be found on the CD and website, also helps with the latter. The Professional Portfolio: A Professional Development Tool for the Internship describes the purpose and structure of the portfolios, including how to document evidence of learning, what the portfolio should look like, and how to go about creating it. This document provides guidelines for field instructors to use as they support the portfolio process during TE 501/502 seminars.

Reaching the front doors, I thank Maggie for being my guide for the day. She suggests that before leaving Erickson, I walk up to the third floor where most of the Teacher Education faculty is located. "You should stop by and see if the Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator is in her office. I know that she would be happy to talk with you about field instruction. It's one of her passions." Thanking her again, I decide that I might do just that.

Mapping the Similarities

Obvious differences exist across these programs (see Table 3.2). The parent institutions vary in size and governance from an intimate private college with 2300 students to a large, public research university serving over 45,000. The programs themselves differ in significant ways. Philosophically, they run the gamut from a program with no conceptual framework to programs that actively utilize their philosophy multiple ways, including assignments (it should be noted that despite the overall philosophical differences, three of the four programs embrace educative mentoring as a

mentoring stance). They also vary in length, with one offering a fifth year internship

model and the others a traditional four year structure.

Table 3.2 Program Differences

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Student Population	2300	4200	25,000	45,000
Certified Students/year*	332	310	1891	905
Conceptual Framework	None	Developing Responsive and Transformative Educators	Reflective Practitioner	Developing Professional Educators
Program Length	4 year/ 14 week student teaching	4 year/ 16 week student teaching	4 year/ 16 week student teaching	5 year/ 9 month student teaching

*These numbers include all student certified by the program (elementary, secondary and special education students).

What I really hope that you will take away from this chapter are the similarities,

especially as they relate to field instruction. As you can see from Table 3.3, the majority

of field instructors are fixed-term instructors. The cases reveal several things about

fixed-term instructors that are worth noting. Fixed-term instructors are generally part-

time employees, an arrangement that works well for program leaders who hire them on

an as-needed basis. Fixed-term instructors generally fall into one of two categories

(retired teachers/administrators or women who left full time teaching to raise their

children), but the vast majority are retired educators. As such, they guard their time.

They are happy to 'give back' to the profession, but they like the flexibility and

parameters of the work (observe and conference four times per semester at your

convenience; evaluate students twice each semester at the midway point and toward the

end, etc). They often are unwilling to go above and beyond what they consider the basic

expectations. The Director at Cross, for example, suggested that supervisors read a book together and engage in conversations about teaching and learning. Supervisors made it very clear that this exceeded their boundaries and refused to participate.

Table 3.3 Who Field Instructs

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Number of Field Instructors	13	6	20	18
Fixed-term Instructors	13 (100%)	5 (83%)	18 (90%)	7 (39%)
Full Time, Non-Tenure Track Instructors	0	0	2	0
Full-time, Tenure Track Faculty	0	1	0	1
Graduate Assistants	0	0	0	10

Field instructors are often hired because they have some connection to the program—they attended the program as students or supervised student teachers in their classroom. In addition to an emotional attachment, they bring some first-hand knowledge of the program. Still, they maintain a second-class status in most programs and there is little connection between them and other program faculty. Programs vary in their attempts to strengthen these connections. Supervisors at Thomas are not afforded much respect or professional status by other members of the college, which became readily apparent to the new Director when he recently assumed the role. He immediately took steps to rectify this situation, most notably inviting the new Chairperson of the Department to share her vision for the program with them and to seek their input. Full-

time faculty members regularly field instruct at Cross (depending on their teaching loads), which allows for on-going conversations about course content and common assignments. The Director makes concerted efforts to connect student teaching with other elements of the program. Midwestern course instructors (800-level) attend one field instructor meeting to share course expectations and assignments, but these only involve instructors from courses taken during the internship. Field instructors have little contact with instructors who teach earlier courses. Program leaders at Midwestern understand the value of connecting ideas from courses to field experiences, but the size of the program and structure constrain these efforts to some extent. For example, nearly half of their field instructors are graduate students, which accounts for a high turnover rate. This means that program leaders are constantly training new people. The mix of experienced and inexperienced field instructors can make planning meetings challenging, as they have different needs, although their hope is that new instructors will learn from the veterans. There is the least connection at Southern Midwest between the program instructors and those who oversee student teaching. University coordinators have virtually no contact with course instructors. The Partnership Director is hoping to strengthen this connection, taking steps in this direction by asking the Dean to talk about the state of the Department.

Table 3.4 Program Expectations for Field Instructors

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Attend Field Instructor Meetings	5 meetings per semester 2 hours each (10 hours total)	4 meetings per semester 2 – 3 hours each (12 hours total)	3 meetings per semester 4 hours each (12 hours total)	12 meetings per semester 90 minutes each (18 hours)
Conduct student teaching seminars	Weekly or bi-weekly at the discretion of the supervisor	Weekly (60 – 90 minutes)	Weekly	Weekly (60 – 90 minutes)
Observe teaching and provide feedback	4 or 5 visits during 14 week placement	At least 6 times during 16 week placement	2 formal observations during 16 week placement	Observe and conference regularly Minimum of 2 hours per week during 9 month internship
Evaluate student teachers	Written evaluation at midterm and end	Written evaluation at midterm and end	Written evaluation at midterm and end	Written evaluation at least 5 times during internship
Coach cooperating teachers	N/A	Informally work with cooperating teachers	Lead weekly meetings with classroom mentors	Lead group meetings with cooperating teachers every 4 – 6 weeks

The other similarity worth mentioning is the commonality in the expectations across the programs. Table 3.4 illustrates that all four programs generally expect field instructors to do the same sort of work: meet with program leaders and other field instructors, meet with student teachers as a group, observe lessons and give feedback, evaluate student teachers and (all but Thomas) teach cooperating teachers about mentoring. There are slight variations in frequency and duration, but the basic tasks are amazingly similar. It is the nature the work—what happens in these meetings, conferences and seminars—that differs and will be the focus of the remaining chapters.

Chapter Four

The Practices of Field Instruction

If you walk into any given school in the country you are likely to find prospective

teachers learning to teach. And chances are you will also find field instructors or

supervisors from a local college, university, or alternative certification program. These

field instructors might be sitting in the back of a classroom, taking notes on a lesson they

are observing; they might be in the hallway conferring or planning with a student teacher;

you might see them gathered around a table with a small group of student teachers

looking at student work; you might catch them standing in the back of a classroom

chatting with a cooperating teacher; or they might be found in the principal's office

talking about particular student teachers or program policies.   To those who spend time

in schools, these activities appear normal, even commonplace. But are they? Do all field

instructors do the same thing? Do they all have the same types of conversations? The

goals of this chapter are to define the common elements of field instruction and describe

the variations in the practices of the participants in this research.

What Field Instructors Do

Let me begin by defining what I mean by a "practice." In the most basic sense, a

practice is a habitual or customary action (http://dictionary.reference.com/bro-

wse/practice). Specifically for this study, a practice describes what field instructors *do* in

the course of their work – the moves they make to promote student teacher learning.

Undoubtedly, field instructors are often called upon to fulfill certain roles for the

program—communicating with K-12 personnel, interpreting expectations, and managing

relationships—but the focus of this study are those activities that help students learn how

to teach. To find evidence of these practices, I combed through interviews and field

notes looking for examples of field instructors going about their work or describing the

use of a practice. The following section describes each practice in greater detail.

Practices that Promote Student Teacher Learning

At the risk of stating the obvious, the point of student teaching is student teacher

learning. Teacher preparation involves a combination of courses and field experiences.

Courses teach students theories, skills, and content knowledge; field experiences offer the

chance to put these into practice, under the guidance of experienced educators. Much of

learning to teach is accomplished by actually teaching; students can only learn so much

from books and brief practicum experiences. Student teaching is about being immersed in

a real classroom and doing the authentic work of planning and instructing. But learning

does not just happen. Cooperating teachers and field instructors use a variety of practices

aimed at helping student teachers learn from this experience (see Figure 4.1), including

talking about teaching; planning lessons, teaching together, reflecting on teaching and

providing emotional support.[10]

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[10] The organization of this section is loosely adapted from Schwille (2008), in which she
identified forms of mentoring, based on data from pre-service and induction mentors.

Figure 4.1 Practices of Field Instruction

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                    │  Practices  │
                    │    that     │
                    │   Promote   │
                    │  Learning   │
                    └──────┬──────┘
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   │Coaching││Question││Teaching││Planning││Reflect ││Providing │
   │        ││  ing   ││Together││Together││  ing   ││Emotional │
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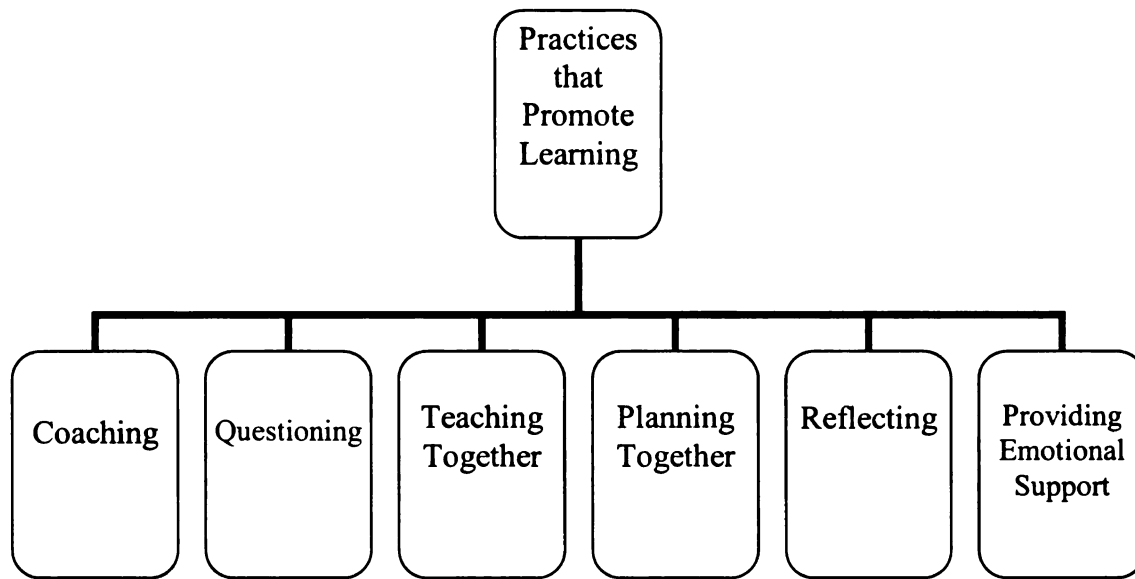
Talking about Teaching

Talking is an essential part of field instruction. Student teachers and field

instructors are commonly found with their heads together talking about a lesson; small

groups of student teachers regularly meet with their field instructors to talk about

teaching. Hopefully, student teachers learn from these conversations. Program leaders

expected their field instructors to meet with student teachers in these ways. One-on-one

conversations were required (*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship*,

MU; *College Supervisors Handbook*, CC; *Student Teaching Handbook*, TC College;

Intern Coordinator Handbook, Part 1, SMU), as were small group seminars (*Guide to the*

Elementary and Middle School Internship, MU,; *College Supervisors Handbook*, CC;

Student Teaching Handbook, TC College; *Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU, Part 1).

Two predominant practices emerged from these conversations—field instructors asked

questions and talked about their experiences as educators, offering advice and making

suggestions.

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Coaching. The most prevalent form of mentoring during these sessions was coaching, where field instructors offered advice or made suggestions. The language of coaching included phrases like: Have you tried...? When I was a teacher.... Would you like to see my resources on...? Every field instructor in this study coached student teachers and many considered this the most important part of their work. Terri, for example, defined success as seeing her suggestions implemented (Terri Interview, 2/1/07, TC).

Table 4.1 Coaching

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Coaching	2	5	1	1	2	3	6	2	0	1	3

There was a strong sense among field instructors of wanting to share the wisdom that they had accumulated over the years. The field instructors who were veteran educators (6 of the 12) expressed the desire to give back to the profession by helping new teachers. They liked sharing their expertise. Simon from Southern Midwest wrote curriculum at the state and national level throughout his teaching career. During one seminar, he informed his interns about standards-based education and helped them understand how curriculum is connected year to year. He included examples from his own classroom. Afterwards he explained, "And so after all the 35 years of my life as a teacher, I now feel like I can give the interns the wisdom that I've gained" (Simon Interview, May 8, 2007, SMU). Carrie described the feedback that she received from her student teachers in which they told her that they were "eager to get ideas, stuff,

suggestions" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). She altered the format of her seminars to accommodate their wishes, building in time to talk and share ideas.

Coaching looked quite similar across the 11 field instructors, and was the primary practice for many field instructors. This was especially true of field instructors from Thomas College and Southern Midwest. The program at Thomas was quite specific about this practice, stating that supervisors were expected to "share perceptions, make suggestions and provide general counsel" (*Guidelines for Student Teachers Handbook*, TC). This was echoed by the Director at one of the supervisor meetings. The *Intern Coordinator Handbook* was less specific, suggesting that they use seminar time to share ideas. Coaching was a dominant practice for the field instructors from these programs with examples evenly distributed across the instructors—Stan (2), Simon (3), Tony (2), Terri (2), and Tracy (3) (see Table 4.1).

The Midwestern numbers are a bit deceiving, because they make it appear as if coaching is rampant. The five field instructors provided 12 examples of coaching, but six of those came from Maggie. The other six were dispersed among the remaining four field instructors. Recall that Maggie had a non-traditional entry into the profession. As someone who did not go through traditional student teaching, Maggie valued the practical assistance that she never received. As a result, she made a point of providing her interns with useful information. For example, her seminars included topics like teaching spelling and creating assessments. She regularly brought in resources to share, saying, "take what you want and leave the rest" (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU). The *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* suggested that field instructors should give advice and offer examples of ways to improve, but these were to be done in the context of

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other work. When offering critical feedback, field instructors were directed to give specific feedback about how the intern might improve her teaching and present information in ways that encourage interns to think for themselves. The program's position seemed to differ somewhat from Maggie's—here's what I suggest, take it or leave it—attitude that was discussed above. The other field instructors seemed more aligned to the program.

At Cross, Carrie spent considerable seminar time providing suggestions; Chris talked about being very selective about what he chose to share with students, because time together was limited. Here again, the alignment seems a bit off, in that both field instructors coached their student teachers and talked about its importance, but there was no documentation from the program about this practice. Perhaps this is because for many people, field instruction is synonymous with coaching and does not bear mentioning. It is also likely that the Director at Cross intentionally included other practices, in her attempts to emphasize a certain vision of mentoring.

Coaching also involved providing practical assistance to student teachers. Learning to teach means learning about and managing logistical details. New teachers need to know about their school—its policies, procedures, curriculum, etc. As emerging professionals, they need information about general education topics, like teachers unions, resources, state and county support. As students, they have program assignments and requirements. Field instructors play a key role in guiding student teachers through these logistical matters. Much of the school information is provided by the cooperating teachers, since they tend to be more familiar with the building and its workings.

Field instructors varied regarding help with general education topics. Carrie devoted seminar time to talking about professionalism—appropriate dress, professional etiquette, talking with colleagues, confidentiality, etc. (Carrie Seminar, 3/5/07, Cross). Mimi discussed teacher certification procedures with her interns and encouraged them to make arrangements to take CPR training (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Nothing was written in program materials and leaders made no mention about providing this type of help, which coincided with the lack of examples. The program materials from Thomas were also silent on this matter, even though this was a key element of Tony's practice. He wanted student teachers to hear from the experts about professional organizations and alternative schools. His seminars included field trips to the local Michigan Education Association and a charter school. He arranged for them to meet a Human Resource Director from a local school, who talked about interviewing skills. The field instructors from Southern Midwest took a very similar approach, providing experiences with professional organizations, Individualized Education Plans, and Michigan Department of Education curriculum developers. The difference was that the program leaders at Southern Midwest expected their university coordinators to play this role: coordinators were expected to "schedule Teacher Certification and Career Development staff to meet with their Interns" and "familiarize interns with relevant community services, i.e., K/RESA; Provide a mock Interview experience during the semester; Provide speakers to deal with issues relating to special needs students" (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*).

The one thing that program leaders and field instructors agreed on is that field instructors are perfectly positioned to help student teachers with their assignments, having access to course instructors who can explain assignments and clarify expectations.

Program leaders and/or materials in all four programs stated that field instructors were expected to help with either creating assignments, disseminating information about them or both. The Cross Director, for instance, explained that supervisors help create assignments for the courses associated with student teaching. This familiarity enables them to help students (Director Interview, 12/19/06, CC). The Midwestern *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* stated that field instructors "work with the cluster leader, program coordinator and team leader to understand and communicate current program practices and policies, and [are] available to pass along information provided by course instructors about planning and other course requirements" (p. 12).

Field instructors from all of the programs helped with assignments. Some devoted seminar time for students to ask questions or work together (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC; Martha Seminar, 1/29/07, MU; Mimi Seminar, 1/24/07, MU; Maggie Seminar, 1/8/07). Others created websites where they posted assignments and provided examples (Chris Interview, 3/21/07; Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU). Maggie put a new twist on an existing assignment, by changing the philosophy statement assignment a bit. She asked them to write a "This I believe…." statement, like on National Public Radio. These statements became self-standards for interns to use when thinking about their teaching. Maggie referred to them often in their conversations about teaching (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Martha helped her interns organize their portfolios by breaking the work into manageable chunks (Martha Interview, 2/12/07, MU).

Field instructors deviated from their programs most often in regard to assignments. Field instructors from Midwestern, Southern Midwest, and Thomas

College all eliminated or severely altered assignments. Despite his best judgment, Stan eliminated a lesson plan assignment that was designed to have the student teachers demonstrate in writing the thought-processes behind their planning, because the cooperating teachers claimed the interns had too much to do (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Tracy and Terri elected to forego one part of a required program form, because they thought it was a "waste of time" (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

Mimi worried about adding to her interns' burden, so she did not make them write certain assignments. One example was a child study in which she still required them to follow a child, but they did not have to write about what they learned. She did ask them to keep a weekly journal, because their reflections helped her do her job more effectively—they were not just "busy work" (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). When Marissa first came to Midwestern, the seminar content in her cluster was substantial and the requirements rigorous. She felt inadequately prepared to teach many of the ideas. Marissa ignored certain parts of the complicated syllabus and omitted some readings, but "never eliminated or dummied-down an assignment" (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). At the time of the interview, she no longer found it necessary to make these types of adjustments, because the expectations in her cluster had changed.

Questioning. Asking questions was also a vital part of field instruction, but field instructors' style and intent varied. Seven field instructors used questioning to probe their student teachers' thinking. Carrie described how her student teachers commented on the fact that she always asks them questions; she explained that she needed to be sure that they had thought through their lessons. Asking questions was a ways to get into their heads.

It's not because I don't agree with what you're doing, it's just because I want to know if you really thought about it or if you just did the easiest thing...Go ahead and carry on because you thought through why that's a good strategy. But, you do need to know why you're doing it. (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC)

There were nine examples of questioning from across the four programs, with the majority coming from Midwestern (see Table 4.2). The *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* explicitly states that questioning is central to the work of field instruction, a sentiment regularly echoed by program leaders (Coordinator Interview, 12/15/06, MU; TE 994 Field Notes, 11/8/06, MU). Questioning was expected and practiced at Midwestern; all four field instructors who used questioning did so to encourage interns to think and talk about their teaching.

Table 4.2 Questioning

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Questioning	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1

Written materials from both Cross and Southern Midwest also included statements about questioning. The Cross *College Supervisors Handbook* provided a list of reflective questions for supervisors to use during conferences (p. 3). There was strong alignment at Cross, in that both Chris and Carrie asked their students teachers reflective questions.

Not so at Southern Midwest. The program was in a state of transition, with program leaders trying to revive a particular vision of mentoring that included reflective questioning. As you may recall, developing reflective practitioners was the conceptual framework guiding the program at Southern Midwest; program leaders gave the most attention to those practices encouraging reflection; and, questioning was mentioned in the

Intern Coordinator Handbook as a reflective strategy (p. 13). The Director modeled and

explained the use of reflective questioning during a School/University Partnership

meeting, basing the group's discussion on an article that had questioning as a central

theme. Simon had embraced this way of working more than Stan, modeling reflective

questioning with his interns and cooperating teachers. Stan did not exhibit the type of

questioning advocated by the Director, who instructed coordinators to constantly ask:

"Why are you doing what you are doing?" (School/University Partnership Meeting,

4/24/07, SMU). She wanted this type of questioning to become second nature.

Stan used questioning for a different purpose. Stan used questioning to steer a

student to a predetermined conclusion; he asked questions to make a point. After

completing a co-observation, Stan and his intern met with the cooperating teaching to talk

about her lesson. Rather than asking the intern to reflect about what she had observed, he

asked . . . .

Stan: Maggie just uses that whiteboard all of the time. Don't you think she ought to use
the overhead more?
Intern: Well, I don't know.
Stan: Well, does she have management problems when she's writing on the board?
Intern: No.
Stan: Might you have problems when you are writing on the board?
Intern: Yea.
Stan: Why?
Intern: Because I haven't got the respect that she has.
Stan: Oh good. Where you gonna teach?'
Intern: Well, I don't know.
Stan: Might you teach in Kalamazoo?'
Intern: Well yea.
Stan: Might you use the overhead more if you teach in Kalamazoo than if you teach in
Portage? What's the difference?

The questions that Stan asked were not intended to encourage the intern to reflect about

teaching, but rather to lead her to a particular conclusion.

There was no mention of questioning in any written materials at Thomas. The

Director told me that he expected supervisors to ask questions (Director Interview,

11/29/06, TC). This coincided with Tony's practice of asking: "Why are you doing this?

Where are going with this? What are you going to do with this, whatever you're going?'

(Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC).

Planning Together

Planning can be tricky for new teachers. Experienced teachers notoriously write

very sketchy lesson plans—much of what they do is in their heads. New teachers,

however, need to write detailed lessons, in part, because it forces them to articulate what

they want students to learn, what they will do to help them learn the content and how they

will assess whether students have learned the material. In addition, in order to help

someone learn how to teach, the mentor needs to know what that person is thinking—the

thought processes behind the actions. Lesson plans are a window into new teachers'

intentions and thinking. Writing detailed lesson plans is ubiquitous in teacher education

programs. During student teaching, most programs require a certain number of formal

lessons, but it is understood that students will develop, along the way, their own unique

planning system that works for them. Field instructors play a pivotal role in this

transition.

Table 4.3 Planning Together

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Planning Together	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1

A handful of field instructors described how they planned with their student teachers. For some field instructors, this involved sharing pre-made plans and resources with their students. Simon asked his interns to choose a lesson plan on the Internet. As they shared these in seminar, Simon connected the content to real world ideas and events, giving examples from his own teaching (Simon Seminar, 1/25/07). Maggie brought resources to seminar that she used when she was a classroom teacher. She talked with the prospective teachers about how to use the concept of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) in lesson planning, supplementing this discussion with examples from her classroom.

A few field instructors took a different approach, planning with their student teachers as co-thinkers. This meant that in the process of planning lessons together, field instructors made their thinking transparent, encouraging student teachers to participate. Melinda engaged in this type of planning after she noticed that one of her interns was teaching directly from her cooperating teacher's lesson.

> She has this tendency of following what her cooperating teacher does with this, like this technical lesson that I told you about, she took it out of her cooperating teacher's book and just sort of figured, 'Whatever the cooperating teacher does is fine.' Well turns out it's not. I mean her cooperating teacher is a great cooperating teacher, because she has a great relationship. But the lessons are not substantially and intellectually engaging in the ways that we would hope they would be. (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU)

Melinda designed ways to work with her interns on lesson planning that would encourage them to focus on student learning and make the lessons more rigorous. Melinda gave her interns written feedback on their plans and provided opportunities for them to plan together as professional colleagues.

All of the programs included lesson planning as part of the work of field

instruction, but only five of the 11 field instructors planned with their student teachers

(see Table 4.3). None of the supervisors from Thomas discussed planning, despite the

program's detailed expectations. The *Guidelines for Student Teachers Handbook* listed

planning as one of the conferencing activities that field supervisors should do with

student teachers and the School of Education provided a form called, "Evaluating A

Lesson Plan" to help supervisors assess lessons. Planning was also discussed by the

Director at a supervisors meeting.

Only Carrie talked about planning with her students at Cross, even though the

Director strongly advocated co-planning. The *College Supervisors Handbook* listed

planning as a requirement for supervisors and the Director introduced the idea of co-

planning to the supervisors during one of their meetings (*College Supervisors Handbook*,

CC; Field Supervisor Meeting, 12/11/06, CC).

University coordinators at Southern Midwest were expected to plan with their

interns—especially when there was a problem—using the Madeline Hunter format

(*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU). Despite this directive, only Simon gave evidence

that he did much with planning. The one example involved his entire group of interns

during seminar.

The strongest alignment was found at Midwestern, where co-planning was listed

as one of the core tasks of mentoring. The program expected field instructors to co-plan

regularly with their interns and advocated a certain type of planning, where mentors co-

think with their interns about each element of a lesson plan. (*Guide to the Elementary and

Middle School Internship*, MU). Four of the five field instructors described co-planning

episodes in which they made their thinking transparent, asked students to articulate the

thinking behind their plans, and focused on student learning. Maggie explained that "anytime you're sitting with them, letting them in on what you're doing is useful" (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU).

Teaching Together

Sometimes the best way to learn something is to see it in action. Rather than always telling, field instructors sometimes show their student teachers what good teaching looks like. Teaching together can take many forms. I am making a distinction between two types: Demonstration teaching (with two examples) and co-teaching (with five examples). In demonstration teaching, field instructors sometimes model brief, impromptu lessons while planning or conferencing with student teachers. "Here, let me show you what that might look like." Schwille (2008) refers to this as teaching "outside the action," because students are not present (p. 157). During seminar, Carrie used—in her words—"transparent pedagogy" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). Sitting around a conference table with her student teachers, she modeled how she would grade an assessment, explaining her thinking as she went through it. Tracy also modeled for a student teacher during a debriefing conference, explaining why she thought circulating was important during whole group instruction. Both of these teachers used demonstration teaching to think out loud about their teaching, giving reasons for their actions.

Table 4.4 Teaching Together

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Teaching Together	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0

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Co-teaching occurs "inside the action" when field instructor model lessons in front of students (Schwille, 2008, p. 156). These can be planned or impromptu. There were two examples of this type of teaching together. In his interview, Simon described how he demonstrated a lesson and then encouraged the intern to try it on her own, claiming that student teachers learn a lot from their mentors in this way (Simon Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Note the absence of any transparency—he did not talk to the intern about the teaching episode, but let her draw her own conclusions. The intent of this type of teaching together is imitation—I show; you try. Maggie described a situation where she jumped in and helped with classroom management in a kindergarten classroom. She thought this was beneficial because:

> I really think you help an intern learn when you have no qualms about going in there and doing it yourself. So, it's really easy to talk and say, 'Have a behavior management plan. Read this chapter. Talk with your cooperating teacher.' But, sometimes, they just need to see it; see what I mean. So I'll go in there and I just do it. (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU)

These examples of co-teaching came from all four programs—one each from Cross, Southern Midwest and Midwestern; two from Thomas. Midwestern, however, was the only program that had any expectations regarding teaching together. The *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* described in detail the purpose and forms of co-teaching. The written material conveyed a very specific vision for the work: "In co-teaching, mentors are expected to teach *and* talk about their teaching before, during and after teaching" (p. 73). Maggie was the only field instructor whose practice aligned with program expectations. Her conversations with the intern, after the fact, coincided with the program's expectation that she talk about what she did, explaining why she chose to use certain strategies. Stan, Tony and Chris matched the expectations

of their programs—they weren't expected to teach together and they didn't. Carrie,

Tracy and Simon all elected to teach together despite the fact that this practice was not

required by their programs.

Reflecting on Teaching

Thinking about teaching goes hand in hand with talking about teaching. As field

instructors and student teachers meet together—individually and as a group—they engage

in activities designed to get them thinking about their own teaching experiences. What

went well? What would they change next time? Did their students learn what they

wanted them to? What does this all mean for their planning? Field instructors used two

practices to encourage this type of reflection: writing and videotape analysis.

Writing. Six of the field instructors used journals in their work with student

teachers. Some used them to build relationships. Chris, for example, described an on-line

activity called Observation/Application, in which students recorded one thing that they

observed each week and then made a real life application. He liked the open-endedness of

the assignment, because it produced heartfelt responses and gave him access to personal

background information, which he later used to make connections (Chris Interview,

3/21/07, CC). Marissa also used reflective journals to get to know her interns, allowing

her to be a better mentor. She told them:

> I don't want to know what time math is or what you did in math in your journal; I
> want to know what are you thinking, what you are you feeling and how this is this
> affecting you?' And that really breaks down some barriers where, then I'll say to
> them things like, "Wow, I understand that you're a mom and you have three kids
> and you're juggling all this. How are you doing?" And when you start those kinds
> of conversations, then they start to trust you and let down and then that's really
> about the relationship building. (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU)

Other field instructors took a different approach to journaling, using them to get inside their students' thinking about teaching. Unlike Chris's open-ended assignment, Stan guided their reflections, wanting his student teachers to think about particular aspects of the experience. He gave prompts like: "Describe your relationship with your mentor. What have you learned about instruction? What have you learned about classroom management? Assessment? What have you learned about education and about the teaching profession? Have you videotaped yourself yet?" (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Stan used the information from the journals to plan seminars for his student teachers. Simon also wanted to get into their heads to share their "ah-ha" moments; to have them describe their thoughts about a lesson (Simon Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). He was the only field instructor who talked about using journals as a means to think about episodes of teaching. Although, his journal assignment was open-ended, students knew that he expected them to write about their teaching. He described one entry in which the intern talked about altering a lesson on the spot. After assessing his students' understanding of the concept and gauging the mood of the class, he made a split decision to change the instructional strategies that he had planned to use. This intern used writing as a way to think about that decision and its consequences (Simon Interview, 5/8/07, SMU).

Table 4.5 Reflective Writing

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Writing	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0

The program materials from Cross and Thomas were silent about reflective writing. Chris was the only field instructor from either institution who required his student teachers to journal. He used the activity to build relationships, rather than as a learning tool. This reflected his emphasis on emotional support.

Journaling was listed as a common reflective strategy in the description of the conceptual framework and an ED 410/470 course requirement at Southern Midwest (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU). Both Stan and Simon used journals with their interns, but in different ways. Stan used the activity to gather information; Simon, to think about planning and instruction. Simon's interpretation of the assignment aligned more closely with the program's expectations. He defined reflection as "thinking back" (School/University Partnership meeting, 4/24/07). The handbook suggested that journals should be used to reflect about teaching, listing the following potential questions:

> What questions or ideas about teaching do I have? What principle or theory about teaching and learning can I draw on from what I am observing and thinking? How does what happened in the classroom relate to past experiences in preparatory coursework or practice? (*Intern Coordinator Handbook*, SMU)

The *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* required interns at Midwestern to "reflect on their teaching and learning in writing, through journals and reflective papers" (p. 12). Journals were used to set goals and provided examples of student growth. Only three of the five field instructors—Mimi, Marissa, and Maggie— described reflective writing as part of their practice and it is questionable whether this coincided with program expectations. The handbook clearly stated that journals were to help interns think about learning to teach, but the examples provided by the field instructors were more relational. Mimi asked her interns to journal so that that she would know what they were doing and thinking; what problems they were having—not what

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they were learning (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU).

Analyzing videotape episodes of teaching. Teaching is a private practice.

Teachers are notoriously reluctant to open their doors and allow others access to their

classroom. Learning to teach, however, requires a certain amount of transparency—

mentors are constantly observing and critiquing; student teachers are asked to step back

and talk about their teaching. Some programs ask student teachers to make their practice

public by videotaping lessons. These provide a different type of opportunity for student

teachers to see and analyze their own teaching. Three of the four programs—

Midwestern, Southern Midwest and Cross—required student teachers to videotape

themselves teaching. Only three field instructors—from Cross and Southern Midwest—

did this, and they differed in what they expected and did with the clip afterwards (see

Table 4.6). Carrie and Chris varied in their approach to the videotape assignment, despite

the detailed directions from the program:

> Videotape one lesson and describe the following: Lesson introduction; lesson
> development; lesson closure; Discuss ways in which and did and did not meet
> your objectives; Were your directions easily understood? Give evidence from
> student behavior; Describe other student responses to your lesson. Did you notice
> any specific student needs that you were not aware of prior to this videotaping? If
> so, describe; Give specific examples of content, conduct, and covenant
> management strategies that you used; Describe how you adapted your teaching to
> meet the needs of students with varying abilities; Describe how your lesson used
> multiple "modalities" to reach the learner including visual, auditory, and
> kinesthetic approaches; Describe the changes you would make in this lesson if
> you were to teach it again; Analyze your presentation strengths and areas to work
> on (facial expression, voice, energy level, body language, etc.; Now that you have
> observed yourself, list 2-3 goals you have for your teacher in the future. (EDUC
> 345 Syllabus, CC)

They both modified the assignment to suit their needs. Chris asked his student teachers

to choose a segment that they thought was challenging or particularly good. They met as

a group to watch the clips. He tried to create a positive, non-threatening atmosphere,

bringing pizza and soda for everyone. Chris did not direct the analysis in any way, letting the students steer the conversation. The comments remained positive and everyone left feeling good about their teaching (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). Carrie went with her instincts and modified the lesson in a different way. She used the video assignment as a tool to get a particular student thinking about her affect in the classroom—her tone and non-verbal cues. It was arranged that a fellow student teacher would do the taping. This student was intentionally chosen, because she struggled with management issues and Carrie thought she would benefit from observing this particular classroom. She was also chosen because Carrie hoped that she would give honest feedback to her classmate. "I think it will be a win-win for both of them" (Carrie Interview, CC). Carrie stuck closer to program requirements by asking her student teacher to consider one of the questions listed in the course syllabus: Analyze your presentation strengths and areas to work on (facial expression, voice, energy level, body language, etc.). Chris, however, missed an opportunity to sit and talk with his students about their teaching, as the program had hoped. Chris' group felt good about themselves and they may have had productive conversations about teaching, but there was no assurance, because Chris did not guide the discussion.

Table 4.6 Analyzing Videotapes

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Video Analysis	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Although the use of videotaping was not clearly articulated at Southern Midwest, its use was implied. Appendix A of the *Intern Coordinator Handbook* included a form

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called A Video Teaching Critique Sheet. The sheet asked interns to consider non-verbal communication, verbal communication, and pedagogy as they watched themselves teach. University coordinators were overheard discussing the videotape assignment at one of the School/University Partnership meetings, indicating its usage (School/University Partnership Meeting, 4/24/07, SMU). Stan talked about videotaping in passing, saying that he really valued the activity but had a hard time getting his interns to do it unless it was assigned—they are so busy. Videotaping was one of the few things that he insisted on because he found it to be "as productive a thing as there is" (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Stan did not describe in any detail how he used the clips.

Program leaders at Midwestern valued the videotape assignment (Team Coordinator Interview, 12/4/06). Interns were expected to videotape themselves for their 800-level courses and these were available for field instructor use. The *Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship* described how video clips of teaching episodes could serve as "texts" which could be used to support interns' learning. These were considered one of the mentoring tools that encouraged reflective self-assessment (pp. 86, 88). Despite these clear expectations, none of the field instructors described using this practice in their work.

Providing Emotional Support

Student teaching can be very stressful: The new teacher is learning to teach while actually teaching in someone else's classroom. There are a myriad of factors that may contribute to (or undermine) your success: whether you get along with your cooperating teacher, the type of support you receive; the students, and your own comfort with the content or work. Add to this the fact that you are being evaluated, and it becomes clear

why this experience can be so intense. That student teachers need emotional support is one of the most widely agreed upon features of mentoring (Enz et al 1996; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986; Little, 1990; Wang & O'Dell, 2002). Field instructors emotionally support their student teachers by listening, encouraging, and making themselves available—not necessarily 24/7, like Stan suggests (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). This support deals with the stresses related to planning and teaching, but it also involves real life issues—how to get along with people, manage your time, set priorities, get over a broken heart. All of the field instructors considered this to be an important part of their work. For some, emotional support took the form of cheerleading, complete with continuous practice and motivational speeches. During the first seven weeks, Chris made a conscious effort to praise the positives, while also checking on student teachers' health, mental and spiritual well-being (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC). Carrie talked about building relationships and getting to know her student teachers as people. At times, she assumed the role of "mom" to help them through situations, offering advice, giving hugs and even feeding them (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). Tony relied on his counseling background when students had personal issues (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC). All of the field instructors acknowledged that student teaching is a challenging experience and that students need a safe place to vent their frustrations. They all—except Melinda—talked about the importance of creating time during seminars when students could just talk. Melinda struggled with this part of the role; she does not see herself as a relational person. While she recognized their need for support, she was not naturally inclined to give it (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU, p. 7).

Table 4.7 Providing Emotional Support

	Tony	Terri/ Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Offering Emotional Support	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0

Surprisingly, the program leaders and materials had little to say about emotional support. Both Southern Midwest and Thomas acknowledged that student teaching is an emotional experience, but were silent on the field instructors' support role. The Team Coordinator at Midwestern spoke about how good field instructors learn when to give support and "when they need a little kick" (Team Coordinator, 12/4/06, MU). Cross leadership said nothing about emotional support. Despite this silence, all of the field instructors value this part of the work and make room for it in their practice. A few give it precedence over everything else. Terri and Tracy recounted times when they chose to downplay other elements of the work—like evaluation--to concentrate on support (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

A Varied Practice

This chapter began with the question: Do all field instructors do the same thing? The answer appears to be both yes *and* no. Field instructors do indeed engage in many of the same practices. Not every field instructor used every practice, but each practice was used by a significant number of field instructors (at least a third). Collectively the group identified a set of common practices, from which they varied only slightly: Coaching, questioning, teaching together, planning, writing, analyzing videotape clips, and providing emotional support.

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Table 4.8 Field Instructor Practices

	Tony	Terri/Tracy	Chris	Carrie	Stan	Simon	Maggie	Mimi	Martha	Marissa	Melinda
Coaching	2	5	1	1	2	3	6	2	0	1	3
Questioning	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Planning Together	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Teaching Together	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Writing	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0
Analyzing Videotape	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Offering Emotional Support	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0

The real variation was evident in how field instructors enacted these practices. There were numerous examples where two or more field instructors used the same practice, but in very different ways—for different reasons. I will call this the *content* of the practice. Another interesting distinction emerged. Field instructors not only varied from one another, but in some cases, from their programs—from the values and expectations articulated by program leaders (in writing and in person). In Table 4.9, I organize these examples of variation into four categories:

(1) Instances when a practice varied from other field instructors
(2) Instances when a practice varied from the program
(3) Instances when the content varied from one field instructor to the next
(4) Instances when the content of the work deviated from the program

The remainder of this chapter describes in greater detail each of these types of variation and then gives attention to the reasons behind the variations that frequently appeared in the data.

Table 4.9 Variations in Field Instruction

	Variations across field instructors	Variations from program	Total
Variations in practice	2	6	8
Variations in content	62	11	73
Total	64	17	81

Practices Vary from One Field Instructor to Another

Practices are what field instructors do—they support, converse, plan, teach and

guide reflections. These practices appear to be common across the programs and as we

can see from Table 4.9, there is little departure in the use of the practices from one field

instructor to the next. What this means is that field instructors are engaging in this same

set of practices, which is not to say that everyone uses all of these, but rather that there

was little variance in the kinds of practices that were used. There were only two instances

of person-to-person variation—from Southern Midwest and Midwestern—and in both

cases, the field instructor created a new practice that coincided with their program's

philosophy. In the following vignette,[11] two field instructors are planning together before

a meeting. Both have made decisions to do—or not to do—certain things and are able to

articulate their reasoning. For our purposes, Martha is the key figure, as she is the one

describing a new practice she has created—this represents a practice variation.

Mimi and Martha

Mimi rushes into the large conference room with its muted tones and comfy office
chairs. Waiting for her is Martha, another relatively new field instructor at
Midwestern. The two like to get together before meetings to share ideas and

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[11] The vignettes are based on actual episodes from the data. Some of the details, however,
are fictitious. For example, for a later vignette, Marissa actually described the observation
and post-observation conference, including details about how she felt and what she
intended to do to improve her practice. For the vignette, I added the atmospheric elements
about the rain and getting into her car. Some elements of the settings are fabricated, but
the events and feelings are genuine.

catch up with one another. "Did you hear that Janet Reed is finally thinking about retiring? She started at Meadow Brook the same year as I did. I can't believe she's stuck it out this long." They talk of colleagues and old friends as they munch on sandwiches and chips. After a while, the conversation turns to their work. "Have you decided what you are going to do about the child study assignment?" Martha asks. Mimi explains that she is concerned about how burdened the interns are at this point in the year; she doesn't want to add to it by making them write so much. She has decided to ask them to choose a child to follow, but is not going to make them write an actual report. They can talk about what they learned in one of their seminars. "I do, however, ask them to send me weekly reflections so that I know what they are doing and thinking; what problems they are having." Martha agrees that it is crucial to know 'where your interns are' so that you can plan for them. "My interns have been working so hard these first few weeks of lead teaching. They came to my house for dinner last night and I told them about a new practice we are going to try. I call it An Assistance Observation." Martha goes on to explain that she is going to go into each of their classrooms for half a day. "I am not requiring a lesson plan. I am just there to help. They can use me anyway they want—to work with a challenging student, take the kids to art, cut out supplies. Whatever they need." Martha says that she hopes to create a more relaxed atmosphere and be helpful to her interns at the same time. (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU; Martha Seminar 1/29/07 and Interview 2/12/07, MU)

In a later interview, the faculty leader from Midwestern commented on how much Martha had grown during her first year. "She has really engaged this as a role that she thinks about; she wants to develop a practice" (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU). The faculty leader felt confident that Martha was meeting the program requirements, but yet was able to make the practice her own. She thought it was great that Martha created her own activities based on what she believes her interns need.

Practices Vary from the Program

Practices are similar among field instructors, but if we compare what they do with what the program expects, more variation is evident. The six examples—which came from all four programs—were evenly divided into two types of variations: practices that field instructors chose to ignore and practices that were used, but not specified by their program. I would imagine program leaders having less trouble with field instructors

including practices like journaling, coaching, and demonstration teaching in their practice

(even though they were not stipulated), than eliminating required practices. The

following vignette allows us to step into the practice of two field instructors who work

together. Their goal is to provide support—what they say, how they spend their time, the

resources they share and the decisions they make.

<div align="center">Terri and Tracy</div>

> The Country Kitchen is a greasy spoon that sits just off the interstate. In a
> separate room off of the main dining hall, six student teachers sit chatting about
> their day as they peruse the menu. Winter sunlight filters in through the wall of
> windows, making the atmosphere cheery and bright. The conversations in the
> room run from scheduling observation times to a story by one young woman
> about how much harder teaching is then she thought it would be. Terri and Tracy
> allow the group time to talk with one another as they order their food. The formal
> part of the seminar begins with Terri sharing ideas. Included in their packet, is a
> sheet that outlines 10 Top Tips that all new teachers should know. She also
> introduces them to a fun Valentine's adjective activity that they can use with their
> students. Next on the agenda, Tracy talks to the group about what they can expect
> during observations. A question is raised about lesson plans. Tracy explains that
> she and Terri don't require them to use The School of Education's lesson plan
> format. They do, however, need to have some sort of plan in mind. Terri
> confirms that their primary goal is to support them. "So, don't be nervous."
> (Tracy/Terri Seminar 1/31/07 and Interview, 2/7/07, TC)

When I asked Terry and Tracy about this later, they admitted that their practice

sometimes contradicts the program, which spells out in great detail the use of the

Madeline Hunter lesson plan format in the *Student Teaching Handbook*. They instruct

their student teachers not to "rat" on them to the director or other supervisors—"what we

say here, stays here" (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC). They described a time when

one of their student teachers stood up at a whole-group, student teacher meeting and told

her fellow student teachers that her field supervisors do not require the use of those "long

ole" Madeline Hunter lesson plans. Tracy said, "I could have shot the girl" (Terri/Tracy

Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

By omitting the Thomas College lesson plan format, Tracy and Terri removed

opportunities to plan together with their student teachers. There is no evidence that they

substituted this format for another, but rather, its removal conveyed to student teachers

that planning was not a practice that they were going to engage in together.

Content Varies from One Field Instructor to Another

The content of field instruction has to do with *how* field instructors enact the

practices—what they talk about and work on with their student teachers. Two field

instructors may both co-teach, but the practice will not necessarily look and sound the

same. One may demonstrate a lesson in hopes that the student teacher will imitate it;

another may do an on-the-spot think aloud, talking over the children as she describes why

she used particular strategies and not others. On the surface, field instructors do the same

things, but underneath the differences are extensive (see Table 4.10). Variation from one

field instructor to the next is where the most variation occurred, with 62 examples from

across the four programs (see Table 4.9). There were examples across and within

programs. It was somewhat understandable that field instructors from different

institutions varied, as programs have different ideologies, structures, and expectations.

Variations were most noticeably visible in seminars. The following vignettes provide a

glimpse into two seminars that are not without similarities. Both have an agenda and

purpose. Student teachers are given opportunities to learn something new and to share

with the group. Yet the content of the conversations and what they learn is very different.

Tony thinks it important to inform students about teachers' unions; Chris has them think

about engaging parents. Flexibility is evident in one; routine guides the other. The setting

varies. Students talk more in one and are relatively passive in the other.

Table 4.10 Practices-Content

Practices *What* *What field instructors do*	Content *How* *The ways they enact it*
Coaching	Share their wisdom (except Melinda)
Questioning	Making a point Reflecting
Teaching together	Imitating Model thinking
Planning together	Sharing resources Co-thinking
Writing	Guiding student thinking Developing reflective habits
Videotape analysis	Building relationships Talking about teaching
Provide emotional support	Supporting their student teachers

Tony

It's a sunny Wednesday in February and 12 student teachers from Thomas College hurry into the Grand Rapids Education Association (GREA) building after a long day of teaching. They file into a stark conference room in the basement of the building. Instant coffee is available on a table, but only a few brave souls partake. Tony is waiting for them, along with Tom, another field supervisor. They have recently begun combining their seminar groups and the arrangement seems to be working well for both of them. As the group takes their seats, they are joined by the large, affable President of the GREA. Alan Chest immediately puts the group at ease with his friendly style and inspirational ideas about teaching. Within minutes, he has the group chanting "I AM A TEACHER!" as he encourages them to assume their authority as educators and "plant seeds" in the schools where they work. He uses this platform to inform the group about the purpose and benefits of teachers' unions. A short film describes the history of unions in Michigan. After an hour or so, Alan leaves the group. Tony and Tom follow-up on some of his ideas, but they also have business that needs to be conducted. During the meeting, one young woman turns to the group for help. She is planning a lesson on Romeo and Juliet and can't figure out a good way to introduce the book. Tony, after a slight hesitation, goes with the flow and asks the group if they have any ideas? A lively discussion ensues with people volunteering ideas that range from watching video clips to role plays. (Tony Seminar, 2/7/07 and Interview, 2/16/07, TC).

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Chris

It's late in the afternoon and the usual hush hangs over the technology lab at Cross College. Five young women file into the cozy conference room with its muted carpet and soft lighting. Waiting for them with refreshments from his personal fridge is Chris, their field instructor. As they get settled, Chris randomly hands out cards. Each card contains a prompt: Describe a moment in time when you... had to stifle your laughter; saw the light bulb go on; learned what not to do; wanted to climb in a hole; didn't want to be a teacher, etc. Knowing the drill, the first student teacher begins by describing a funny incident that happened in her classroom earlier in the week. When each person has shared an experience, Chris tells a story of his own. He holds up a crayon picture of a brown creature for the group to see. Chris explains that his son drew this picture on his first day of pre-school. The teacher had asked her young students to draw a picture of what they wanted to be when they grew up. Sitting on the carpet with the other children sometime later, Chris' son proudly announced that he wanted to be a squirrel when he got older. Recognizing the chagrin on Rob's face, the teacher acknowledged the boy's ideas and assured him that his parents would be very proud of him no matter what he chose to be. Chris tells this story with more than a little humor as a way to begin a conversation about how teachers can set the tone with parents. (Chris Seminar, 3/6/07, and Interview, 3/21/07, CC)

If we consider what each program expects, the variation is reasonable. Both programs require field instructors to run seminars in which they coach their student teachers. Supervisors at Cross are guided by a detailed course syllabus and list of seminar topics. Chris's content reflects these requirements, but it is equally evident that he has infused the seminar with his own style, personality, and preferences. We see these in the story about his son and the opening activity that he designed. Thomas supervisors determine their own content. Tony relies on his personal experiences when planning seminars. This field trip reflects what he finds valuable. We also see how field instructors have to improvise, as when Tony is caught off guard by the student teacher who asks for help. All of these elements coincide with the open attitude of the program.

Perhaps more surprising, however, is the considerable variation found within programs. In the following conversations, two field instructors from the same institution

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are debriefing an observation with a student teacher. Again, we notice that the content varies in the two conversations, which is logical given that they stem from two different lessons. The variation extends beyond subject matter, however.

Mimi

The day is unusually warm for late October and the classroom smells of sweaty kids, dry erase markers, and cupcakes from an earlier birthday celebration. Mimi sits in the back of the room taking in the sights and smells of life in a fifth grade classroom. As students pack away their pencils and science books, the intern motions that she is ready to head out into the hallway. The pair walks down to the library (where they can talk in peace and quiet) and settles into a small conference room. All the way, the intern chatters about how she thinks the lesson went. Mimi has observation notes with questions written in the margins. One of the goals that she has set for herself is to ask better question, rather than beginning with the usual, "So, how do you think it went?" or "Why don't you try this?" She wants to get below the surface and ask questions that make the intern think. As the intern continues to dissect the lesson, Mimi looks for an opening where she can interject a probing question. "I thought it was interesting when Samuel asked you the question about the poles and you told him that you didn't know and moved on. I'm wondering if you can think of another way that you could have handled that besides the way that you did? What else could you have done other than saying, 'I don't know?'" The intern pauses to consider, a slight look of surprise on her face. As the intern stumbles on with an explanation of how she might have looked up the answer with the students, Mimi thinks to herself, "Oh, good. I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, making her think about it." (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU)

Marissa

The rain is pouring down in buckets. Marissa clambers into her car, but she is already soaked to the bone. With a half-hearted chuckle, she realizes that the weather perfectly reflects her mood. She starts the car and turns on the heater full blast. Propping her forehead on the steering wheel, she allows herself a few minutes to collect her thoughts. As a veteran field instructor, she has felt confident in her practice for years. In fact, she has been operating in a comfort zone for quite some time. But recently that has changed. The class that she observed today brought home the point *once again* that she is out of her element. The little second graders were so combative with the teachers; they seemed so angry. The conversation with her intern afterwards plays over and over in her head. The intern was desperate for help and Marissa didn't know what to say to her. Marissa does not feel equipped to handle students like that. Her own teaching experience was in a small rural district and although she has been field instructing in diverse schools for years, she feels like things have changed.

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Behavior problems seem more extreme. Her interns are going to need to know how to handle situations like this. As she heads for home, Marissa considers her options. She needs to talk with someone who can help her figure this out, but she also believes, more than ever, that relationships are the key. Students in urban settings need to know that adults care for them. She vows to spend more time getting to know her interns and in turn commits seminar time to teaching them how to foster relationships with their students, even if this means that other things don't get covered. Pulling into her driveway, Marissa also wonders about the possibility of doing some subbing in these schools as a way to understand what it's like to teach there. All she knows is that she has to do something. (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU)

Asking better questions is Mimi's current goal. We see her practicing on the intern, regardless of the lesson content of the lesson. Marissa's attention is on the children and how she can equip her student teachers to work with them. Both field instructors are working to improve their practice, but what they are working on depends on their prior experiences and development as mentors.

This within program variation was rampant. Consider more examples. At Midwestern, four of the field instructors plan with their interns, but the practice looks very different for each of them. Maggie co-teaches with her interns. This involves sitting together and actually designing a lesson from objective to assessment. One aspect of this work that Maggie especially enjoys is sharing her resources. Melinda has a specific focus when it comes to planning—student learning. When Melinda talks with interns about ideas for lessons, she asks questions about student engagement and assessing student learning: How are you going to *hook* the students? How will you know if they learned what you intended? Marissa takes yet another approach, offering advice about specific plans. Interns show their plans to Marissa ahead of time so that she can make comments and give suggestions. Mimi tells interns that they have to have a plan for everything they teach and they need to be able to articulate the thinking behind those

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plans. During post-observation conferences, Mimi asks interns questions like: Why did you use small groups for this lesson? Do you think they were effective? Would you change the lesson? How? These field instructors work for the same program and engage in the same practice, but they go about it in different ways.

Stan and Simon work for the same program, but they enact many of the practices differently. Both ask students to journal. Stan uses the journals to gather information about what students know, whereas Simon uses them as a reflective tool. The difference is that in Stan's case, the journals are for him (students write to provide him with information); in Simon's case the journals are for the students (students write as a way to think about their own teaching). These field instructors also differ with regard to questioning. Stan questions his interns as a means to guide their thinking, to lead them to a particular point, whereas Simon questions his interns to get them thinking about their teaching. Again, these field instructors work in the same program, but vary in how they carry out the practices.

Content Varies from the Program

The conversations and work of field instruction sometimes stray from the program. As was true of the practices, program leaders expect a certain amount of variation from one field instructor to another, but it becomes more problematic when field instructors deviate from program purposes and expectations. The 11 episodes— again, from all four programs—illustrate how field instructors ignore policies, eliminate assignments, disregard program content in favor of doing their own thing. While these are usually intentional, field instructors sometimes vary because they lack connections to or understanding of the program (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). In the following

vignette, we see Stan succumb to pressure from his cooperating teachers regarding an

assignment. He elects to eliminate it, despite his better judgment.

Stan

Stan likes to be early to School/University Partnership meetings. After placing his notebook on one of the many long tables in the room, Stan wanders over to get coffee and a pastry. Along the way, he shouts greetings to every other person in the room. He stops for a brief conversation with another coordinator as he winds his way back to the table. 'John, are you still looking for a third grade bilingual teacher? I have the perfect person for you. Call me next week and we'll talk.' As he gets settled, he is joined by "his group." Stan likes to use this time to touch base with the mentors in his building. As this is the first meeting of the school year and some of the mentors are new, he is especially eager to share with them what *he* does with the student teachers (he still can't bring himself to use the new-fangled term 'intern'). Stan begins by telling them he considers himself a bit of a rogue, because he tends to do his own thing, but he always has the students' best interest in mind. In fact, one of his top priorities is to help them find jobs. Stan spends the next 20 minutes, telling his mentors about the topics that he thinks all student teachers need to learn about and the guests that he invites to seminar. He describes the places that he takes them to visit each semester, like the Michigan Teachers' Association. 'I feed them what they need.' Stan pauses to take one of the agendas that are being passed around for the Partnership meeting. He asks the mentors if they have any issues to discuss before the meeting starts. The mentor coach brings up one of the assignments, saying that the mentors and interns agree that student teachers have a lot to do and this assignment is unrealistic. Stan pauses to consider this. As the meeting is called to order, he leans in and tells the mentors that he will consider eliminating the assignment if it is causing too much stress. (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU)

There are other examples of this type of variation. Terri/Tracy, Marissa and Mimi all

eliminate or drastically alter an assignment; Terri defies a program policy; Tracy and

Stan openly criticize their programs; and, Carrie, Stan, and Marissa change or ignore

program content (see Table 5.6). While these incidents will be discussed in greater detail

in chapter 5, suffice it to say, it is surprising that this type of variation occurs across all

four programs. Getting at the root of this variation is the goal of this study.

Accounting for Variation

Field instructors vary in *what* they do and *how* they do it. Why? Why does one field instructor choose to enact a practice one way and not another? Why do field instructors create or eliminate practices? Why do field instructors from the same program do very different things? Much of the variation has to do with the intentions and goals of the field instructors—what they are trying to accomplish. Are they working to develop certain habits or dispositions? Making connections? Giving practical advice? Focusing on the students in the classroom? What they work on and talk about varies depending on the focus of the field instructor. Common purposes emerged from the data and are described below.

Field Instruction is an Individualized Practice

Field instructors bring prior experiences and knowledge to the practice. If we were to count how many hours most field instructors have spent in schools—as students, student teachers, teachers, administrators, and now field instructors—the number would be substantial. These experiences contribute to their understanding of teaching and what student teachers need to know. Field instructors bring strong opinions about these to their practice. Tony provides, in the vignette above, an example of this type of reasoning. As a retired administrator, he holds definite beliefs that field instructors should know about teachers' unions and what it means to teach in a state where teachers are protected. He gives them experiences to inform them about something that he considers essential. Field trips like this are common. The location and content varies depending on what the field instructor thinks important. Seminars regularly serve as a platform where field instructors can introduce ideas and materials that they believe all new teachers need.

Table 4.11 Practices-Content-Purpose

Practices *What field instructors do*	Content *The ways they enact it*	Purpose *The purpose behind the action*
Coaching	Sharing their wisdom (except Melinda)	Bringing prior experiences and knowledge to their practice Developing a practice Customizing their practice Responding to their student teachers Interjecting theory Connect Coursework to Field Experiences Develop Reflective Habits
Questioning	Making a point	Bring prior experiences and knowledge to their practice
	Reflecting	Developing a practice Developing Reflective Habits
Teaching together	Imitating	Bringing prior experiences and knowledge to their practice Customizing their practice
	Model thinking	Developing a practice Connecting Coursework to Field Experiences Developing Reflective Habits
Planning together	Sharing resources	Bringing prior experiences and knowledge to their practice Responding to their student teachers
	Co-thinking	Customizing their practice Developing a practice Interjecting theory Connecting Coursework to Field Experiences
Writing	Guiding student thinking	Bringing prior experiences and knowledge to their practice Customizing their practice
	"Seeing" their thinking	Responding to their student teachers Developing Reflective Habits
Analyzing Video	Building relationships	Bringing prior experiences and knowledge to their practice Customizing their practice
	"Seeing" their thinking Talking about teaching	Interjecting theory Connecting Coursework to Field Experiences Developing Reflective Habits
Providing emotional Support	Supporting their student teachers	

Field instructors are developing a practice. Just as teachers develop a practice, so do field instructors. As you know—if you have ever learned a practice—it is virtually impossible to concentrate on all things at once. At times, your focus narrows onto one element. Mimi is doing just that; her current focus is asking better questions. This goal influences how she plans for and conducts conversations with student teachers (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Not all field instructors are focused on asking better questions. Some are making a concerted effort to talk less during seminars (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU); others are figuring out how to address content with beginning teachers (Program Coordinator Interview, 12/15/06, MU). Their work looks different because they are concentrating on particular elements. What they do and say is different from other field instructors because of their efforts to improve their practice.

Field instructors customize their practice. "Do your own thing" and "make the practice your own" were mottos the field instructors in this study lived by, and this was often encouraged by program leaders. There is a strong sense that field instructors commonly go their own way. They infuse their experiences and wisdom into their work by the choices they make. Field instructors who are technologically savvy find ways to build technology into their practice (Chris Seminar Interview, 3/21/07, CC). Science "experts" offer more detailed help on science lessons than in literacy (Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU). Every field instructor brings to the practice strengths, weaknesses, and proclivities that are reflected in his or her work. The result is that they focus on different things with their student teachers. Maggie's seminars, for example, look very different from others' because of her experiences. Maggie never had a mentor and she is determined to compensate for this by sharing her resources with her interns on a regular

basis. Her seminars sound like: "When I was a teacher.... I brought this in for you to see.... If you want, you can borrow" (Maggie Seminar, 1/8/07, MU).

There is also a creative element to field instruction. Educators are notorious thieves. We steal good ideas every time we step foot into a school. Field instructors are no exception; they borrow ideas from fellow field instructors all the time (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC; Martha Interview, 2/12/07, MU). This is especially evident in mentoring situations, where new field instructors are learning from veteran field instructors (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, Cross; Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU). This creativity also allows field instructors to put new twists onto existing assignments and practices. Field instructors take their wealth of resources and ideas— and those provided by the program—make adjustments and work them into their practice.

We saw this sort of creativity from Chris in the vignette above. As a new field instructor, Chris knows he wants his students to talk about their teaching, but he doesn't know how to get them started. After much brainstorming, he comes up with a unique way to begin his seminars (Chris Seminar, 3/6/07, and Interview, 3/21/07, CC).

Field Instructors are Responsive to Student Teachers—Sit in on any field instructor meeting and you are likely to hear them talking about their student teachers— how different one group is from another; how needy some can be; amazement at what they don't know. Field instructors make choices in the course of their work in response to these student teachers. Sometimes this means making minor adjustments to assignments or schedules in order to accommodate situations (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). At times, they are flexible because students have questions or need help. Field instructors describe assuming different roles because student teachers need different

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things from them. Students in crisis need a counselor; younger ones who are stressed out about life need a parent (Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC; Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

Marissa shows yet another kind of responsiveness, in the vignette above, when she realizes that her student teachers face challenges that she did not have as a teacher. Her interns work with children that have unique social and emotional needs; they look to her for help. Learning how to cope with aggressive students has become a personal mission for Marissa and it pervades the content of her practice (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). Marissa's practice looks very different from other field instructors', because she finds herself in a unique situation. This drive to equip her student teachers with knowledge and strategies defines much of their work together. They spend time building relationships, reading about the root of certain behavioral issues, and developing strategies to cope with these behaviors. Other field instructors focus on issues personally relevant to their student teachers.

Field Instructors Focus on the Big Picture

Field instructors interject theory. Student teachers are generally focused on the here and now—what happened in the classroom yesterday, the lessons they are currently planning, what materials they need for today's lesson, what issues they are having with students, etc. As outsiders, who do not attend to the minute-by-minute workings of the classroom, field instructors are perfectly poised to interject broader ideas (like learning theories, teaching for understanding, child development) that help student teachers learn beyond their immediate context. Martha expressed it this way:

> I think a lot of times the cooperating teacher is talking about the immediate things that are happening and they don't have time to really talk to [student teachers] about things beyond that…They're really busy and it's hard to have a student teacher and explain everything you're doing and that's going on in your mind. I

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think [field instructors] bring a more global view of teaching. (Martha Interview, 2/12/07, MU, p. 10)

The idea stems from Dewey's (1938) notion of educative experiences in which learning experiences promote future growth by attending to immediate concerns without losing sight of the big picture. This means that field instructors help with pressing issues while simultaneously referring back to bigger ideas and goals. Not everyone takes this stance and, in fact, some field instructors plainly state they do not interject theoretical ideas, preferring to concentrate on more practical matters (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). There are numerous examples when field instructors introduce theories in the course of conversations or during seminar; these included differentiated instruction, gifted and talented students, scaffolding learning, management theories, child development, student motivation, and critical thinking. Two examples from the previous vignettes illustrate this. Chris not only uses his personal experience to get his students thinking about the parental perspective, but they also read an article about how to be more persuasive with parents. He uses their current experiences with parents, infused with new ideas from an article, to think about how teachers can solicit parental support in general (Chris Seminar, 3/6/07, CC). Marissa also brings in psychological theories about behavioral issues to help her student teachers learn how to understand and cope with angry, aggressive students (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU).

Field instructors connect course work to field experiences. Another way that field instructors act as the "big idea" person is by connecting ideas from courses to field experiences. Student teaching ideally builds on teacher preparation coursework—it is the place where ideas are put into practice. Familiarity plays a large role in a field instructor's ability to do this. The field instructors in this study run the gamut from those who know

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nothing about their programs—and don't want to—to field instructors who attended the program or taught courses, giving them first-hand knowledge. Those who are unfamiliar with their programs are interesting, because for some the issue is desire and some access. Tracy honestly admits that she doesn't "give a rip" about what students do in their courses (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/1/07, TC). Others have little access to course content. Simon believes in making connections—between ideas, people, and lessons. He genuinely wants to make connections between course content and field experiences, but has not had the opportunity to learn about earlier program components. This leaves Simon in the position of making general statements like "[You] can find things to put in their bag of tricks from [your] methods courses" (Simon Seminar, 1/25/07, SMU).

Some field instructors make conscious efforts to connect courses and field experiences, by implementing a required tool. A thread that runs throughout the programs at both Thomas College and Southern Midwest University is the use of common lesson plan format—although we have already established that not all field instructors from these institutions adhere to this requirement (*Student Teaching Handbook*, TC; *Intern-coordinator Handbook*, SMU). Others act as interpreters, explaining assignments, readings, and expectations. Carrie uses seminar time to answer questions about assignments (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). The director provides supervisors with information about assignments and texts so they are able to support coursework. Supervisors at Cross also design courses and give input to program leaders about assignments (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

Field Instructors Develop Reflective Habits

Reflection has become synonymous with quality field instruction over the past few decades among teacher educators (Schon, 1983/1986; Zeichner, 2006) and, while there are varied meanings and questions about the empirical weight of this belief, the importance of reflection to many of the field instructors in this study explains their moves. "Tell me how you think the lesson went" and "say more" are common prompts used by field instructors trying to develop reflective habits in their student teachers. Mimi is working on this element of her practice in one of the vignettes. Rather than coaching her student teacher, Mimi asks questions to make her intern think (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). She used a different reflective tool—journaling—in the vignette with Martha. Mimi asks student teachers to write about their experiences. These entries give her insight and allow her to mentor more effectively (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Transparency is another reflective element observed among field instructors. It involves thinking out loud—making your thinking transparent. Carrie models this in seminar as she explains her thinking while working through an assignment. She stops at one point and asks, "What is the value of what I just did?" (Carrie Seminar, 3/5/07, CC). Maggie also talks aloud as she plans with interns. "I decided to make this move at this point because..." (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Student teachers got to explain their thinking while watching video clips of lessons (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

There is a clear distinction between those who take a reflective stance toward field instruction and those who don't. This most likely relates to program vision; reflection does not naturally occur unless it is developed. In programs where leaders intentionally teach field instructors about the value of thinking aloud and give them

opportunities to reflect, field instructors are much more likely to internalize and use reflection as a practice. Maggie is the perfect example. Survival best describes her teaching experience; there was no time for reflection. When she became a field instructor, reflection was not part of her repertoire. The program provided opportunities to learn about the value of reflection. She now models reflective thinking and uses tools regularly with her student teachers (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU).

Field Instructors are Disconnected from their Program

Variation occurs in cases where there is little or no direction from the program. When expectations are unclear or the program lacks structures (like assignments, handbooks, etc.), field instructors are left on their own to make decisions about what to do. This was the case at Thomas College. The program does not have a handbook specifically for field instructors and the *Student Teaching Handbook* provides general information, like the frequency of observations and evaluations. However, it says nothing about the content of that work, so field instructors do their own thing, which leads to varied practices. The program offers no guidance about seminar content, so field instructors base their seminars on what they think new teachers should know. Tony arranges field trips and speakers about topics he finds important. Tracy and Terri allow time for student teachers to talk and build relationships; they provide resource ideas from their own classrooms. These seminars vary, despite being from the same program, because field instructors are left to decide the content on their own.

Another type of disconnect involves actual and intentional divergence from the program. The most notable examples involve altering or eliminating assignments. Mimi altered an assignment by foregoing the written requirement. Students still had to study a

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child, but were not required to hand in the written portion of the assignment (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Tracy, Terri, and Stan choose to eliminate assignments. Stan was influenced by his cooperating teachers; Terri and Tracy made the call based on their professional judgment. In one interview, Marissa explained her decision to omit certain readings, because she was not comfortable with the content (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). At a School/University Partnership meeting, one field instructor left the meeting because he found the activity a "waste of time" (School/University Partnership Meeting field notes, 9/26/06, SMU). Terri contradicted a program policy by directing her cooperating teachers to remain in the room at all times during lead teaching (Tracy/Terri Interview, 2/7/07, TC). Thus some variations result when field instructors disagree with program philosophy or expectations.

In conclusion, field instruction varies in different ways and for many different reasons. Considerably more variation exists in the content of the work than in the practices. Thus, while field instructors are engaging in similar practices, they are enacting them in different ways. It is also evident that field instructors vary more from one another than from the program. This is to be expected as program leaders encourage creativity, responsiveness and flexibility. What causes some concern are the 17 examples in which field instructors varied from the expectations of their programs. We will explore these further in the next chapter, using the lens of loose coupling.

Chapter Five

Field Instructor Autonomy in a Loosely Coupled System

Field instruction varies: across individuals and programs, across time, context,

and purpose. Field instructors make decisions—creating assignments, giving student

teachers experiences, discussing relevant topics, providing resources, and neglecting

policies. All of these choices combine to create very different practices from one field

instructor to the next. What accounts for this variability? I contend that variation is the

direct result of the autonomy that comes with the job.

But what to make of this autonomy? On one hand, it makes sense that field

instructors need a certain amount of freedom to successfully mentor new teachers, each

of whom has different needs and circumstances. On the other hand, it seems problematic

that field instructors have the ability to make decisions about important things like

assignments and policies. Program leaders acknowledged this tension.

The director at Southern Midwest, for example, explained that she expects mentor

seminars to vary. In her own words, this is necessary because:

> Each school culture is different. So many things contribute to that differences: the
> leadership style of the principal, the size of the school, the demographics of the
> school, even things like the physical building – if you've got a building that's on
> one level, as compared to a building that's three stories high, the whole way that
> business is conducted is changed even by a physical structure. (Director
> Interview, 12/8/06, SMU)

She worries, however, that "the vision of the content, the substance, and the power of that

seminar has been lost by many" (Director Interview, 12/8/06, SMU). At one of the

School/University Partnership meetings, a university coordinator described what he does

for his first seminar each semester, delivering a "professionalism wakeup call." The

Director found some of his ideas inappropriate. The coordinator, in his presentation,

suggested that it was a coordinator's job to preach at the interns about certain topics—the

importance of the internships; it's time to grow up. This does not fit the Director's vision

for the seminars. She wants them to be conversations about teaching and student learning.

(School/University Partnership Meeting, 12/12/06, SMU). The aim of this chapter is to

understand this tension that arises due to field instructor autonomy. Using the concept of

loosely coupled systems will provide a means of thinking about the benefits and

constraints of autonomy, and in turn, variability.

<div align="center">

Loosely Coupled Systems:

Connection and Autonomy

</div>

Weick (1976) defines loose coupling as "a situation in which elements are

responsive, but retain evidence of separateness and identity" (p. 3). This means that

loosely coupled systems consist of "two components: (1) a source of order which

consolidates, unifies and coalesces diverse elements or fragments and (2) elements or

fragments, which are consolidated, unified, or coalesced by a source of order" (Orton &

Weick, 1990, p. 213). In other words, there is a controlling source and fragments that are

managed by the source. This definition stems back to earlier work by Burns and Stalker

(1961), which "combine the contradictory concepts of connection and autonomy" (p.

216). Burns and Stalker described how organizations often have both an element that

provides connectedness *and* components that act autonomously. A dialectical concept

like loose coupling allows us to examine the complexities of an organization by

embracing internal inconsistencies or contradictions.

Educational researchers have used loose coupling to examine how policies make

their way through the education system from conception to practice. The move from

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policy conception to implementation tends to be vertical—from the top down—with

policymakers mandating policies, but having little control over how they are put into

practice. Because teachers have a great deal of autonomy, implementation of policies is

dependent upon these "street level bureaucrats" who pick and choose what and when to

put into practice (Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). One result of this system is that there is a

great deal of inconsistency in the implementation of policies, because teachers are free to

broker policies as they see fit (Cohen & Hill, 2001). Policymakers have long lamented

this fact, because policies are often transformed by those who turn it into action. How

they look in practice can differ greatly from what was originally intended.

Loose coupling between levels is considered by many to be a "sin or something to

be apologized for" (Weick, 1976, p. 6). Shulman (1983), however, invites a more benign

interpretation. Rather than being defective, loosely coupled systems function well

because the connections between the levels are adaptive. The institutional level does not

prescribe every action of those working at other levels in the system, but neither are the

implementers on the ground free to do as they please. This system necessitates that there

be some combination of "obligation" and "freedom" (Shulman, 1983). The obligation

typically comes from the governing or institutional level. Shulman likens this to an

overarching shell that provides a foundation or framework within which people are free

to make choices. "Educational policies must be designed as a shell within which the

kernel of professional judgment and decision-making can function comfortably" (p. 156).

Freedom is given to those who put the ideas into action. They are permitted to choose

within a given set of possibilities. Variation is expected. This system functions because

one level demands a measure of control, while still allowing other levels the freedom to

exercise their own judgment. Although the terms are similar to those used by Burns and

Stalker (1961), the word "connection" has a different nuance than "obligation," as

Shulman's language points to the power structures at play. The obligating entity of an

organization holds some authority over the autonomous components and yet these

components are expected to act freely within certain parameters. In fact, the work

necessitates it.

Teacher Preparation Programs as Loosely Coupled Systems

Teacher preparation programs provide varying degrees of control over

autonomous field instructors through their obligation structures, yet field instructors are

expected to exercise their professional judgment—as educators—in their work with

student teachers. In order to make the case that the four teacher preparation programs in

this study operate as loosely coupled systems, it is necessary to establish: (1) that there

are obligating structures in place that are communicated to field instructors in some way

and that frame their work and (2) that field instructors act autonomously.

Obligation Structures

According to Weick (1976), one of the most frequently coupled mechanisms is

the authority of office. The elements of this coupling mechanism "include positions,

offices, responsibilities, opportunities, rewards, and sanctions"; these elements serve to

hold the organization together (p. 4). In teacher preparation programs, the elements that

hold the organization together (obligation structures) include: conceptual frameworks,

goals, standards, job descriptions and learning opportunities. These are articulated in

written

Table 5.1 Obligation Structures

Philosophical Structures	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Mission	School of Education Mission Statement	Education Department Mission Statement	College of Education Mission Statement	College of Education Mission Statement
Guiding vision	Written Vision Statement regarding Student Teaching	Conceptual Framework: Developing Responsive and Transformative Educators	Conceptual Framework: Reflective Practitioner	Vision: Developing Professional Educators
Standards	Program Standards	The Teacher Education Program's Professional Goals	Michigan Entry Level Standards for Beginning Teachers	Teacher Education Professional Standards
Goals			Program Goals and Intended Candidate Outcomes	
Knowledge Base		The Teacher Education Program's Knowledge Bases		
Articles			Feiman-Nemser (2001b) Stanulis (1994)	Corbett and Wilson (2002) Finn Jr., C.E., Rotherham, A.J. & Hokanson Jr., C.R. (Eds.). (May, 2001)
Mentoring stance	Educative Mentoring	Educative Mentoring	Educative Mentoring	Educative Mentoring

Table 5.1 Obligation Structures continued

Organizational Structures	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Handbooks	*The School of Education Handbook, Student Teaching Handbook*	*The Student Teaching Handbook, The Handbook for Cooperating Teachers, and The Field Supervisors Handbook*	*Intern Coordinator's Handbook*	*Guide to the Elementary and Middle School Internship Handbook*
Job Description			Job Description	Job Description
Seminar Content	Portfolio Assignment	EDUC 345/346 syllabi and assignments (including as Observation Report Form)	ED 410 and ED 470 course syllabi and assignments	ED 501/502 syllabi and assignments TE 801, 802, 803, 804 and assignments
Curricular tools	Lesson Plan Format Student Teaching Observation Record Student Teaching Evaluation Form	Student Teaching Observation Sheet Suggested observation language Co-planning Evaluation form	Binda Video Library Madeline Hunter's ITIP Lesson Plan Format Intern Teaching Observation Checklist Intern Teaching Observation Summary Form Observing the Intern In the Classroom Description Evaluation Forms (Midterm and Final)	Document -- The Professional Portfolio: A Professional Development Tool for the Internship Field Instructor Feedback Form Co-planning Co-teaching Analysis of Student Work Assessment of Intern Progress: A Tool for Discussion Professional Learning Plan
Learning Opportunities	Field Supervisor Meetings (12 hours) Assigned Mentor	Field Supervisor Meetings (10 hours/semester) Assigned Mentor Blackboard	School/University Partnership Meetings (12 hours/semester) Assigned Mentor	Field Instructor Meetings (630 minutes) Cluster Meeting (210 minutes) TE 994: Practicum on Mentoring

form in handbooks, assignments, and texts, as well as in the stories and instructions

handed down by teacher educators and (at times) other field instructors. To find evidence

of these obligating structures, I looked at program websites, in handbooks, and field notes

from interviews and observations. As evidenced in Table 5.1, all four of the teacher

preparation programs provide some type of authority mechanisms or structures intended

to guide the work of those who work with student teachers. These mechanisms obligate

field instructors; they give direction to the work and prohibit field instructors from acting

without basis. Let us now consider both the philosophical and organizational structures in

more depth.

Philosophical Structures. Most teacher preparation programs have underlying

philosophies that guide the program. These include mission statements, conceptual

frameworks, vision statements, goals, and professional standards. The intent of these is

to provide a philosophical and conceptual basis for every aspect of teacher preparation,

including course content, assignments, field experiences, and conversations. Some

programs have very clearly articulated visions and mechanisms. In their *Student Teaching*

Handbook, for example, Cross College laid out a conceptual framework entitled

Developing Responsive and Transformative Educators (p. 12). This framework was

carried across courses and field experiences and directly tied to assignments,

observations, and evaluation forms. The handbooks went into great detail about the

importance of creating responsive practitioners, who strive to meet the needs of all

learners and the ways in which educators can "work towards renewal where the status

quo is clearly inadequate" (*Student Teaching Handbook*, CC, p. 14). The framework was

also mentioned during official and informal meetings. During one field supervisor

meeting, the director brought up one of the program's common documents, the Student

Inventory, which is a survey that is sent home with students. Teachers use the

information to inform their teaching, which affirms the department's goal of meeting the

needs of diverse learners. She used this tool as a way to think about differentiating

instruction and being responsive to the needs of all students (Field Supervisor Meeting,

8/23/06, CC).

In the absence of philosophical structures, members of teacher preparation

programs are left to their own devices. When programs do not stipulate what students are

expected to learn from field experiences, for example, field instructors design seminars

and facilitate conversations based on their expertise or what they think students need to

know. This was evident at Thomas College, where minimal philosophical structures

existed. Field supervisors relied heavily on their own experiences and understanding of

teaching.

Organizational Structures. While philosophical structures seem somewhat

esoteric, organizational structures tend to be more practical. They are a program's

backbone, providing members with explicit guidelines about their work. Specifically, job

descriptions define the qualifications of and expectations for field instructors. Course

syllabi and assignments provide substance for the student teaching seminars and

determine, to some extent, what is to be learned. Curricular tools, like observation and

evaluation forms, are organizing structures in that they regulate field instructors.

Observation and evaluation forms give direction during observations and conferences, so

that conversations remain on-task and productive (meaning they move student forward in

terms of development). For example, forms at Thomas, Cross, and Midwestern are based

on new teacher standards (either program or state standards), which encourages field

instructors to focus on certain elements of the student teachers' development. They

provide principles and measurable outcomes on which to attend during conversations.

Tools, like analysis of student work and co-planning, center the work on pupil learning,

in that they give field instructors and student teachers chances to talk about what student

learning. Learning opportunities, like field instructor meetings and mentor pairs, offer

field instructors clarification about course syllabi, assignments, and the use of tools.

They also provide information about topics like adult learning, instructional strategies,

and special education. Field instructors receive suggestions regarding the content of their

seminars in both formal and informal learning opportunities with program leaders and

other field instructors. And finally, handbooks offer written articulation of the

philosophies and organizational structures used by each program. They provide a

centralized location where field instructors can learn about the program and their work.

In sum, across all four programs there are obligating structures in the forms of job

descriptions, tools for working with mentors and prospective teachers, and mission

statements/program philosophies. But the programs vary quite a bit as to the amount of

structure that each provides. On one end of the spectrum, Thomas College offers few

structures to guide their supervisors, having no conceptual framework, handbook, or

associated course. As such, supervisors feel few program constraints and are free to

structure the experience in any way. As an example of the other extreme, Cross College

has an explicit conceptual framework that is woven throughout the program. Supervisors

understand that the program's focus is to create responsive and transformative educators.

This influences seminar topics and reading materials. The course assignments and

handbooks also provide direction as supervisors plan. Seminar time is spent on assignments developed by program leaders, not at the supervisor's whim (although flexibility is permitted in the interest of being responsive to student teachers' needs).

Field Instructor Autonomy

Recall that our purpose at this point is to establish that the four programs in this study function as loosely coupled systems. The previous section described the obligation structures. The goal of this section is to outline autonomy, especially as it relates to field instructors. Course instructors plan and teach their own courses; they make decisions about texts and assignments with varying degrees of assistance from program leaders. Cooperating teachers welcome student teachers into their classrooms and guide them as they learn to teach; each brings different knowledge, skills, and personality traits to the work which affects the experience. Field instructors oversee the student teaching experience. They exercise independence in a variety of ways. The aim of this section is to establish field instructor autonomy in our four programs.

Weick (1976) nominates several functions of loose coupling that illustrate autonomy. These will guide this section, as examples of all were evident in the vignettes of the previous chapter (see Table 5.2). The first has to do with avoiding standardization and being responsive to learners' needs. Field instruction is not a rote practice with prescribed moves. Each student teacher, class of students, and school is unique. Field instructors cannot respond to all in the same way. The work requires that field instructors

get to know the school contexts and their student teachers as learners, then respond accordingly. Recall Tony. He clearly had an agenda for the seminar which did not include taking time for individuals to talk about their teaching. When one young woman presented a dilemma, Tony made a spur-of-the-moment decision to forego his agenda to facilitate a discussion (Tony Seminar, 2/7/07; Interview, 2/16/07, TC). He used his professional judgment to make a spontaneous decision. Field instructors are expected to be responsive like this—the work actually requires that they remain flexible and make decisions based on the needs of their student teachers. These types of moves cannot be planned or prescribed, but must be made in the moment.

Table 5.2 Functions of Loose Coupling

Function	Example from Vignettes
Sensitive sensing mechanisms: Avoid standardization and be responsive	Tony was responsive and flexible during his seminar
Local adaptations	Carrie changed assignment to suit her student teacher Stan eliminates a planning assignment, despite his better judgment
Mutations: Organization retains identity despite variations	Chris created his own practice; the program retained its identity Martha creates her own activity
Interpret the role: several means can produce the same results	Mimi and Marissa are from the same program, but they interpret the role differently: Mimi wants them to think about their teaching; Marissa wants to support them during a stressful experience. Tony bases his seminars on what he thinks student teachers should know about the profession Stan feeds his interns what they need
Self-determination	Terri and Tracy deviate by eliminating an assignment Mimi doesn't require students to write assignments Stan eliminates a planning assignment, despite his better judgment

Being responsive also requires field instructors to make local adaptations. These are minor changes made at one level—in this case the student teaching field experience—that do not negatively impact the program. Changes might be as insignificant as eliminating a scheduled seminar during the week of parent/teacher conferences so that interns can attend the conferences (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Or, it might involve altering an assignment. In her vignette, Carrie noticed that one of her student teachers was struggling with relational issues. Her tone of voice with students was very harsh and her body language sent negative signals. Carrie tried to address these during a post-observation conference, but the student teacher was reluctant to discuss them. Carrie decided to alter the program's videotaping assignments in order to help this student teacher "see" herself. Carrie designed the assignment so that student teachers in her seminar group would videotape one another and then fill out a peer observation forms. She purposely paired this particular student teacher with someone who would be honest and open to having a difficult conversation about this potentially touchy subject (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). Carrie made the decision to revise this assignment to address a particular situation, but this adjustment did not have any real impact on the rest of the program.

Weick (1976) claims that loosely coupled organizations can retain their identity and structure even when the work and ideas of its individuals varies. Programs have identities formulated by program leaders and articulated in mission statements and conceptual frameworks. These remain intact, despite the minor variations expected of individual field instructors, who are actually encouraged to make the practice their own. Each person brings to the practice of field instruction experiences, personality, and ideas

about teaching and learning. Each is expected to draw upon these when working with student teachers. This sometimes results in the creation of new tools, procedures, or activities. We see an example of this in the case of Chris, who wanted his student teachers to open up and talk more. He designed an activity to promote talk about episodes of teaching (Chris Seminar, 3/6/07, and Interview, 3/21/07, CC). There are numerous instances of this type of autonomy, where field instructors created websites, notebooks, surveys, and activities intended to help student teachers learn from the experience. Weick (1976) finds this kind of variability of practice acceptable, claiming that "several means can produce the same result" (p. 5). Student learning is the end goal, which field instructors use various means to accomplish.

Field instructors also make decisions based on their interpretation of the role. Programs with clearly stated philosophies minimize the chance that the role will be misinterpreted. However, even in programs that provide standards, goals, and vision statements, variation still exists. As field instructors from the same institution, Mimi and Marissa shared common professional standards and vision of educative mentoring, yet the focus of their work differed. Mimi expressed a desire to ask better questions that would promote reflection. She was actively working to improve this aspect of her practice—she described recording good questions when she heard them, devising questions to ask interns during observations, and creating impromptu questions during post-observation conferences. Marissa, on the other hand, believed that interns need to build relationships with students, especially those in diverse, urban settings. She came to the realization that she needed to learn more about how to manage students with anger issues (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). Marissa planned to read recommended books

and articles on the subject and signed up to substitute teach is local, urban schools. Marissa also vowed to build stronger relationships with her interns and spend seminar time discussing how to build a community in the classroom (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU).

These field instructors work for the same program and are both committed to being effective mentors. Yet they bring different experiences to their practice, and these influence what they think and do. For example, Mimi had 15 interns from Midwestern University in her classroom throughout her teaching career. She came to know some the field instructors very well. In the course of their work together, one particular field instructor taught Mimi a great deal about learning to teach and the practice of mentoring. Mimi's emphasis on questioning stems from that person and those classroom experiences with interns.

In contrast, Marissa's personal experience as a parent also shaped her work as a field instructor. As a mother of college-age children, she understands the demands and stresses faced by college students. She believed field instructors should form relationships that support interns during this stressful experience.

According to Weick (1976), self-determination is an important element in loose coupling. In complex systems like teacher preparation, individuals are *expected* to act with a certain amount of independence. Members at each level do the work that is required of them. For field instructors, this means operating in K-12 schools in relative isolation. Program leaders are forced to trust field instructors to use their knowledge and experiences as professional educators to make reasoned judgments on behalf of the program and in the best interest of their student teachers. These decisions are numerous

and sometimes (but not always) spur-of-the-moment, but they should never be unfounded. The Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program at Midwestern noted that there is a certain spontaneity involved in good field instruction, which is not a matter of "I don't know what I'm doing, so I'll just do anything" (Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program Interview, 12/15/06, MU). Rather, there is a pedagogy that field instructors need to learn. "A good field instructor is somebody who has developed a repertoire and knows how to use that repertoire in whatever situation they find themselves in" (p. 7).

If a repertoire is one requirement, good professional judgment is another. Teaching teachers, like teaching, requires making decisions with incomplete information and in the moment. Field instruction cannot be scripted, and thus field instructors find themselves in situations where they are required to make judgment calls. Many of the examples offered in chapter 4 portray field instructors exercising their professional judgment. This happens when field instructors plan their seminars, create new tools, provide student teachers with learning experiences, and alter assignments to promote learning.

But not all judgment calls are good ones. How do we determine if good professional judgment was exercised? One standard might involve the degree to which a field instructor's decision is aligned with the program's practices or ideals. There are multiple examples in which the decision-making freedom of field instructors conflicted with the program ideals. During one of their seminars, Terri and Tracy explained a decision that they made to deviate from a program requirement involving what they considered to be a cumbersome and unrealistic lesson plan format. They no longer

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required their student teachers to use it, although they appreciated the thought processes behind planning and expected student teachers to have an objective for each lesson. They did not, however, see the need to write formal plans (Tracy/Terri Seminar 1/31/07; Interview, 2/7/07, TC).

Mimi was also concerned about overburdening her interns and had decided to forego requiring a formal, written child study. In lieu, she planned to talk with them about what they learned from "following" a child in their class (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Stan made a similar decision. However, his "move" was spontaneous. Stan felt pressure from the mentors in his building to eliminate an assignment. He clearly was not comfortable with the decision, but decided that for the sake of being agreeable, he would comply with their wishes (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). All of the field instructors made premeditated and off-the-cuff decisions regarding program requirements. They used all of the available information about program requirements, the needs of their student teachers, and their own understanding of the situation to make reasoned decisions to eliminate elements of an assignment. This self-determination—for bad or good—is common in field instruction.

Function or Dysfunction?

Function: To operate normally, fulfilling a purpose or role

Dysfunction: Failure to perform its function properly: a disturbance in the usual pattern or activity of behavior (Encarta Dictionary)

This section is about the relationship between program structure and field instructor autonomy—how the adaptive connections between the two help teacher preparation programs function and how, at times, lead to dysfunction (Shulman, 1983).

Loose coupling helps the system (teacher preparation) work well in several ways.

Most notably, it allows field instructors the freedom to be responsive to the needs of

particular student teachers. The situated, unpredictable nature of the work demands

flexibility; moves are not rote, words cannot be prescribed. Instead, field instructors react

to situations and needs as they arise. There were 36 incidents of responsiveness and

spontaneity in the data from field instructors in all four programs (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Examples of Responsiveness

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Examples of Responsiveness	Tony (2)	Carrie (4) Chris (1)	Stan (2) Simon (9)	Marissa (5) Mimi (4) Martha (2) Maggie (6) Melinda (4)
Program Total	2	5	11	21

Field instructors responded by planning seminars or post-observation conference

based on students' needs, altering the type of support they provided, changing an

assignment, and dealing with an immediate situation or crisis (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Types of Responsiveness

	#	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Plans seminar/conference based on students' needs	18	Tony	Carrie	Stan Simon	Mimi Maggie Melinda
Alters approach and type of support	10		Carrie	Simon	Marissa Maggie Melinda
Alters an assignment	2		Carrie		Marissa
Deals with an immediate situation or crisis	6	Tony	Carrie Chris	Simon	Marissa

The most common type of responsiveness dealt with identifying and addressing student teachers' needs. There were 18 examples in which field instructors planned a seminar or conference based on their understanding of what students needed to know or be able to do. Several used some type of instrument—journal entry, questionnaire, quick write—to assess students' needs and interests (Maggie Interview, 1/29/07, MU; Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU; Simon Interview, 1/25/06 and 5/08/07, SMU; Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU); others determined this information informally through conversations (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC; Melinda Interview, 1/24/07, MU; Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Mimi, for example, realized from an observation that one of her interns did not know how to effectively plan a guided reading lesson. During their next planning session, they co-planned a lesson together (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU). Carrie varies the content of her seminar based on students' comments. This particular group is eager to "get ideas, stuff, and suggestions," so Carrie makes time for sharing when she plans seminars, which is different than her usual approach. She is trying to accommodate their wishes (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC).

Another type of responsiveness involved altering their style of mentoring. Carrie compared her current students to past groups, describing the various approaches she uses. This group tends to need more emotional support; they spend a good amount of time talking about practical, real life issues, like getting car insurance and dealing with heartbreak. Carrie plays mom to this group more than others.

Two field instructors altered assignments to accommodate students. Carrie added an element to a videotape assignment, because she thought it would benefit two of her students. Rather than having a student videotape herself (using a tripod), Carrie asked

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another student teacher to do the videotaping so that the pair could debrief together afterwards (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). Marissa also added an element to a lesson in which the group was examining classroom management theories. After reading the materials, her interns began analyzing their cooperating teachers' management styles. Instead of thinking about the theories in the abstract (as the assignment dictated), the group used their cooperating teachers as examples to help them make sense of the theories (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU).

The final type of responsiveness involved on-the-spot decision-making in response to situations and crises. Spontaneity of this kind distinguishes a loosely coupled system from a tightly coupled one (Weick, 1976). Situations arose in the field that required spontaneity and quick thinking. These often involved minor crises. During a seminar, Tony changed his plans when it became apparent that a student needed help planning a lesson for the coming week. She was clearly distraught as she explained her dilemma to the group. Rather than move forward with his agenda, Tony allowed time for the group to help her plan (Tony Interview, 2/16/07,TC). Chris described a situation in which he was forced to alter his plans to do a formal observation, because the student was upset and needed counseling. They spent the afternoon talking about whether teaching was the right profession for her, rather than what Chris had planned (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC).

Program leaders acknowledge the need for this responsiveness:

You have to know your contexts and how that's influencing what is happening and you have to know your learner and try to provide opportunities for that learner to engage in learning within in the contexts...You are the role you need to be in the moment so that your intern can move forward in their learning (Coordinator of the Teacher Preparation Program Interview, 12/15/06, MU)

Teacher preparation programs are adaptive in that field instructors are free to remain flexible and be responsive, but this adaptiveness has limits, which are set by program leaders in the form of policies, procedures, and curriculum. Chris, for example, was free to forego the formal evaluation that he had scheduled on that given day, because the student teacher needed emotional support. But he could not forego the assignment all together, opting instead to return and do it another day. Loose coupling allowed Carrie to make time in her seminars for sharing ideas and teaching tips, but not *in lieu* of the program's required content. Carrie responded to the wishes of her student teachers, but not at the program's expense. Being both free and obligated, necessitated that these field instructors meet the immediate needs of their student teachers, while still fulfilling program requirements. Field instructors were free within limits.

Loose coupling also contributes to the functioning of teacher preparation in pragmatic ways. The first relates to time. Field instruction is time consuming work. If we look back at Tables 2.4 and 3.4, we can approximate how much time field instructors spend each semester. Table 5.5 estimates that field instructors spend about 11 hours per week doing the work of field instruction, which constitutes at least two days of a five day work week. This is potentially problematic for tenure track faculty members with full teaching loads. The other time-related problem is flexibility. Field instructors need to be able to work around student teachers' schedules to some extent, which are restricted by things like specials (gym, art, music) and curricular blocks (e.g. Reading First schools are required to do literacy in the morning). Faculty members, with set teaching schedules are less flexible, unlike retired educators. Loose coupling makes it practical for programs to hire adjunct faculty to oversee field experiences.

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Table 5.5 Time Commitment

Field Instruction Activity	Average Time/Semester	Notes
Attend field instructor meetings	13 hours	Based on the average expectation of the four programs
Lead seminars	16 hours	Based on a one hour seminar (although programs specify 60 – 90 minute seminars)
Observe and provide feedback	77 hours	Based on a 90 minute session for both the observation and the conference, except Midwestern which stipulates two hours per week. Based on a load of six student teachers
Lead evaluation conferences	72 hours	This does not include writing time Based on a load of six student teachers
Average Time	178 hours/semester 11 hours/week	This does not include any time working with cooperating teachers, which three of the four programs stipulated

Hiring adjuncts to field instruct also makes financial sense, as they are typically

willing to work for minimal compensation. According to Weick (1976), loosely coupled

systems should be relatively inexpensive to run because there is a minimal need to

coordinate people (field instructors only meet an average of 13 hours each semester).

Supervisors at Thomas, Cross, and adjunct instructors at Midwestern, for example, are

paid a per student teacher rate. No additional perks—like health benefits—are included.[1]

Graduate students at Midwestern seem to be an exception, as they are relatively

expensive. A half-time graduate assistant earns between $11,600 and $15,000 during the

academic year, plus a waiver of the out-of-state portion of tuition, a waiver of nine credits

of in-state tuition each semester, medical benefits, and a waiver of registration fees

(http://www.educ.mu.edu/students/graduate/assistant-ships.htm), all of which costs the

university approximately $25,000 in total. Several field instructors joked about the

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[1] Information about compensation was not available for Southern Midwest; although one of the coordinators made a comment that they were paid relatively well (relative to what, I don't know). My direct inquiries went unanswered. Information for the other programs was provided by field instructors during interviews.

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meager compensation, indicating that they do the work—not for the money—but as a

way to give back to the profession by passing on their accumulated wisdom (Carrie

Interview, 3/22/07, CC; Martha Interview, 2/12/07, MU; Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC;

Tracy/Terri Seminar 1/31/07; Interview, 2/7/07, TC). Field instruction offered them

professional fulfillment, in addition to part-time, flexible work that generates an extra bit

of income. The programs benefit, because full-time salaried faculty members can spend

their time teaching courses, conducting research and advising students, rather than field

instructing.

But just as field instructor freedom contributes to the functioning of teacher

preparation as a loosely coupled system, this same autonomy permits dysfunction. Too

much freedom allows some to perform their function improperly, to make decisions that

undermine the program. There were 13 examples of inappropriate variation in the data

(see Table 5.6). The most prevalent form (5 incidents) involved eliminating or drastically

altering a required assignment. Tracy and Terri provide an example of this type of

dysfunction. They chose to eliminate the required lesson plan format. This decision

thwarted the program's purposes. The *Student Teaching Handbook* claimed:

> One of the most important factors in achieving success as a student teacher is to
> plan carefully...A new teacher needs to have carefully planned lessons written
> and ready to consult. Such planning results in growth in confidence and gives
> purpose, structure, and direction to the teaching-learning process. Carefully
> written lesson plans also provide a means for lessons to be more effectively
> critiqued in pre- or post-lesson evaluation sessions with the cooperating teacher(s)
> and/or field supervisor. (p. 17)

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Table 5.6 Inappropriate Variation Incidents

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Eliminated or drastically altered a program assignment	Tracy/Terri (2 incidents)		Stan (2 incidents)	Marissa (1 incident) Mimi (1 incident)
Countermanded a program policy	Terri (1 incident)			
Expressed views that criticized or deviated from the program	Tracy (1 incident)		Stan (1 incident)	
Altered content		Carrie (1 incident)	Stan (1 incident)	Marissa (1 incident)
Program Total	5 incidents	1 incident	4 incidents	3 incidents

Clearly, program leaders at Thomas College believed that planning contributes to the professional growth of student teachers. This is stated in writing, along with detailed descriptions of the lesson plan format to be used by all student teachers. Despite this clarity, Tracy and Terri exercised their freedom and eliminated the requirement. The fact that they asked students not to "rat" on them indicates that they realized that this decision counteracted the wishes of program leaders (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC). They had the freedom to make this type of decision anyway. Stan and Marissa also exerted their independence regarding assignments. The cooperating teachers in Stan's building asked him to eliminate an assignment because students were feeling overwhelmed. With obvious reluctance, he acquiesced (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Similarly, Marissa decided to forego required readings, because she was unfamiliar with the content and did not feel comfortable teaching the material (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). Mimi made a different type of decision by altering a required assignment. In her opinion,

students were overwhelmed; she wanted to alleviate some of the burden. One assignment was a child study, in which students were asked to "follow" a child. The assignment included a written portion, with specific questions. Mimi told her interns that they did not need to do the written analysis (although they did need to study a child). She described how they discussed their cases during seminar. This involved a brief description of each child, after which interns shared what they had learned from this experience. The level of preparation and thinking changed considerably when Mimi eliminated the reflective, written portion of the assignment (Mimi Interview, 1/29/07, MU).

Terri decided to go against a program policy. Cooperating teachers are expected to leave the classroom for periods of time during lead teaching so that student teachers can take control of the class. Terri disagrees with this policy, claiming that student teachers learn more when cooperating teachers remain in the room. In an interview we had together, Tracy noted that it was both a program and state policy. Terri was adamant, stating that she would continue to direct their cooperating teachers to stay (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC). It is unclear in these cases, what impact these decisions had on student teacher learning. The point, however, is that these field instructors took advantage of their freedom to sometimes make decisions that contradicted program requirements.

Two field instructors expressed views contrary to their program. During our interview, Tracy talked about their (Tracy and Terri's) practice. She thinks that they are doing a good job and doesn't care if what they do aligns with the program: "I think that we're doing a good job and I don't want to be told to do it differently" (Terri/Tracy Interview, 2/7/07, TC). Stan also made derogatory comments about his program. He

does not like the cluster site model and as a result does his "own thing. I'll be honest; I drag my feet on this program. I was not gung ho" about the changes (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). Both of these field instructors disagree with some element of their program and because field instruction is so loosely coupled to the program, field instructors can act with impunity. Tracy and Stan admit that they consciously deviate from the program because of fundamental, philosophical differences.

The final type of dysfunctional variation—with three incidents—involved altering the content of the work. Carrie made a decision to change the content of her seminar, based on her perception of the students' needs. In her interview, she openly contradicted the program: "I don't think that's really what they need. I don't think they need content instruction any more at this point" (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07, CC). So, she did something different. Marissa made a similar decision. When she first became a field instructor for the Grand Rapids cluster, there was a lot of content to teach in the seminars. "I felt incompetent and inadequately prepared, like I was being asked to be a professor" (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). There were portions of the complicated syllabus that Marissa chose to ignore, in favor of providing emotional support. The final example came from Stan. The *Intern Coordinator Handbook* clearly stated that university coordinators were expected to teach cooperating teachers about mentoring and coaching (Part 1, p. 17). Stan did not feel comfortable with this part of the role, preferring to remain on an even, professional level with them. He described an incident when he went to observe a student teacher. While the intern was teaching, Stan pulled the cooperating teacher into the hall and asked his standard questions: "How's it going? What's going on? What's happening? What should I observe for the next time I come in to observe this

student teacher? Are you having any difficulties in any way?" The cooperating teacher

responded: "I wish she (the student teacher) wouldn't talk when I'm talking to other

people" (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). When I questioned Stan about this, it became

apparent that he did not ask follow up questions to determine the content of the

conversation or the nature of the student's questions. He did not provide the cooperating

teacher with strategies of how to understand and handle the situation. Stan's response was

to create a blanket policy for his interns: "Let the [cooperating] teacher do the talking

unless you're spoken to and asked to speak up" (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU).

These examples reveal dysfunction. Loose coupling is intended to allow for

freedom and independence, but these incidents lead me to wonder whether, in some

cases, too much freedom is afforded field instructors. Half of the field instructors (6 of

12) made decisions and acted in ways that aligned with their program, but the others

exercised their autonomy is ways that seriously deviated from their programs. At times,

these actions threatened program coherence.

Coherence is commonly understood to be a system "logically or aesthetically

consistent so that all the separate parts fit together and add up to a harmonious or credible

whole" (Encarta Dictionary). When this concept is applied to teacher preparation, it

generally refers to a program's attempt to connect all aspects of the program—courses,

early field experiences and student teaching—into a system that provides related learning

experiences and creates competent teachers. This might mean that language used in one

class aligns with language used by field instructors in the field or that an assignment

builds upon experiences in earlier courses. Coherence suggests a conscious effort to tie

experiences, assignments, and readings together; values and norms are woven throughout

the program, and mixed messages are avoided.

Many reformers and scholars maintain that coherence is associated with program effectiveness, arguing that a fragmented curriculum is less likely to influence the teaching practices of students in their programs (Barnes, 1987; Howey & Zimpher, 1989; Sedlak, 1987). Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust and Shulman (2005) claim that:

> A number of studies have offered empirical evidence that teacher education programs that have coherent visions of teaching and learning, and that integrate related strategies across courses and field placements, have a greater impact on the initial conceptions and practices of prospective teachers than those that remain a collection of relatively disconnected courses. (p. 392)

Using data of nine teacher preparation programs from the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study of over 700 teachers and teacher candidates conducted by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (NCRTL), Tatto (1996) makes a similar claim:

> Our findings across the field of teacher education seem to indicate that in those few cases where faculty espoused more coherent views around professional norms, student teachers tended to show more definite movement toward developing views that were in turn congruent with those espoused by the faculty. Thus coherence around program norms and professional norms seem to play an important role on the influence of teacher education on student teachers' beliefs about teaching diverse students. (p. 175)

Although, it should be noted that moving in the direction the program wants does not necessarily make students effective teachers.

In sum, across these studies and others (Clift & Brady, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & MacDonald, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Howey & Zimpher, 1989; Levine, 2006; McDevitt, Troyer, Ambrosio, Heikkinen & Warren (1995; Slick, 1997; Snyder, 2000) scholars argue that coherence matters in teacher preparation.

Field instructors have the potential to contribute to a program's coherence in a variety of ways: connecting field experiences to content from previous courses; linking the program's conceptual framework to K-12 classrooms; promoting the use of common tools or skills. These connections, however, are not always made. The 13 dysfunctional incidents described above help us think about specific incidents when coherence was undermined. Let's return to the incident in which Tracy and Terri eliminated the lesson plan assignment. Lesson planning not only teaches students organizational skills, but embodies the program's ideals. As noted earlier, program leaders at Thomas designed the assignment with two purposes: (1) they believed that planning would give students more confidence and help them be better teachers, and (2) plans served as a record around which mentors and student teachers could talk about teaching (p. 17). By foregoing this assignment, Tracy and Terri not only undermined students' learning, but they lost a potentially valuable mentoring opportunity. Coherence was compromised because program ideals were impeded.

Consider another example. Stan expressed views in which he clearly disagreed with the structure of SMU's program. Recall that the School/University Partnership was established 15 years ago around a cluster site model. Student teachers are placed in cluster site schools. Stan prefers the old model in which students were placed in a variety of schools. After all these years, Stan still dislikes the change and admits to placing student teachers in non-cluster site schools on occasion. He "does his own thing" because he's "not gung ho" about the changes (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU). The *Intern Coordinator Handbook* describes the benefits of the cluster site model:

> the major goal in each Cluster Site is for Interns (student teachers) to use reflective processes as they interact with Mentors (cooperating teachers) and

University Coordinators (student teacher supervisors) in order to create conditions in which responsible and deliberate teacher/learning can occur for all participants. (p. 8)

These partnerships allow the program to develop relationships with cooperating teachers, who come to understand the program. The idea is that these mentors will perpetuate the program's goals, like using reflective processes. Stan seriously undermines the program's attempts to create coherence when he "does his own thing" and places students in other schools (Stan Interview, 5/8/07, SMU).

One final example. Marissa opted to alter the content of her seminar, because she felt unprepared and unqualified to teach unfamiliar concepts from texts that she had never read (Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU). During her interview, Marissa described the complex syllabus and numerous texts required for seminars (recall that Marissa field instructed in a satellite cluster, which had a different syllabus at the time). Due to her discomfort and conflicting beliefs about the purpose of seminars (she thought they should be more like a support group), Marissa chose to focus on content that differed from program expectations. To state the obvious, it undermines coherence when field instructors elect to teach material other than that prescribed by the program (especially in cases where the program leaders made intentional efforts to connect content across the program). The real cause of incoherence in Marissa's case is lack of knowledge. The program did not prepare her to teach the content and, as a member of a satellite cluster, who rarely comes to campus, there were few opportunities for Marissa to learn about the program and it goals and expectations. Without that knowledge, it is impossible for her to make connections.

But these are only a handful of examples from 100 hours worth of data. Certainly

these represent the most blatant examples of inappropriate variation. Of more concern,

however, are the 97 incidents which I consider ambiguous—meaning that they were not

clearly appropriate or inappropriate, but had the potential to go either way. Let me give

you some examples. Looking through the data for examples of field instructor variation, I

nominated four types of ambiguous variation (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Types of Ambiguous Variation

	Thomas College	Cross College	Southern Midwest University	Midwestern University
Lack of direction from the program	6	1	20	13
Role is not clearly articulated or understood	4	7	1	3
Learn from other field instructors	4	13	9	16

Field instructors varied their practice when there was a lack of direction from the

program. In these cases, field instructors were left to make decisions on their own;

decisions which may or may not align with their program's goals. There were 40

examples in the data when field instructors exerted their professional judgment because

the program offered little or no guidelines. The most obvious cases came from Thomas

College, which provides minimal guidance for field instructors. The program, for

example, does not formally or informally stipulate seminar content; no course syllabus or

list of potential topics exists. Field instructors have total control of the content. These

incidents are ambiguous, because they illustrate field instructors making decisions that

had the potential to deviate from the program. A field instructor might choose to invite

guests or cover topics that would align with the program. But as the system stands (with

loosely coupled connections), field instructors might choose guests or topics that would

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contradict the conceptual framework, values or goal. For instance, if a program embraces a constructivist view of learning, it would be inappropriate for a field instructor to discourage this view of learning in favor of another. What makes this example ambiguous—and potentially problematic—is that the field instructor has the freedom to decide either way.

Field instructor variation occurred when the role was not clearly articulated or understood. In the 15 incidents of this type, field instructors were left to develop their own interpretation of the role and how it should be enacted. The program at Cross College, for example, does not have a formal, written job description. Field instructors learn about the work from listening to the Director and watching other field instructors. Both Chris and Carrie talked about their interpretation of the role. Chris, in particular, struggled to understand what was expected of him. He talked about assuming various roles at different times (which I believe is what all of the leaders of these programs would want, as field instruction is complex, multi-faceted work). Because of a lack of direction from the program, Chris was uncertain which aspects of the role to emphasize, so he made decisions based on his own understanding and experiences. Both of these field instructors interpreted and enacted the role based on their own judgment. These interpretations had the potential to align with program expectations or not. When field instructors are left to decipher the role on their own, this can potentially lead to conflicting goals. It would be problematic, for instance, if a program believes that field instructors are teacher educators, responsible for engaging in activities that promote learning for a field instructor to only engage in activities that offer emotional support (again, I am assuming that all field instructors assume multiple roles; the issue here is

emphasis). Programs take a risk when they do not define the role, because loose coupling affords field instructors the freedom to enact the role as they see fit.

The final type of ambiguous variation, with the most incidents (42), stemmed from incidents when field instructors learned from one another. Field instructors in all four programs adopted ideas from other field instructors, and in fact many program leaders encouraged this. The Team Coordinator at Midwestern created space during meetings for field instructors to discuss intern dilemmas with the other field instructors (Field Instructor Meetings, 11/6/07 and 11/20/06, MU). The Faculty Leader later told me that this was a program stance that they took with veteran field instructors: "Yes, you know your role, but the new people don't and we need you to help induct them into this practice" (Faculty Leader Interview, 1/10/07, MU). In all the programs, field instructors met informally to share ideas and talk about the role (Chris Interview, 3/21/07, CC; Mimi Interview, 1/29/07; Simon Interview, 1/25/07 and 5/8/07; Tony Interview, 2/16/07, TC). Learning of this type also occurred in mentoring pairs when veterans taught new field instructors about the work (Carrie Interview, 3/22/07; Simon Interview, 1/25/07 and 5/8/07). These incidents are ambiguous because what is learned may not align with the program; it rests on the assumption that the person teaching understands and enacts the program's philosophies, knowledge, and skills. When a field instructor tells another, "Here's how I do it," this does not ensure that this person is passing on information that coincides with the program. It might, but it might not.

Even when field instructors enact their practice in appropriate, productive ways, variation can create inconsistency, meaning that student teachers, even within the same institution, can have very different experiences. There were numerous examples of this in

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the earlier description of responsiveness. Mimi, Maggie and Melinda, for example, field instruct for the same program, but their seminars differed considerably because they were planned in response to a particular group of student teachers. Students in Maggie's seminar learned different material than Melinda's, because Maggie's students were interested in certain topics. This inconsistency in and of itself is not a bad thing. Consistency among program leaders (including field instructors) does not necessarily ensure a better learning experience or the creation of better teachers. Recall our earlier discussion about policy implementation—that inconsistency results because teachers broker policies and in doing so, transform the policy itself. The policy looks different than was originally intended. If we think about this in terms of teacher preparation, we begin to see that inconsistency is a very real possibility in a system where autonomous participants are free to make decisions and take action at will. What program leaders intend may be very different from what actually happens in the field; courses may have little bearing on field experiences. In this sense, variation limits the possibility that connections will be made across the program.

It is not my intention to imply that all field instructors should speak and act exactly the same. In fact, variability is a natural result of field instructor autonomy. The point is that there are foundational principles, concepts, norms, and tools that drive each program (obligation structures). These need to be made known and upheld by all who work with students in a program, including field instructors. Tatto (1996) concurs:

> Having a coherent program does not necessarily require that all faculty think alike, as diversity of thought contributes to rich learning experiences. She emphasizes, rather, that coherence should abide in the common ground among faculty around professional norms and expectations, as well as in the way that learning experiences are organized and conceptualized. (p. 394)

The problem arises when field instructors fail to reinforce what Buchmann and Floden (1992) refer to as "points of contact"—the common threads that can (and should) be woven throughout a program, like values, norms, ideas and tools. This happens either because field instructors lack the knowledge needed to make the connections or they feel no obligation to adhere to the program's values and requirements (p. 9). This points to a system with weak obligations structures, where autonomy reigns. If we believe that students learn more when they receive consistent, reinforcing messages, then it becomes problematic when field instructors have the freedom to make certain types of decisions. Autonomy—and the resulting variation—have the potential to undermine student teacher learning, which is the ultimate goal of teacher preparation programs.

But coherence cannot be seen blindly or turned into mechanistic, prescribed moves. Buchmann and Floden (1992) argue that the idea of coherence, when applied to the process of learning to teach must be understood in more complicated ways. Learning to teach, they argue, involves working with uncertainty. Attempts to create consistency in the curriculum and among teacher educators may be oppressively rigid and may actually restrict learning when uncertainty and adaptation to situations is so essential to good practice. Because of the situational nature of learning to teach, certain types of experiences

> Cannot be purposely built into a program – except indirectly, that is, by including content and activities that reward recollection and are open to manifold responsive engagements. To take advantage of such potentials, education must deliberately leave room for the unexpected while preparing students to make the most of adventures in learning. (p. 7)

In language that echoes proponents of loose coupling, Buchmann and Floden (1992) advocate a form of connectedness that encompasses both form and flexibility.

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They claim that "educational coherence is found where students can discover *and* establish relations among various areas of sensibility, knowledge and skill, yet where loose ends remain, inviting a reweaving of beliefs and ties to the unknown" (p. 8). This implies a connectedness, among ideas and tools that still allows for variation and responsiveness (think: obligation and autonomy). What this means is that certain aspects of the curriculum should cohere, while others remain flexible. The system should be lithe enough to accommodate new ideas and uncertainty without falling apart; it should not be so structured, insisting on absolute consistency among its members to the point where it becomes closed and rigid.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Implications

In the previous chapters, I have outlined the wide range of variation that occurs in field instruction and considered the loosely coupled relationship between teacher preparation and field instruction, between obligation structures and autonomy. But why does this matter? Who will this study speak to? How will it contribute? I would love to claim that it adds weight to the argument that preparing better field instructors creates good teachers or impacts student achievement. But it doesn't (that's my next study). The fact of the matter is that little evidence exists *anywhere* to support those claims. The literature on field instruction is weak—there is no rigorous, empirical data that points to the effectiveness of field instruction. The results from the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (2006-2007) provide evidence of how well students from our four institutions did on their content exams. The Teacher Institutions Preparation Survey Profiles uses nine New Teacher Efficacy Factors (Literacy Support, Liberal Arts, Learning for ALL students, Subject Matter, Management Learning, Professional Behavior, Community Resources, Technology, and Pedagogy) to gather information from exiting students about how prepared they feel. This information is intended to help programs assess areas of strength and weakness. But, neither of these measures offers any direct correlation between mentoring and teacher preparedness or mentoring and student achievement.

So what is the value of this study? Like most interpretive work, the advantage of this study is its capacity to help us see inside field experiences in a new way. The theory of loose coupling serves as a framework for thinking about field instruction and hopefully

contributes to our consideration of whether such a variable practice, when applied to variable student teachers in variable situations, COULD have a substantial effect, favorable or unfavorable, on learning to teach.

The Positive Consequences of Loose Coupling

Teacher preparation programs operate in two worlds: university classrooms and K-12 schools (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985), because learning to teach involves acquiring content and pedagogical knowledge and practicing in messy, real-world K-12 classrooms. For this reason it makes sense to view teacher preparation as a loosely coupled system, where there are structures and autonomy. Field instructors maintain a precarious position between these two worlds. Loose coupling allows them to straddle schools of education and K-12 classrooms in multiple ways.

Student teaching takes place in messy, complex classrooms where situations arise and teachers need to be flexible. Field instructors help student teachers deal with this complexity. According to Weick (1976), loosely coupled systems are good for "localized adaptations" (p. 6). Systems like this can handle messy and complicated work because they allow members to adapt in minor, but important ways. As teacher educators *on the ground*, field instructors are able to help student teachers respond faster to situations that arise. Teacher education programs are large systems, not built to react quickly. Loose coupling allows part of the program (field instruction) the freedom to respond immediately when necessary.

The learning needs of student teachers vary. They come to field experiences with different content knowledge, classroom experiences and ideas about teaching and learning. Field instructors take each of these learners *where they are*, a factor that

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contributes to the variation in the practices of field instructors. Loose coupling allows field instructors to be responsive to student teachers as learners in ways that other members of the program cannot. Field instructors have the "self-determination" to be responsive, to adapt content, to tailor the experience to individual students (Weick, 1976, p. 7).

A claim often leveled against teacher education programs is that they are out of touch with the realities of K-12 schools. Loose coupling offers a solution. Weick (1976) describes the "sensitive sensing mechanism" of loosely coupled systems (p. 6). In this case, field instructors serve as sensing mechanisms with their finger on the pulse of K-12 education. Teacher educators have people on the ground, in classrooms that can potentially bring back information about changes that will contribute to educators' understanding of the complexities learning to teach and inform their decisions about content and design.

The Challenges of Loose Coupling

Understanding field instruction in the context of loose coupling explains its functionality, but also highlights an inherent tension. Field instructors work within a complex system, where they are expected to both cohere (to the program's vision and expectations) and adapt (to the situated realities of learning to teach in real classrooms). Although the data provides a few examples of field instructors who demonstrated clear disregard for their program (like Terri/Tracy), most examples offer portraits of field instructors trying to navigate this tension with professionalism and integrity. Stan and Mimi for example, understand the pressures involved in student teaching. They are torn between enforcing program expectations and accommodating student teachers by

lightening the demands placed on them by the program. Both of these field instructors made judgment calls that involve altering or eliminating an assignment. While the quality and worthiness of these assignments is unclear and we cannot be certain what these field instructors did instead of the assignments or what impact this had on student teacher learning, we can understand the dilemma. Loose coupling places field instructors in these types of situations, where they are required to rely on their professional judgment, deciding when to cohere and when to adapt.

Consider another example. Marissa accepted the position of field instructor at Midwestern, assuming that she understands the role because she supervises students for another institution. She brings to the position knowledge of teaching and field instruction. But Marissa was caught navigating a tricky path where she found herself teaching unfamiliar content. Compounding this is the fact that Marissa is by nature a nurturer who would prefer to spend time providing emotional support to her students. As a conscientious program member ("I need to teach these three chapters, so I better figure them out" Marissa Interview, 12/14/06, MU), she recognizes her responsibility to adhere to expectations, to teach certain content, but two factors conflict with these efforts: her lack of content knowledge and her own beliefs about what student teachers need. In this example we see a field instructor coping with "complex and contradictory expectations" (Shulman, 1983, p. 154). Loose coupling, as Weick (1976) defines it, provides field instructors latitude to adapt the program to address differences among student teachers and their placements, but it also provides a ballast intended to keep field instructors from merely acting on personal preferences, doing what they thought they knew how to do, trying to pass on their own wisdom, trying to avoid things that they knew they could not

do, etc. The tension is exacerbated by the fact that program leaders are removed from field experiences and the daily work of field instruction. Field instructors, for the most part, operate independently, on the nominal basis that all are thoughtful, skilled practitioners. They are hired for their experience as educators and trusted to support student teachers. This struggle to navigate the tension between coherence and adaptation raises a number of questions: What needs to adhere to and what can field instructors let go? How do field instructors know what to let slide? How do they learn to make these decisions? Is K-12 experience alone sufficient preparation for this type of work? What types of learning opportunities might programs offer to help field instructors learn to make these decisions?

Implications

The major implication for this study involves research on field instruction. The role of field experience in learning to teach has received renewed attention from scholars in recent years (Grossman et al., 2008). We still have much to learn about the factors and conditions that influence learning to teach in K-12 classrooms. In particular, research is needed that adds to our understanding of how mentors impact this learning. Policymakers and practitioners have been operating for years under the assumption that mentoring matters. Studies are needed to quantify this claim. This will require developing outcome measures for student teacher learning and ways to link mentoring to student achievement.

Chapter 1 described the empirical literature (or lack thereof) on field instruction. Research on field instruction has historically consisted of small-scale single-method case studies that convey "voices" of individuals and focus primarily on roles and practices (Levine, 2006, p. 53). Some address the complexity of the work, especially the tension

between assistance and assessment (Boydell, 1986, Feiman-Nemser, 1996, & Slick, 1997). This study, I believe, further illustrates the complexity and contributes in that it helps us understand how field instruction fits into teacher education systemically. It points to one possible reason why field instruction has had so little effect on student learning—the tension between coherence and adaptation. Given the data, there are limits as to what it can say. The field instructors were not chosen as representative samples and therefore the data does not permit me to make certain claims. It is, however, reasonable to draw out implications for future research. For example, if we broaden the focus of the research to include student and teacher learning, new methodologies will be called for that include large-scale, longitudinal studies with measurable outcomes.

Consider an example. In a large-scale study of 15 teacher education institutions, Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald, and Ronfeldt (2008) examine coherence in teacher education, particularly students' perceptions of coherence. They nominate possible structural features (qualification and selection of cooperating teachers and frequency of supervisor observations) as a means to investigate the relationship between fieldwork and coursework. They suggest, for example, that arranging for field instructors to have more contact with full-time program faculty "may create conditions that increase [the] likelihood" of coherence (p. 283). They question the feasibility of this, however, and caution readers that increased time together will not necessarily lead to a shared vision and even when it does, these ideas may not be communicated to student teachers. "In a field that is calling for larger-scale studies, this research attempts to identify promising features that are also amenable to large-scale studies of the impact of teacher education" (p. 273).

Given the renewed interest in field experiences among teacher education scholars in recent years of (Darling-Hammond, 2006, Grossman et al., 2008, Zeichner, 2006) the time is ripe for new forms of research on field instruction, especially large-scale studies that examine the relationship between field experiences and the broader teacher preparation program. Questions for consideration might include ideas about how field instructors learn to navigate the complexities of the work, whether the readings and assignments attached to practice teaching and field instruction help field instructors work effectively with student teachers, and what types of outcomes could be used to measure impact on student teacher learning. The voices at the beginning of this dissertation remind us of the value placed on field experiences by student teachers. In this age when formal teacher preparation programs are being called into question, it is perhaps time to re-examine a feature that remains a mainstay in most programs: field instruction.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol
Director of Student Teaching

When you select field instructors*** what qualities do you look for? What questions do you ask them when you initially interview prospective field instructors?

During orientation, what are the most important things that you try to convey to new field instructors?

Describe a typical field instructor meeting.

Are your field instructors expected to conference with student teachers after observations? Are there forms that field instructors use to guide their observations and conversations? What is the goal of those post-observation conferences? How do you prepare people to lead post-observation conferences?

What would you like to do with your field instructors if you had more time or funds?

Describe someone you thought is an excellent field instructor.

What do you think every field instructor in your program should read and why? Is there a text, theory or model that best describes your view of field instruction? Describe any assignments that you give to field instructors to help them learn about the practice.

What role do field instructors play in the education of new teachers in your program? What would you say are the primary goals of student teaching? What type of contact do your field instructors have with other teaching faculty in your department?

It is not uncommon for field instructors to field instruct for multiple institutions. Do you know of field instructors in your program that work for multiple institutions? If yes, what differences do you see across programs? What challenges does this create for you? What would say is unique about your use of field instructors?

What do you do to challenge/meet the needs of people who have been field instructing for many years?

When you work with new field instructors, how does their previous experience influence what they need to learn or what you do to prepare them?

Describe a difficult situation that you had with a field instructor. What did you do to try to fix it?

What is the most challenging part of teaching someone about field instruction?

Think of a situation in which a student teacher was struggling with his/her teaching. What did the field instructor need to do in order to help the student teacher? How did you help support/equip the field instructor?

Were you a classroom teacher at some point in your career? What did you learn from your field instructor? Describe any experiences that you might have had as a field instructor. A cooperating teacher.

How did you learn about field instruction? How do you stay current? Where do you go for ideas about field instruction and how to prepare field instructors?

What prepared you most to do this job?

What would you say is the primary goal of student teaching?

From my reading, I have found that there are different functions that field instructors are called upon to do. I wonder if you would give me your reactions to each of these:
- Offer emotional support to student teachers
- Communicate with cooperating teachers and principals
- Educate cooperating teachers
- Evaluate student teachers
- Challenge student teachers' understanding of subject matter knowledge
- Encourage student teachers to reflect on their teaching

(I need to work on this list, but this gives you the idea.)

***I will use whatever term is appropriate to each specific program.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol
Field Instructors

Tell me about what you do as a field instructor.

What surprised you when you became a field instructor?

What do you do as a field instructor that helps your student teachers learn to be good teachers? Where did you learn this technique/tool/idea?

What have you read that influenced your work as a field instructor? How did you find out about the book/article?

Who was most influential in helping you learn to be a field instructor?

What is the most recent thing that you have learned that relates to field instruction and where did you learn it?

Tell me about your field instructor when you were student teaching. How are you similar/different?

If you were telling a prospective field instructor what you do and why…what would you say?

Tell me about field instructor meetings. What do you do? What would you like to do in those meeting that you don't currently do? What do you find most helpful and informative? Who does the most talking during these meetings?

How closely do you follow the ideas and practices of this program? Can you give me an example of when you have deviated from a particular practice and why? Where do you get other ideas about how to field instruct?

Appendix C

Variation Chart

Appropriate Variation	Ambiguous	Inappropriate Variation
Field instructors develop a practice that is based on a shared vision of the work, a common understanding of theories and a repertoire of actions. They practice what they learn in orientation sessions and program meetings in their practice.	There is a lack of direction from the program and so field instructors do what they think is best, which may or may not align with the program's goals.	Some field instructors eliminate or alter assignments that undermine the integrity and consistency of the program.
Field instructors are responsive to their student teachers and the contexts in which they teach. They use their knowledge of schools, curriculum and pedagogy in their work with student teachers.	The role is not clearly articulated, understood or mandated. So, they develop their own opinion of what the role is and how it should be enacted.	Field instructors base decisions on their own opinion of what student teachers need to learn.
	Field instructors learn from one another and will adopt ideas from others. These may or may not coincide with the program's goals.	
	The field instructor does not have sufficient knowledge of and experience with k-12 schools.	Field instructors don't value the teacher education program, so they disregard it.
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