MENTORING THROUGH COLLABORATION: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF A TEACHER RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE COOPERATING TEACHER/STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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With the intent of better understanding the mentoring relationship during the music student teaching experience, this study examined the impact of a teacher research project on the development of the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The following research questions were designed to guide this project: 1) How do cooperating teachers and student teachers describe the impact of the teacher research project on their relationship with one another?, 2) Do cooperating teachers believe participating in a collaborative teacher research project made them a better mentor?, 3) What factors contributed to the development of a meaningful mentoring relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher?, and 4) Does participation in a teacher research project impact the cooperating and student teachers' sense of empowerment?

Participants in this study were three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs from a small Midwestern college. During the student teaching experience, the pairs worked collaboratively with one another on a teacher research project. I used ethnographic methodological techniques to collect data before, during, and after implementation of the project. Interviews, both individual and focus group, as well as in-depth field observations of the participants in their natural setting were the main sources of data, while informal conversations, field notes, and journals provided further insight. Trustworthiness was established through data triangulation, member checks, and peer review.

The following themes emerged from the data: Expectations and Feelings, Cooperating Teacher Qualities, Student Teacher Qualities, and Teacher Research. The last theme, Teacher Research, was further delineated into three sub-themes: Improving Practice, Collaboration, and Personal Satisfaction. Student teachers exhibit specific qualities that shape their experience. The cooperating teachers appreciated these qualities in their student teachers, and as a result, were more willing to share teaching responsibilities. Participating in a teacher research project provided opportunities for both the cooperating teachers and student teachers to improve their practice. Further, it allowed the student teachers to exhibit the desired qualities (i.e., initiative, dedication, reflection) that resulted in being given more trust and responsibility from the cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers and student teachers alike desired a personal connection with one another that would allow for an authentic, comfortable relationship. The teacher research project resulted in increased opportunities for collaboration between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. This collaboration led to a relationship that was more collegial in nature.

Recognizing the importance of specific student teacher qualities to a successful student teaching experience suggests that music teacher educators foster these qualities throughout undergraduate coursework. Music teacher educators might also consider the use of a teacher research project in the student teaching experience to encourage these qualities while simultaneously allowing for a more collegial relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

For my grandmother, Ursula Jeanne Kalamaroff, for her constant support and belief in me.
Baba, you are missed and loved.

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INTRODUCTION

Personal Reflection

In the spring of my seventh year as a public school music teacher, I was asked if I would take a student teacher for the upcoming fall semester. I was delighted to be asked; I had benefited greatly from my own student teaching experience, and I was excited for the opportunity to give another young teacher the same rewarding experience for which I was so grateful. I quickly agreed, and began to reflect more deeply upon my own student teaching experience and my relationship with my cooperating teacher, Mr. Levi[1].

I enjoyed each and every day of my student teaching. In many ways, it could not have been more perfect. The school was known for having a high quality choral program, and Mr. Levi was a popular teacher both in his school district and in the larger city where the school was located. He was generous with his time and his classes and encouraged me to develop a rapport with the students, as he felt that was especially important for a successful teaching experience. Additionally, Mr. Levi did not hesitate to give me the constructive criticism I needed to improve my teaching. The consistent, honest feedback he provided was crucial to my success as a teacher. Even after seven years of teaching, during which I had pursued and received my master's degree part-time, I still recognized Mr. Levi as a seminal figure in the kind of music teacher I became. For these reasons, I took my job as a cooperating teacher quite seriously.

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[1] All names used in this study are pseudonyms.

The next fall, my first student teacher, Darby, began working with me, and we quickly connected on both a personal and professional level. She came to me having already developed many qualities that would enable her to succeed, and I did my best to let her flourish. Darby enjoyed many successes throughout her student teaching experience, and we were both very sad when our time together was over. We remain good friends to this day.

I taught for three more years before leaving to pursue my doctoral degree, and had three more student teachers. While all three of these student teachers had successful experiences (at least from my perspective), the extent to which I was able to cultivate a personal relationship with each of them varied. I realized that there are many factors that determine the development of a personal relationship, especially one in which one person is in a position of power. However, when I attempted to define and better understand these factors better, I realized this was a difficult task.

Nonetheless, I firmly believed in the importance of such relationships in the development of both the student teacher and the beginning teacher. In addition to my relationship with Mr. Levi, I also benefited from other professional/personal relationships, including those with more experienced music teachers in my district as well as a number of my previous collegiate professors. Despite the difficulty I had in identifying the particular reasons and factors for success in these relationships, I was keenly aware of how important these people had been to me and wondered how other music teachers could benefit as well from similar relationships.

Somewhere along my journey as a public school music educator I became aware of the term 'mentor.' Mentoring has a wide variety of definitions, including a wise and trusted counselor or teacher and an influential senior sponsor or supporter. While I never was part of an

official mentoring program, I was fortunate to have several unofficial mentors throughout my career. These mentors offered support and guidance in a variety of manners, all of which had a direct effect on how I approached my teaching. I had an experience during my first year of teaching when I was rather unsupported and was able to compare this to later in my career when I was not only supported, but also given opportunities for growth. These contrasting experiences led me to inquire as to the potentially great influence mentors and mentoring programs have on music teachers, both during the student teaching experience and when they are being socialized into the profession. What factors make mentoring work? Is there one format that works better than others? Are there specific qualities that good mentors possess? For these reasons, the concept of mentoring, and, more specifically, mentoring as it occurs between the cooperating teacher and student teacher during the student teaching placement, has become the focus of this qualitative dissertation.

Rationale for Study

While a significant body of research exists within the teacher education genre, there is a limited, albeit growing, number of studies exploring mentoring issues specific to music education. In 2002, Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith stated that, although mentoring is a highly researched topic, no studies have "analyzed music teacher data separate from the data from classroom teachers. Thus, the research that provides the foundation for important policy may not be applicable to music education" (p. 9).

In addition to the need for more studies in the research literature pertaining to the problems of beginning music teachers, of further concern is that the existing literature is focused primarily on what is already happening (and the perceptions of those involved) in mentoring and

induction programs. It may be worthwhile to investigate various ways of furthering the knowledge that has already been gained through research so as to improve the practice of mentoring.

Much of the literature refers to the importance of the relationship between the mentor and mentee (Abell et al., 2002; Awaya et al., 2002; Gratch, 1998; Hawkey, 1998; Martin, 1997; Stanulis & Russell, 1999). In many cases, the quality of mentoring is dependent upon the trust and camaraderie that is built between the mentor and mentee. Awaya et al. (2002) define mentoring as a journey involving the building of a relationship that is characterized by trust, sharing of expertise, and moral support.

Given the importance of the mentoring relationship, perhaps it is necessary to investigate ways in which a more organic and meaningful partnership can be constructed between the mentor and mentee. The research suggests that action research might be one such way of building this relationship.

Action research, also referred to as teacher research, has been used to create meaningful professional development for both beginning and experienced teachers. Knight, Boudah, and Groce (1998), as cited in Henson (2001), define teacher research as a "collaborative process by which teachers themselves critically examine their classrooms, develop and implement educational interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions" (p. 819).

A further benefit of teacher research is that it encourages beginning teachers to work collaboratively with other teachers. This collaboration addresses some of the major issues facing new music teachers, including feelings of isolation and lack of support (Krueger, 1999). Indeed, Henson (2001) found that teachers involved in collaborative teacher research experience a

decrease in feelings of frustration and isolation. Collaboration is being viewed as a key component in teacher expertise development (Oja, 2001).

Teacher research is built upon the premise that teachers identify and creatively address problems in their classrooms. Engaging in a collaborative teacher research project might allow beginning teachers to speak comfortably about their struggles with a more experienced teacher, rather than feeling professionally (and perhaps personally) inadequate. A collaborative teacher research project might also be the conduit for a more authentic mentoring relationship between the experienced and beginning teacher. The current study will attempt to understand and perhaps offer possible strategies for overcoming the aforementioned difficulties with current mentoring situations and relationships.

The review of literature will begin with a detailed look at research that has been done concerning the student teaching experience, which will help to illuminate the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship that will act as the mentor/mentee relationship in this dissertation. Next is a review of literature focusing on the identity development for the beginning music teacher. An understanding of this research will serve to help the reader better understand the issues surrounding and pertaining to music teachers new to the profession. Following is a review of research concerning teacher research, specifically addressing how teacher research has been used to benefit beginning teachers. I will also explore the area of collaborative teacher research and why this may prove to be beneficial for beginning teachers. This chapter concludes with the Purpose and Problems for the current study.

Research on the Student Teaching Experience

Often, student teaching is the first extended experience preservice teachers have in the classroom. It seems reasonable, then, to provide an understanding of the research concerning this experience. There is a large body of research that suggests that student teaching is a seminal experience in the undergraduate education (Conway, 2002; Rideout & Feldman, 2002; Roulston, Legette, & Womack, 2005). Rideout and Feldman (2002) also state that student teachers begin the experience in a limited role but eventually assume more responsibility. Draves (2008) discovered that student teachers with a strong teacher identity were more likely to be given more power in the classroom by their cooperating teachers.

Multiple studies have focused on the perceptions of music student teachers (Frederickson & Pembrook, 1999; Kelly, 2000; Madsen & Kaiser, 1999). Madsen and Kaiser (1999) and Kelly (2000) discovered that discipline and classroom management were ranked as the greatest fear prior to student teaching. Frederickson and Pembrook (1999) investigated the perceptions of preservice teachers during the student teaching experience, and discovered that the best aspects of teaching related to making decisions regarding literature and building collegial relationships with other teachers.

Information regarding the cooperating teacher often is embedded in the research rather than being the focus (Rideout & Feldman, 2002). However, the vast majority of research speaks to the importance of the cooperating teacher in the student teaching experience. Schleuter (1991) examined the thinking of preservice music teachers before and following the completion of their experience. She concluded that the cooperating teacher is most influential in the teaching decisions made by the student teacher. Kahn (2001) identified flexibility and good communication skills as important cooperating teacher skills.

Several studies highlight the importance of the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. Borko and Mayfield (1995) suggest that student teachers' relationships with their cooperating teachers can lead to meaningful feedback for the student teacher, resulting in new ways to think about teaching and learning. Draves (2008) focused on the relationships formed between student teacher/cooperating teacher pairs. She concluded that cooperating teachers desire a personal connection with their student teachers that would result in learning for both parties.

Berthelotte (2007) investigated the similarities and differences between the expectations of four cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs. She found that both student teachers and cooperating teachers desire to be immersed in the school community, despite concerns that the cooperating teachers had regarding the student teachers' readiness. Both the cooperating teacher and student teacher had multiple fears, including issues concerning classroom management, accomplishing necessary elements of teaching, and their own insecurities as a teacher. Berthelotte also found that cooperating teachers gave mixed messages to their student teachers, and neither party engaged in critical self-reflection. Additional issues included frustration on the part of the student teachers in the development of their own teaching style, rather than that of their cooperating teachers, and cooperating teachers were frustrated with their role of evaluator, which presented a perceived conflict with their role as a mentor. Berthelotte found that cooperating teachers who viewed themselves as learners saw the student experience as a shared one between the cooperating teacher/student teacher pair.

The importance of reflective dialogue between the cooperating teacher and student teacher, as well as the importance of reflective thinking on the part of the student teacher has been studied extensively. Conklin (2003) investigated the impact of reflective thinking in the

professional growth and identity development of preservice choral music teachers. The students in this study cited the cooperating teacher as an influential model. Stegman (2007) examined the content of reflective dialogues between six pairs of cooperating teachers and student teachers. She discovered that the conversations were most meaningful when they occurred on a regular basis and the cooperating teacher guided the conversation toward more significant levels of reflection.

Elliott & Calderhead (1993) found that cooperating teachers view their role in multiple ways, including being a good listener, being a friend, or acting as a guide or leader. Further, their role manifested itself based on the cooperating teachers' own definitions of their responsibilities. Most of the cooperating teachers valued the importance of mentoring the student teacher.

Veal and Rikard (1992) studied the interpersonal relationships between cooperating physical education teachers and their student teachers. The cooperating teachers described having a student teacher as a productive, collaborative experience in which both members benefited.

The research suggests that the student teaching experience is most productive and meaningful when cooperating teachers serve as mentors (Duling, 2000). However, the research also suggests that a positive mentoring experience requires thoughtful and careful consideration (Conway, 2003). Additionally, requiring the cooperating teacher to act in the role of a mentor depends heavily on the rapport that is developed between the cooperating and student teacher (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Veal and Rikard, 1999). It has been suggested that working collaboratively might be an effective tool in managing and creating a successful student teaching experience (Bowles & Runnels, 1998).

Identity Development in Beginning Teachers

Studies in the General Education Literature

Before examining how teacher identity is developed in music teachers specifically, an understanding of the findings of general education research seems necessary. Even within the realm of general education, research in this field is somewhat limited. Only in the mid-1980s did the identity of preservice and beginning teachers begin to be investigated. However, researchers have investigated the multiple ways in which teachers develop through their teacher education programs and during their induction into the profession.

Fuller (1969) put forth the idea of a developmental change in teachers' thinking. Based on her work counseling student teachers, Fuller analyzed student responses to open-ended statements and interviews. She stated that there were three different kinds of concerns that teachers face related to teaching: self, task, and impact. Self concerns center on a teacher's feelings of adequacy and competence, task concerns center on a teacher's preoccupation with a specific chore or duty, and impact concerns center on a shift in the teacher's thinking about student learning. The most important premise of Fuller's concerns theory is the idea that teachers can identify and discuss the nature of their teaching concerns (perceived problems of teachers).

Fuller and Bown (1975), based on Fuller's aforementioned 1969 work, proposed a three-stage model of teacher development hypothesizing that student teachers move naturally through these stages as they advance through their teacher education program. Research exists that both agrees with (Burden, 1982) and challenges their hypothesis (Giullaume & Rudney, 1993). The most compelling research that disagrees with this model is that of Borich (2000), who states that

the Fuller and Bown theory is idealized, and not all teachers progress from self to task to impact concerns in the same order.

Berliner (1994, 2000) proposed a model of development of expertise suggesting that teachers take approximately five years to proceed through three stages of development: novice, advanced beginner, and competent. Berliner also believes that, as teachers progress through these stages, there is a notable change in teachers' thinking. These changes occur specifically in the areas of instructional behaviors, understanding of students and learning, awareness and understanding of context, and perceptions of self and the teaching profession.

Burden (1990), in W. Robert Houston (Ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, examined various preservice teacher development models. The models share an emphasis on individual differences among preservice teachers and suggest the need to individualize interventions and support over extended periods of time. Korthagen and Russell (1999) questioned the effectiveness of traditional teacher education programs that are built on an application-of-theory approach and instead emphasize the central role of reflection in teacher development. They wrote, "teacher development is conceptualized as an ongoing process of experiencing practical teaching and learning situations, reflecting on them under the guidance of an expert and developing one's own insights into teaching through the interaction between personal reflection and theoretical notions offered by the expert" (p. 5).

Zielinski and Preston (1992) administered a survey to preservice teachers (N=67) to ascertain their main areas of concern regarding teaching. They found that preservice teachers' concerns shifted from primarily information-centered to student-centered issues after their junior level practica experience. Based on their findings and those in previous studies, they suggested

that preservice teachers might not be able to think reflectively about teaching until they have been in a teaching situation.

Perhaps it is this aforementioned perception of self that was the catalyst for researchers to begin investigating the role that teacher identity plays in the overall growth and development as teachers. Researchers have discovered that students who enter teacher-training programs tend to have specific preconceived ideas about the profession (Hutchinson, 1990; Sweeney, 1984). Further, it is these preconceptions that influence future teacher's actions in the classroom, and are the result of prior experiences as a student (Asam, 1999). Ross (1986) found that it is difficult even for teacher education coursework and field experiences to change the strongly held perceptions of preservice teachers. Multiple studies (Bozin-Mirkovic, 1997; Hengst, 1990; Ross, 1986) have suggested that a process of professional socialization can affect preservice teachers' perspectives, and it is during these processes that preservice teachers begin to see themselves as teachers.

Beginning teachers continue to be socialized into the profession, although this process manifests itself differently than during the undergraduate years. Cook (2002) postulated that new teachers begin their careers with beliefs that do not necessarily fit their new professional community, which may in turn contribute to their leaving the profession. Findings throughout the literature have suggested that mentoring and induction may help to offset the issues that are faced by beginning teachers (Cook, 2002; Gehrke, 2006; Gratch, 1996), but the mentoring relationship is most successful when beginning teachers are allowed to choose their mentors and when the interactions include informal conversations with colleagues, and classroom support. The research also suggests that beginning teachers share common experiences that contribute to the socialization process (not being fully prepared for all aspects of teaching, forging

professional relationships with other adults, and balancing personal and professional lives), although these experiences do not occur at the same time, in the same order, or with the same degree of impact (Daley-Peterson, 2001).

Researchers also have investigated external influences on teacher identity. Zulich, Bean, and Herrick (1992) examined the impact of personal biography on preservice teachers' development. They found that the stages of teacher development are affected by personal biography, and suggest that preservice teachers should have opportunities to analyze their personal biographies within the framework of teacher development stages. The researchers also state that preservice teachers should interview experienced teachers regarding their professional development.

Studies in the Music Education Literature

Research in music teacher education has identified two types of socialization that contribute to a teacher's sense of identity: primary and secondary. Woodford (2002) stated that primary socialization occurs early in life, and it is during this time that children tend to assume the musical roles and attitudes of parents and significant others. Woodford describes secondary socialization as the time during which music students view music teachers as career role models. Given the wide variety of knowledge and skills involved in music teaching, Woodford speculated that music education might necessitate even greater levels of socialization.

Many researchers have attempted to better understand identity construction better through the influences of primary and secondary socialization. Doloff (1999) found that music education methods courses typically do not address the issue of teacher identity development, and she offered three strategies for uncovering preservice teachers' images of teachers and teaching: personal history/biography, using visual image metaphors, and drawing. She stated, "giving

students an opportunity to make their experience explicit allows students to reflect on what they believe about teaching" (p. 193). Additionally, Doloff found that preservice teachers' images of teaching are often based on a private studio teacher, and that this image may be inappropriate for what is required of a classroom teacher.

Further influences for preservice teachers include school music teachers and family members. Ferguson (2003) investigated four undergraduate string education majors who volunteered to teach lessons in a university string project to underprivileged students. Ferguson hoped to understand how participation in this program influenced the preservice teachers' understanding of what it meant to be a teacher. She discovered that the students' reactions to and feelings about the teaching environment were filtered through their personal histories.

Campbell (1999) examined the perceptions of 43 undergraduate music students as they began their first formal field experiences, with a focus on how the participants began to combine theory and practice. Campbell found the participants' teacher identities were influenced strongly by their secondary school experiences, and that these preservice teachers were beginning to understand the complexities of the profession. Prescesky (1997) used autobiographical and journal entries to explore identity construction of four music education students. She found that participants' perceptions of themselves were rooted in childhood memories and models of practice.

In addition to the impact of primary and secondary socialization on identity construction, many researchers have investigated the conflict that exists for new teachers between becoming a musician or a teacher. Roberts (1991) addressed the question of music education students' identity construction through interviews with undergraduate music education majors (N=108). He found that all interviewees saw themselves primarily as musicians, and that the role of

teacher did not appear to hold great significance for the undergraduate music education majors. Roberts speculated that this conflict may be unique to music education, and that the pressure to be viewed as a successful musician is a dominating influence.

Mark (1998) reported on studies of Austrian music schools and the problem of preparing music teachers for the European labor market. Data were collected through interviews of approximately 400 musicians, professors, students, and graduates. In the programs studied, the emphasis on developing musicianship was relatively great compared to the pedagogical components of the programs. Woodford (2002) stated that most undergraduates enter their formal training viewing themselves as musicians first and teachers second.

The Role of Reflective Thinking

Many researchers have investigated ways in which reflective thinking can aid in the identity development of teachers. Reflective thinking can be encouraged in a variety of ways with varying results, but it seems to have a positive impact on beginning teachers. Huba and Freed (2000) wrote of the importance of encouraging reflective thinking in preservice teachers, but found that "as students become more reflective in their thinking, they must develop in their understanding of what can be known and how knowing occurs" (p. 212). Huba and Freed also make reference to King and Kitchener (1994), in which seven stages of reflective thinkers are established, from the lowest level where candidates do not see a need to reflect, to the highest level where candidates recognize the need for reflection and justification.

Many studies in both the general and music education literature have investigated the use of reflective thinking in preservice teacher education. Several researchers have examined the ways in which professional development schools might encourage the use of reflection in teacher education programs. A professional development school is defined as an institution formed

through a partnership between a professional education programs and a P-12 public schools. Part of the mission of a professional development school is teacher preparation and faculty development. Newman, C., Moss, Lenarz, and Newman, I. (1998) examined 15 preservice teachers' reflective abilities after immersion into a professional development school environment. Their findings state that, "the cohort participants were able to move to higher levels of concern more quickly because they were continually encouraged to collaborate and to reflect on the effects of their actions on their students" (p. 7).

Freese (1999) investigated the role of reflection on preservice teachers' development in the context of a professional development school. Freese incorporated three types of reflection: anticipatory (during planning), contemporaneous (while teaching), and retrospective (after the lesson). He found that this reflective framework allowed for increased understanding of preservice teachers' responsibility, and that the preservice teachers "discovered different ways of looking at learning, teaching, and what it means to be a teacher" (p. 904).

Conkling (2003) observed the reflective practices of seven preservice music teachers involved in a professional development school. The participants reported a strong sense of pride and accomplishment at having been directly responsible for their growth through reflective practices, and Conkling stated that teaching identities begin to form long before student teaching and even before preservice teaching experiences. Additionally, she suggested that finding ways to teach reflective practice in the undergraduate program could be a significant contributor to the process of developing a teacher identity.

Strategies for Promoting Reflective Practice

Several researchers have employed various techniques such as videotape analysis, portfolios, and reflective journaling in an attempt to encourage more reflective practices. Broyles

(1997) studied 12 undergraduate music education majors during their student teaching, and focused on the effectiveness of videotape analysis on the role development of student teachers in music. Findings indicated that videotape analysis highlighted music majors' focus on student learning.

Mitchell (1997) incorporated portfolios into two semesters of a senior-level music education course. The use of portfolios was a response to what she perceived as a lack of reflection and role identity in undergraduate music teacher education students. The students were required to include a cover page, resume, statement of teaching philosophy, and narrative statements in the portfolio. Mitchell found that, as a result, students reflected upon their teaching and learning more often and more critically, and thought more about what it meant to them to be a teacher. Students were able to assess their own learning and objectively report on the development of their teacher identities.

Bauer and Dunn (2003) used an electronic portfolio to facilitate reflection, and found that it not only helped teacher candidates to see connections between teacher education coursework, but also allowed for preservice teachers to "understand how the various curricular components relate to their goal of becoming a music teacher, resulting in more meaningful learning" (p. 16). Berg and Lind (2003) also used electronic portfolios with the intent of integrating reflection and technology. They found that essays written by preservice teachers at the end of the semester showed evidence of reflective thinking, and, further, that "students were able to reflect on their teaching, analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for continued improvement" (p. 22).

Journaling has been found to be an effective means to promote reflective thinking amongst preservice teachers. Carter (1998) examined the effectiveness of journal writing in

promoting reflection among preservice teachers enrolled in an education psychology course. She found that students believed journaling to be helpful in both examining and potentially changing their beliefs about what it means to be a teacher. Bolin, Khramtsova, and Saarnio (2005) used student journals to stimulate authentic learning, and found that journaling can be an effective tool for involving students in the learning process.

Seminal Influences and Experiences on Teacher Identity

As this review of literature previously suggested, preservice music teachers enter teacher-training programs with preconceived notions about what it means to be a teacher. These preconceptions are based either on influences from family members at an early age (primary socialization) or classroom and private music teachers (secondary socialization). The research literature suggests that music teacher educators should encourage students to discuss their personal histories, and should consider the potential influence these histories may have on their perceptions of teachers and the teaching profession. Music teacher educators, then, are not only charged with providing preservice teachers with the skills necessary to become a successful music educator, but also must challenge these preconceived notions to affect change in future music teachers.

Music teacher identity is developed early for undergraduate music education majors (Mitchell, 1997; Campbell, 1999; Conkling, 2003; Ferguson, 2003). Music teacher educators have used a variety of methods to foster identity development, with reflective thinking in response to various teaching moments (i.e. field experiences) having the most impact. The research also suggests that incorporating field experiences early in the music teacher education curriculum will help to develop music teacher role identity.

Identity Development Through Mentoring and Induction

Based on the information provided in the aforementioned studies, the development of teacher identity is a complex and multifaceted process, and music teachers specifically have key obstacles to overcome to develop a healthy identity. Further, the research suggests that the development of a healthy identity may help to offset teacher attrition while simultaneously creating teachers who are more reflective about their practice.

Given this information, the question for music teacher educators and researchers then becomes one of how and when best to develop a healthy identity. The research suggests that teachers develop through multiple stages that go beyond the typical four or five year undergraduate teacher preparation program. Further, Berliner proposes that, "even with a program of teacher education, classroom teaching is too complex a job to be learned very rapidly" (p. 361). Additionally, as previously stated, Dolloff (1999) believes that music education methods courses typically do not address the issue of teacher identity development. It is possible that music teacher educators feel that the current coursework for preservice teachers does not allow for the incorporation of skills that foster identity development, or perhaps music teacher educators feel that other skills are more important given the limited time. It seems reasonable, then, that a healthy teacher identity might be most appropriately developed while one is already teaching, and more specifically, through an induction and mentoring program.

A common theme that was found throughout many of the aforementioned studies is that of reflective thinking. Reflective thinking can manifest itself in a variety of ways (i.e., in response to video analysis, through traditional and electronic portfolios, and through journaling). These techniques have been found to encourage preservice teachers to reflect more upon what it means to be a teacher (Mitchell, 1997) and see connections between coursework and early teaching experiences (Bauer & Dunn, 2003). These findings support the inclusion of some, if

not all, of these techniques into a mentoring program for beginning teachers. Additionally, incorporating these activities into a mentoring program may provide necessary and welcome guidance for school districts that are charged with providing a form of induction for beginning teachers.

While the vast majority of states mandate that school districts offer some type of induction program for beginning teachers, the details of such programs vary greatly within and between states. As a result, there exists a vast inconsistency between mentoring and induction programs provided to new teachers, and there are varying degrees of perceived success and value related to these programs. Conway (2003), in her examination of mentoring practices in Michigan, discovered "no consistency in the interpretation of Michigan law" (p. 11) requiring all schools to provide mentors for beginning teachers. Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith (2002) investigated the training and compensation of mentors and discovered that many states offer only guidelines for mentors. As a result, these "policies provide insufficient support for mentoring to take place" (p. 10).

A mentoring program that is centered upon, first and foremost, reflective thinking would provide the necessary socialization into the professional that encourages teachers to begin viewing themselves as teachers (Broyles, 1997; Mitchell, 1997; Conkling, 2003; Ferguson, 2003). Additionally, reflective practice may be instrumental in helping music teachers, specifically, develop their teaching identity beyond the primary (assuming music roles of parents) and secondary (viewing music teachers as role models) types of socialization.

The techniques that have proved to be most successful in research are ideal activities for a mentoring program. Assuming that care has been given in the choosing of a mentor for the beginning teacher (Gratch, 1996), reflective thinking can serve as the basis for productive

conversations between mentors and mentees. The following is an example of how reflective thinking might serve as a catalyst for a more productive mentoring experience.

Mentees might be asked to respond to journal prompts that are centered on daily practice, including perceived problems in their teaching. The purpose of this is two-fold. First, reflective writing has been found to facilitate a teacher's professional growth (Freese, 1999; Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, 1992). Additionally, preservice teachers may fail to value reflection and reflective practice until confronted with a challenge or problem in a teaching situation (Zielinski & Preston, 1992). Prior to meeting with their mentee, the mentors also could be asked to think of current challenges and problems in their own teaching. As a result, the mentors and mentees would be more likely to have a meaningful and productive conversation, and the mentor may also benefit from thinking more deeply about his or her own practice. A further benefit of this type of reflective thinking is that the mentors also continue to enforce a healthy identify. Indeed, it appears that encouraging new teachers to think reflectively under the guidance of mentor will be beneficial to the mentor and mentee alike.

Studies in the Teacher Research Literature

As this dissertation will examine the use of an action research project as a vehicle for a more organic mentoring experience, an understanding of teacher research, both in definition and its prevalence in the research literature, warrants further exploration. Teacher research, also referred to as action research, is a term that can be defined as a process through which practitioners study their own practice to solve problems embedded in their daily routine (Corey, 1953). Sagor (1992) identified three criteria for teacher research: the issue pertains to teaching and learning and is within the scope of the researcher's authority, the issue is one which the

researcher is passionate about, and the issue focuses on an area of teacher or student performance that could be improved upon. Further, Fueyo and Koorland (1997) stated the following,

> "Teachers as researchers observe and analyze their plans and actions and their subsequent impact on the students they teach. By understanding both their own and their students' classroom behaviors, teachers as researchers make informed decisions about what to change and what not to change."

Mitchell et al. (2008) wrote of the importance of collaborative teacher research for the beginning teacher. Like much of the research that exists regarding new music teacher perceptions and mentoring practices, Mitchell et al. recognized that beginning teachers are confronted with many issues as they begin their teaching careers. The authors stated that professional development "is a special challenge for novice teachers, who may focus more on coping with a new role, and developing and consolidating their instructional skills, than on growth and new approaches" (p. 344). Further, the authors questioned whether professional development fulfills the goal of retaining good teachers or improving practice. To provide the necessary support to beginning teachers, Mitchell et al. recommended extending the partnerships established between student teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors into the beginning teachers' careers.

Successful collaboration depends upon the following planning and considerations (Mitchell et al., 2008): defining the problem, establishing a plan to collect data, analyzing the data, identifying solutions, and reporting the results. Active teacher involvement is a crucial component at all stages of the research process.

Participating in a collaborative teacher research project "allows the uncertainties of the teacher to be a source of learning and professional development for teachers and students"

(Mitchell et al., 2008, p. 348). It may prove especially relevant for beginning teachers as a means of expressing doubts and uncertainties about their own teaching as well as building a fruitful relationship with a more experienced teacher.

Henson (2001) examined the motivational effects of a teacher research initiative implemented in an alternative and special education school. More specifically, Henson investigated the self-efficacy, empowerment, collaboration, and perceptions of school climate of teachers who participated in teacher research. Collaboration and general teaching efficacy were consistently related, but all teachers in the study reported increased levels of collaboration with others.

Farrell (2003) described a study in which seven novice teachers participated in a collaborative teacher research study. The classroom-based project was designed to enhance both teachers' personal practice and impact student outcomes. A university supervisor served to coach and mentor the teachers through the various stages of the action research process. Qualitative data collection techniques were used with the following data sources: teacher journals, interviews/feedback sessions, indices of self-efficacy administered pre- and post-intervention, and transcripts of online discussions between participants. The findings of Farrell's (2003) study indicated large increases in the participants' perceived levels of instructional efficacy and increased empowerment. Additionally, Farrell found that engaging in teacher research "compelled these teachers to inquire into their own teaching, to question their methods, and to engage in creative problem solving" (p. 26).

O'Connor et al. (2006) examined the experiences of 34 graduate students in an elementary education masters degree program as they engaged in a teacher research project during two required teacher research courses over the course of a year. Data were collected via

survey (with open-ended questions) as students progressed from the proposal stage to the final presentation stage. Conducting teacher research was found to put teachers in control of their own professional development. O'Connor et al. (2006) stated that teachers in the study "consistently commented that the action research process made them more aware of their teaching practices and more cognizant of their students' needs" (p. 22). The teacher research process also serves to makes teachers more aware of new strategies and gives them more confidence in their own work (Ferrance, 2000; Sax & Fisher, 2001).

While the implementation of a teacher research project takes time, commitment, and careful consideration, the benefits of participating in one seem to far outweigh any potential difficulties. Further, the research suggests that the effects of participating in a teacher research project begin to address the important issues faced by beginning music teachers. However, no research currently exists investigating how the mentoring relationship is impacted by the use of a collaborative a teacher research project. Therefore, a closer examination of the phenomenon is warranted.

Purpose and Problems

With the intent of better understanding the mentoring relationship during the music student teaching experience, the purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the impact of a collaborative teacher research project on the development of the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The following research questions were designed to guide this investigation:

1. How do cooperating teachers describe the impact of the teacher research project on their relationship with the student teacher (and vice versa)?

2. Do cooperating teachers believe the teacher research project makes them a better mentor? If so, how?

3. What other factors contribute to the development of a meaningful mentoring experience between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher?

4. Does participating in a teacher research project impact the cooperating and student teachers' sense of empowerment?

Secondary research questions include:

a) Are all aspects of the teacher research project approached collaboratively? If not, how was the division of work between the cooperating teacher and student teacher determined?

b) What do both the cooperating and student teachers report as the most difficult component of the collaborative teacher research project?

c) Does participation in a teacher research project impact the cooperating and student teachers' current and future instructional practices? If so, how?

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

The chapter begins with a detailed look at research that has been done concerning mentoring in both the general and music education realm, and will serve as a framework for understanding the mentoring experience during the student teaching experience. The chapter continues with an in-depth look at three seminal studies: DeLorenzo (1992), Conway and Zerman (2003), and Draves (2008). These studies are deemed as seminal because of their findings, their methodologies, and their influence on the body of research in the fields of mentoring and induction, and the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher during the music student teaching experience.

Research on Mentoring in General Education

In the general education literature, researchers have explored the following topics related to mentoring and induction: the issue of assistance versus assessment, the perspective of the novice teacher, ways in which mentors assist the beginning teacher, the relationship between the mentor and mentee, exemplary mentors, and looking at mentoring as a professional practice.

Assistance Versus Assessment

Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) used a case study design to investigate two induction programs that integrated assistance and assessment to promote quality teaching. The researchers used a comparative analysis to analyze multiple layers of data, including interviews with program leaders, analysis of program documentation, and observations of staff meetings and

mentor training. Additionally, Yusko and Feiman-Nemser observed experienced mentors as they worked with new teachers. Each mentor was asked to submit documentation of one year's work with both a successful and a struggling teacher. The researchers found that assistance and assessment can coexist, and that requiring mentors to assess did not prevent them from forming meaningful relationships with beginning teachers.

Perspective of the Novice Teacher

Multiple researchers have investigated novice teachers' perspectives. Youngs (2007) employed a case study design to investigate the nature and quality of the mentoring programs experienced by first- and second-year teachers. He found that mentoring was perceived as more valuable when greater care was given to mentor selection, mentor assignment, and professional development. Fantilli and McDougall (2009) also used a case study design to understand better the induction experiences of five beginning teachers in Ontario, Canada. The researchers found that each participant experienced similar difficulties with various aspects of teaching, and opportunities to collaborate with experiences colleagues, team teaching, and informal mentorship were cited as being the most effective means of support during the early years of teaching.

Lofstrom and Eisenschmidt (2008) conducted interviews with 16 novice teachers during the second half of their first year of teaching. The researchers were interested, specifically, in the recent incorporation of a mentoring program for novice teachers. Using content analysis, the researchers reported that the novice teachers received support from their mentors that helped with both personal development and professional knowledge. Feedback, collegiality, mentor availability, reciprocity of the relationship, and mutual trust emerged as key components of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentors Assisting Beginning Teachers

Researchers also have questioned the role that mentors play in helping beginning teachers learn to teach. Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kahn (2000) investigated 15 mentor/mentee pairs (in the form of cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs) with the hope of understanding the characteristics of successful mentoring and the role this mentoring plays in helping the mentee become a better teacher. Data were collected throughout the course of one semester, and included dialogue journals between the pairs, interviews, videotaped conferences, and artifacts from weekly seminars that the student teachers attended with their university supervisors. The researchers discovered the following themes from the data: helping student teachers survive their beginning teaching experiences and define their teaching lives, establishing relationships based on dialogue and reflection, building professional partnerships, and mentoring and jointly defined work.

Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) used two case studies to investigate how mentors can help beginning teachers improve their teaching. The mentor/mentee pairs used in this study were teachers in a district known for a quality induction and mentoring program. The researchers used interview and observations data gathered over a two-year period as well as supplemental written records generated by the mentor/mentee pairs. Upon analysis, the data showed that one of the beginning teachers showed exceptional growth, while the other beginning teacher had difficulty. However, both beginning teachers benefited from the support of the mentor teacher. The researchers point out that the type of mentoring experienced by the beginning teachers in this study went beyond the image of mentors as buddies or guides, and rather was better defined as teacher of teachers. Further, Norman and Feiman-Nemser state, "until we face the fact that all beginning teachers are learning to teach, we will continue to define induction as short-term support rather than new teacher development" (p. 695).

The Mentor/Mentee Relationship

In an attempt to understand and to clarify effective mentoring better, many researchers have investigated the relationship between the mentor teacher and beginning teacher. In an eighteen-month ethnographic study, Martin (1997) collected data from two mentor/mentee pairs. Types of data included videotapes of teaching (analyzed using a thick description), researcher's meetings with the mentors, and audiotapes of conversations between the mentor/mentee. An analysis of the data revealed that the mentors approached the mentoring experience just as they might approach their teaching practices. As such, the two mentors in this study took quite different approaches in building relationships with the mentees, and in neither case was there a shared balance of power. The researcher suggests that the relationships might improve if the mentors were provided with clearer expectation and training.

Gratch (1998) also used an ethnographic approach to explore the role of mentor relationships in the process of beginning teacher socialization. Data were collected through interviews that were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a constant comparative method. The main theme that came from the data surrounded expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship. The beginning teacher in the study experienced frustration when she found her mentor unavailable for the type of thoughtful feedback and discussion she had hoped to find. Similar to the previously discussed study, implications of this study include clearer expectations and mentor training.

Hawkey (1998) focused on mentors' conceptions of their roles as well as the influences behind these conceptions. Additionally, student teachers responded to their experiences with the aforementioned mentors. Sources of data include recorded conversations between the mentors and student teachers, as well as individual interviews with the participants. Findings indicated

that each mentor had a unique style that was similar to his or her teaching style. As such, the student teachers appeared to be learning different things based on their mentor's approach.

Abell et al. (1995) used a qualitative interview approach to work towards developing a better understanding of mentor and intern participants' relationships in a teacher internship program. The interviews were analyzed using within- and cross-case analysis. The researchers found the relationship formed between the mentor and intern is constructed jointly, and that respect and trust is crucial between the mentor and mentee. The beginning teachers stated that the following attributes are most important in a mentor: support (even when struggling), flexibility, and mentors who are willing to adapt to the needs of the beginning teacher.

Stanulis and Russell (1999) sought to understand the mentoring relationships between two pairs of mentors and student teachers across a six-month period. More specifically, the researchers were hoping the study would help to illuminate how the student teacher/mentor teacher pairs make sense of their particular roles. Data collection included classroom observations, small group reflection sessions (one pair), whole group reflection sessions (both pairs), and dialogue journals kept by each pair of mentor and student teacher. Constant comparative analysis of the data led to coding for themes. The researchers stressed the importance of fostering a caring environment in which teacher learning can occur. This finding was consistent with Awaya et al. (2002), in which mentoring is seen as a relationship rather than a specific role.

Mentoring as a Professional Practice

General education researchers also have focused on various aspects of the mentor, including what it means to be an exemplary mentor. Feiman-Nemser (2001) attempted to define various aspects of exemplar mentors: what they do, how they think, and what beginning teachers

learn from their interactions with them. Data sources were 10 hours of interviews and 20 hours of observations. The researcher used this data to define a mentor's role better, which include two elements: helping beginning teachers find ways to express who they are in their work and helping beginning teachers develop a practice that is both responsive to the community, and reflects what the profession knows about children and learning. Feiman-Nemser also questioned how her participant learned to be a mentor, and discovered that this person was part of a unique graduate intern/teacher induction program sponsored by a university. While certainly not possible for every school district, there is the potential for elements of this partnership to be incorporated in other programs.

Stanulis (1995) used interviews and observation to gather information about five mentors' perceptions of their roles. She discovered that four out of the five mentors identified themselves as teacher educators. Orland-Barak and Hasin (2009) used collective case studies to examine the perspectives of mentors who are well respected have toward mentoring in a variety of contexts. Findings of this study indicate that these mentors are alike in their definition of roles and practices.

The last major aspect of the general education literature that has been explored is defining mentoring as a professional practice. Orland (2001) studied the process of learning to construct the role of a mentor through qualitative inquiry, which allowed for in-depth and on-going investigation of the mentor's learning. The major source of data was recordings of weekly meetings between the researcher and participant. The most notable finding revealed that becoming a mentor required a conscious process into a different teaching context, and did not necessarily emerge from being a good teacher. This finding was confirmed by Schwille (2008), who observed and interviewed 26 pairs of mentors and mentees from the United States, England,

and China. Other sources of data included a log of mentor/mentee interactions and documents from each program. The major finding stated that, "much like teaching, mentoring that is aimed at helping novices to learn is a professional practice with a repertoire of skill sets that must be learned over time" (p. 139).

Research on Mentoring in Music Education

Music education researchers have investigated mentoring and induction with similar approaches to those used in the general education literature. While many of the topics are aligned with those explored in the general education literature, the subtopics are catered to issues that pertaining to beginning music teachers.

In her research about the perceived problems of beginning music teachers, DeLorenzo (1992) explored which programs available to these teachers were perceived as the most helpful. DeLorenzo stated that, "beginning teachers identify mentor teachers and colleagues in the field as most helpful" (p. 18) and suggested that beginning music teachers "look to experienced teachers for help" (p. 18).

Krueger (1999) interviewed 20 music teachers during their last month of their first year of public school teaching. The interviews were open-ended, but guided from questions that pertained to types of new teacher assistance, primary resource people, and continued growth and musicianship. Findings indicated that isolation was a common theme among beginning teachers, supporting the findings of an earlier study (Krueger, 1996). However, effective mentoring programs (experienced by only four the 20 participants) served to offset this feeling of intellectual isolation.

Conway (2003) examined beginning music teacher mentor practices in 13 school districts in mid-Michigan. Data were collected through beginning teacher interviews, teacher journals, focus-group meetings, mentor interviews, administrator interviews, and the researcher's log. Findings indicate inconsistency among the types of mentor programs in the schools, and varying degrees of teacher satisfactions with the programs. Conway further explored the reasons for the lack of consistency and found the following possible reasons: type of school, teaching responsibility and classroom setting, type of mentor assigned, and the training provided to the mentor. Topics that were investigated also include teacher contact with the assigned mentor, the content of mentor interactions (administrative duties, classroom management, parent interaction, building and district policies, and personal issues), and the need for music mentors for music teachers.

Pairing music teachers with an experienced music mentor is a common theme discussed throughout the literature (Krueger, 1999; Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith, 2002). Often, new music teachers are paired with a building mentor, and this building mentor is usually capable only of meeting a portion of the beginning music teacher's needs. Conversely, an experienced music teacher mentor can guide his or her mentee in making decisions regarding issues indigenous to music education, such as curriculum choices, lesson planning, and classroom management. Conway & Zerman (2003) state that, "choosing concert literature and planning lessons for music courses is driven by content. Generic beginning teacher programs alone do not provide the right kind of support" (p. 17).

Schmidt (2008) studied one novice teacher's growth as he was mentored in his teaching, as well as serving as a mentor (under supervision) in a university-based program. Questions guiding the study included concerns the mentors identified for a novice teacher and strategies

used to address these concerns, concerns the novice teacher had for his mentees and how he addressed them, relationships that were evident in the novice teacher's simultaneous roles as mentee and mentor, and what contributed to the novice teacher's growth and ultimate retention as a teacher. Findings indicated the necessity of careful matching of mentor/mentee pairs, providing novice teachers with multiple resources and models, and allowing mentors to have adequate time to observe the novice teacher's instructional style.

Some of the findings discovered in the music education research seem similar to research in general education as well. For example, there exists an inconsistency between mentoring and induction programs provided to new teachers and as such, there are varying degrees of perceived success and value related to these programs. Conway (2003), in her examination of mentoring practices in the state of Michigan, discovered "no consistency in the interpretation of Michigan law" (p. 11) requiring all schools to provide mentors for beginning teachers. Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith (2002) investigated the training and compensation of mentors and discovered that many states offer only guidelines for mentors. As a result, these "policies provide insufficient support for mentoring to take place" (p. 10).

Summary of the Mentoring Literature

The topics of mentoring and induction have been well-researched area in general education. While the body of research in music education is not quite as comprehensive, there are certainly overlapping questions, approaches, and findings. For both general and music educators, it may be helpful to create a larger body of research that addresses the use of mentoring not simply as assistance, but as a means of improving the quality of teaching. Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) investigated mentor/mentee pairs to determine if and how

the mentors are helping beginning teachers improve their teaching. However, as previously mentioned, their study took place in a district already known for a quality induction and mentoring program. It seems likely that mentoring as a means of improving teaching might only be possible, or at least more likely, in a district that provides the necessary framework for induction and training for mentors. Perhaps if there is more research supporting mentoring as a means to improve teaching, school districts would view mentoring as a necessary component, rather than as a luxury for new teachers. School administrators may then be more apt to approach mentoring and induction as "dependable ideas about new teachers as learners, the nature of educative mentoring, and the role of schools in new teacher induction" (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005, p. 694).

Several of the aforementioned studies discuss the perspective of the novice teacher in the mentor/mentee relationship. However, while some studies make reference to the thoughts, actions, and perceptions of the mentee, none of these studies focus specifically on the perceptions of the mentor. It seems reasonable, then, that the role of the mentor is one that should be more carefully examined. Feiman-Nemser (2001) examined various aspects of the exemplar mentor by asking them what they do, how they think, and what beginning teachers learn from their interaction with them, but did not specifically ask what acting in the role of a mentor does for the mentor. Stanulis (1995) discovered that four of the five mentors studied identified themselves as teacher educators, and it is this line of research that should be more deeply explored.

Seminal Studies

DeLorenzo: Perceived Problems of Beginning Music Teachers

DeLorenzo's (1992) quantitative study sought to identify the perceived problems of beginning music teachers as well as the perceived usefulness of professional assistance offered during the first year of teaching. The impetus for this study was based on multiple studies stating that as many as 40% to 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first seven years, and further, that most leave during the first four years (Schlechty and Vance, 1983). Researchers began inquiring as to the reasons why teachers leave the field, and Griffin (1987) stated that isolation from experienced teachers and lack of assistance in developing effective teaching skills were among the contributing factors. DeLorenzo continued the preface to her study by outlining the beginning of special assistance programs offered to novice teachers in response. She discussed the fact that most of these programs evolved from research based on studies of beginning general classroom teachers, but because music teaching "involves specialized skills and responsibilities that are different from the general teaching population, beginning music teachers may also require different kinds of assistance" (p. 10). DeLorenzo aimed at providing meaningful assistance to beginning music teachers, and to provide those in "care-giving positions" more information about the problems that music teachers encounter during their first year.

DeLorenzo (1992) developed a 55-item questionnaire for the study, comprised mainly of five-point Likert-type scale questions in addition to open-ended questions requiring a narrative response. In responding to the survey, subjects were asked only to consider those experiences that occurred during their first year of teaching. Questions elicited information regarding background data and general teaching responsibilities, as well as questions about the degree of helpful assistance from people and/or programs and the usefulness of specific forms of assistance. A total of 221 surveys were returned and analyzed.

DeLorenzo (1992) found that beginning teachers identified mentor teachers and colleagues in the field as most helpful and suggested that beginning music teachers look to experienced teachers for help. Further, the narrative responses stated, "the need for information specific to music teaching" (1992, p. 20).

As one of the first studies inquiring specifically as to the issues pertaining to beginning music teachers, DeLorenzo (1992) was instrumental in bringing this topic to the forefront. Her study provided about information about the needs of beginning music teachers and continues to influence research in the areas of beginning music teacher mentoring and induction programs.

Conway and Zerman: Narrative Case Study

Conway and Zerman (2003) worked collaboratively on this narrative case study. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of one first-year instrumental music teacher regarding mentoring, induction, and the first year of teaching. Conway was hoping to understand mentoring, induction, and teaching during the first year as experienced by one teacher in a specific setting. An important and interesting aspect to this study is that the participant also became the co-author (Zerman). Also of interest is the fact that Conway believed Zerman to be as "set for success as is possible for a beginning middle school instrumental music teacher" (p. 9). Additionally, Zerman's mentor was an experienced teacher sharing her content area.

Data for this qualitative study included Zerman's handwritten journal, email communication between Zerman and her mentor, observations of Zerman by Conway, two interviews with Zerman, an interview with Zerman's principal, and an interview with Zerman's mentor, Zerman's responses on an End of the First Year Questionnaire, and the audiotape from a

meeting between Conway and Zerman after Zerman's second year of teaching. After data collection was finished (at the end of her second year of teaching), Conway and Zerman (2003) reviewed all the data sets. Conway remarked, "After her second year, Tavia (Zerman) was able to bring a more reflective analysis of the data then she could have immediately after the first year" (p. 9). Conway and Zerman then decided together to focus on the following themes: being overwhelmed and concerned regarding the ability to continue in the position, induction and professional development provided by the district, the mentoring experience, and why Zerman decided to continue teaching into her third year. The researcher also describes in detail the quality of the induction and mentor support given to Zerman. Zerman was given the opportunity to choose her own mentor, and Conway believes this "helped create a successful experience for her" (p. 15). Zerman's mentor taught in the same school district and was also a music educator, thus making it possible for Zerman to express concerns specific to her classroom.

Conway and Zerman (2003) believed the most important finding of this study to be that "content-support is a necessity for beginning music teachers" (p. 18). They also discussed the reasons why providing content-support is difficult (funding, maintaining continuity) and suggested that state music organizations may be able to provide services for beginning music teachers.

The study is important to this dissertation not only for its findings, but also for its methodologies, specifically, its use of narrative inquiry. In addition to the findings aforementioned, Conway stated that "we must continue to conduct research in collaboration with teachers so that we may begin to have a better understanding of teaching and learning from the music and arts classroom perspective" (p. 18).

Draves: Cooperating Teacher/Student Teacher Relationships

Draves (2008) investigated four student teacher/cooperating teacher pairs to understand better the specific types of relationships that exist between student teachers and cooperating teachers. Although multiple studies have investigated the student teaching experience, few have looked closely at the relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. Draves used ethnographic methodological techniques to collect data, including observation of participants, individual and focus group interviews, informal conversations, and the collection of artifacts, such as lesson plans and reflective notes.

After data collection was completed, Draves (2008) coded the data and looked for emergent themes. Five themes emerged from the data: Cooperating Teacher Characteristics, Student Teacher Characteristics, Relationships, Power Sharing, and Teacher Identity. Cooperating teacher characteristics were defined further into four sub-themes: personal/professional, musical, educational, and influential experiences. Cooperating teachers and student teachers both agreed on the importance of these subthemes. Student teaching characteristics were defined into three sub-themes: personal/professional, musical, and educational. The personal/professional characteristics "exerted a strong influence than other categories in the formation of a positive student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship" (p. 185).

The relationships that were formed by the participants in the study were positive and based on trust and respect. The cooperating teachers and student teachers valued each other, as well as their contributions. Both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher desired a close personal connection. Draves (2008) found that power sharing between cooperating teachers and student teachers can be placed a continuum, from a student/teacher relationship on the end with

the least power sharing, to team-teaching in the center, to a collaborative partnership on the end with the most power sharing. The last theme explored teacher identity, and Draves found that cooperating teachers were aware of the progression of their student teachers' identities, as well how serving as a cooperating teacher shaped their own teacher identities.

Based on these findings, Draves (2008) makes multiple suggestions for practice. These include careful consideration of student teacher/cooperating teacher matches as well as providing opportunities for the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs to interact prior to the student teaching experience. She also has suggestions for the cooperating teachers, such as finding opportunities for meaningful discourse between the cooperating teachers, and preparing cooperating teachers to work with student teachers.

This study is important to this dissertation as it focused on the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The findings are important in the creation and implementation of a successful student teaching experience, as well as informing other forms of the mentor/mentee relationship.

The studies by DeLorenzo (1992) and Conway and Zerman (2003) are instrumental in developing an understanding of mentoring and induction from multiple perspectives. Draves (2008) provided insight to the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship, another incarnation of the mentor/mentee relationship. DeLorenzo was one of the first music education researchers to address the issues of beginning teachers as they relate to music education. Conway and Zerman, using narrative inquiry, helped researchers gain deep insight into the perceptions of a particular beginning music teacher. Conway and Zerman also used collaboration with the participant to garner an even richer understanding of the issues facing novice teachers. Draves looked deeply into the intricacies of the relationship between the

cooperating teacher and student teacher, and offered suggestions for practice that could be applied to the mentor/mentee match. These studies served to illuminate the importance of providing support and assistance to beginning music teachers, specifically through a mentoring relationship.

This dissertation will attempt to combine the multiple areas of mentoring, the cooperating teacher/student teacher experience, and the implementation of a collaborative teacher research project. The literature suggests that the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher is a form of a mentor/mentee relationship, and that is important both for the perceived success of the student teaching experience as well as for the lasting impact on the student teacher. This study, using data gathered from participant observation and interviews, will help to better understand the impact of a teacher research project on this important relationship.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Researcher's Lens

As I approached this study, I was able to draw upon my experience as both a student teacher and as a cooperating teacher in my own classroom. My own experience as a student teacher was exceptional, and despite the number of years that have passed, my former cooperating teacher and I are still in communication. He remains an important influence to the way I approach my teaching.

I enjoyed the responsibility of having a student teacher in my classroom, and worked hard to provide a successful experience for my student teachers. While I believe that all did have a good and meaningful experience, there were some with whom I was able to connect on a close, personal level, and others less so. In my mind, the rapport I was able to establish with the student teachers impacted whether, and to what extent, I viewed their student teaching experience as a success.

The issues of how, and why a personal connection could be established between myself as a cooperating teacher and my student teachers remain somewhat ambiguous. Upon further reflection, this is true for all of the mentor/mentee relationships from which I have benefited. And yet, despite this ambiguity, the importance of these relationships is unparalleled to the teacher, and now teacher educator, I have become. For these reasons, the issue of mentoring, both in the student teaching experience, as well as for beginning teachers, has been the focus of my research.

In Conway, C. M. (Ed.), *Great Beginnings for Music Teachers: Mentoring and Supporting New Teachers*, Klimpton states in his foreward that, "done well, mentoring nurtures a reflective behavior in teaching that is essential to the growth of this art" but further cautions, "mentoring will never become a habit of mind and part of our culture of professional preparation until the profession *chooses* to make it so." My desire to better understand the mentor/mentee relationship has brought me to this research study.

Design

This study seeks to understand the impact of a collaborative teacher research project on the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The voices of both the student teacher and cooperating teacher were instrumental in gaining an accurate perception of the impact and of the role it plays in the mentor/mentee relationship.

This study is qualitative and more specifically, incorporates a descriptive collective-case study design. Methodology, data analysis, and interpretation also align with the qualitative paradigm. Data were collected in multiple forms, consistent with case study design in qualitative research (Stake, 1995).

Ethnographic methodological techniques were used to collect the following data: in-depth observation of participants, formal individual interviews and focus group interviews, collection of artifacts (i.e. journal entries, lesson plans, reflective notes, observation reports), and informal conversations. Conway (2003b) stated that the use of narrative inquiry might enable researchers in higher education and music teachers to communicate, design research, and examine teaching practice more effectively. Additionally, Conway (2003b) suggested that, "music teacher education researchers begin to tell the stories of music teachers in real classrooms" (p. 35).

Participants

Three student teacher/cooperating teacher pairs from a small Midwestern college served as participants. Selection of participants was bound by those student teaching and those serving as cooperating teachers during fall semester 2010. As participation in this study required both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers to implement the use of a teacher research project, all participants needed to agree to be involved. Also, it is my responsibility to observe and evaluate the student teachers during their student teaching experience. After potential participants were identified, I felt it important to reiterate that their participation was completely voluntary and would in no way impact their evaluation during the student teaching experience. Further, the student teachers were not pressured to participate based on my role as their supervisor. The participants were understanding of this potential conflict and willingly chose to continue their role in the study.

Potential participants were identified by recommendations made by various college faculty members, some of whom were familiar with the public school music teachers, and some who knew the student teachers well. Recommendations were provided for those possible participants who were likely to provide rich and meaningful data as well as to the public school music teachers who might be willing to change their teaching to accommodate the teacher research project. These recommendations proved to be important in identifying successful participants. For example, members of the music faculty initially identified one student teacher, Sara, as a possible participant. However, a colleague from the education department informed me that Sara's cooperating teacher, while successful in the classroom, was not known for being especially forthcoming about her teaching practice. Fortunately, my colleagues and I were able to identify other student/cooperating teacher partnerships that would meet the needs of this study.

I initially contacted the three student teachers identified to explain the study and ask for their participation. Once each student teacher agreed, I contacted their respective cooperating teacher.

The three cooperating teachers in the study had a variety of teaching experience: eight years, 23 years, and 24 years. Two participants had at least ten student teachers prior to their current one, and one participant was serving as a cooperating teacher for the first time. All three participants were females. Their teaching settings were as follows: kindergarten through 8th grade general music and choir, middle school band, and 9th grade choir. All participants were identified by pseudonyms to protect their identity.

The student teachers were completing a four-year program in music education. The students in this college have the choice of student teaching in either the fall or the spring, and there are various pros and cons depending on the choice. The participants in this study chose to student teach in the fall, and resumed their schedules as a full-time student in the spring. Music education majors at this institution are tracked either instrumentally or vocally, resulting in the student teaching placement occurring in either an instrumental or general/vocal setting. The vocal music education majors have the choice of student teaching at the elementary or secondary level. The student teachers were placed in the following settings: elementary general/junior high choral, middle school band, and 9th grade choir.

At this institution the full-time student teaching experience does not begin until the fifth week of the semester, resulting in a minimum of ten weeks of student teaching. During the first four weeks of the semester, the student teachers are enrolled in specific education courses and are also required to spend each Wednesday with their cooperating teachers in their placement.

The student teachers in this program are required to continue participating in their large ensembles during the student teaching experience, resulting in their return to campus several

evenings each week. Although this did not have an obvious, direct impact on this study, this opportunity for the student teachers to interact several times per week resulted in meaningful conversations between the student teachers about their experiences. These conversations were referenced on occasion during my formal and informal conversations with the participants. As with the cooperating teachers, the student teachers were identified by pseudonyms. The following contains a more descriptive summary of each participant.

Cooperating Teacher: Kathy Kjelland

When meeting Kathy, one is immediately comforted by her calm, unassuming demeanor. She has a no-nonsense attitude about her, and it only takes a few moments to realize she possesses a wonderful sense of humor. These qualities have enabled her to be both successful and adored at Buffalo Creek Elementary School and Junior High. The job at Buffalo Creek requires the multiple skills Kathy possesses, as she is the vocal/general music teacher to the kindergarten through eighth grade students. Students move in and out of her classroom at 25 minute intervals throughout the morning, and she has the required combination of energy, demeanor, musical skills, and teaching skills to appreciate each and every student.

Kathy has taught for eight years, and this is her first time as a cooperating teacher. She has definite ideas about how the process should unfold for her student teacher, Amelia Summers. Kathy welcomed Amelia into every aspect of her world, and it is clear that this approach has worked well for both parties. Kathy is committed to all aspects of her life: wife, mother, musician, music teacher, and now, cooperating teacher.

Cooperating Teacher: Claire Swensen

Claire is a life-long learner. She holds a master's degree in music education, and completed the coursework for her doctoral degree as well. She has been involved in many

capacities with the state music association, and it is obvious that she is respected by both her peers and students. However, when meeting Claire, one would never guess that she has 23 years of teaching experience. She carries herself in a youthful manner, which is not to suggest that she is, in any way, immature. Rather, she appears almost ageless.

Her middle school band students at Explorer Middle School think she is very cool, and they work hard for her. So do her student teachers. She has served as a cooperating teacher "at least ten times" by her account, and enjoys this responsibility. She has a well-defined idea of how much guidance and support her student teachers needs and her student teachers reap the benefits of this knowledge. She is, by all accounts, a people person, as is evidenced by her interactions with students and student teachers alike.

Cooperating Teacher: Suzanne Marks

Suzanne Marks is in charge. There is no doubt about this fact. It is not because she says she is, and is not even necessarily because of how she acts. Rather, this quality simply emanates from her in a non-threatening way. Her students respond to this energy quite well, most likely because it is authentic. Her commanding presence is complemented by a very warm demeanor, making her one of the more popular teachers at Riverside High School.

Suzanne is a leader and supporter for her students and for her student teachers. She has spent 26 years in the public schools and has been a cooperating teacher nearly 20 times, though she cannot remember the exact number. She believes that it is important work, and holds her student teachers to high standards. She views her job as busy, hard, but meaningful work, and her students and student teachers alike appreciate this quality.

Student Teacher: Amelia Summers

Amelia Summers enjoyed every aspect of her student teaching experience. Although she had hoped initially to teach at the high school level, her placement in a kindergarten through eighth setting at Buffalo Creek proved to be serendipitous. She loved the variety that each day brought, and found great joy in working with the younger children.

Amelia has a calmness about her that enabled her to deal with the busy schedule at her student teacher placement. She is also a natural leader and was rarely flustered in the classroom. The daughter of educators, Amelia found it easy and rewarding to reflect upon her teaching. She is open to teaching at any level next year, so long as she is teaching. She developed a close friendship with her cooperating teacher, and it is obvious that this relationship will be important to Amelia as she begins her teaching career.

Student Teacher: Emma Gilmore

Emma Gilmore is a born teacher. The best way to understand her is probably through this anecdote: during a final meeting that I held with the student teachers prior to the beginning of their experience, Emma passed out what she called, "happy student teaching" bags, filled with miniature chocolates, tic-tacs, stickers, a red pen, and hand sanitizer.

She also is a wonderful musician and an intelligent, well-spoken young woman. She was very excited about student teaching at Explorer Middle School, and developed a wonderful relationship with her cooperating teacher and the students. In many ways, she went above and beyond expectations, beginning an after-school ensemble for young flutists. She is eager to begin her teaching career, and is hoping to find a job teaching beginning band.

Student Teacher: Thomas Williamson

Tall and lanky, Thomas has established himself as a leader in the college music department. He is a section leader for the choir, and is also the president of the student ACDA

chapter. This leadership extended to his student teaching placement, and was quickly recognized by his cooperating teacher at Riverside High School. He is a gifted vocalist and pianist, and he uses these skills wisely in the context of a rehearsal.

He greatly enjoyed the relationships he built with his cooperating teacher and with the students. He is very high energy, and likes to be in constant communication with the people in his life. Thomas often would send emails to me sharing anecdotes and teaching stories he had experienced during his day. He eventually would like to go to graduate school for either choral conducting or music education, but is looking forward to starting his teaching career next year, and hopes to find a job at either a middle school or high school level.

Procedure

Participants were initially contacted by email to request their participation. After initial contact was made, I met with each participant individually to explain the study and distribute the consent document (see Appendix A), requesting voluntary participation. Data collection began in October 2010 and continued through December 2010.

Participants were asked to implement a collaborative action research project during the course of the student teaching experience. The participants were told about the teacher research project during the initial meeting so that they had a clear idea of what would be expected and required of them as participants. As I anticipated many questions regarding this project, I developed a set of guidelines that would help to direct the teachers as well as answer questions that might have arise during the implementation of the project and throughout the student teaching experience (see Appendix B). These guidelines were developed using Sagor's (1992) criteria for teacher research: the issue pertains to teaching and learning and is within the scope of

the researcher's authority, the issue is one which the researcher is passionate about, and the issue focuses on an area of teacher or student performance that could be improved upon. I chose to use the term 'teacher research' rather than 'action research' as it seemed more palatable and easier to comprehend. This choice was, in no way, a reflection upon what I felt to be the capabilities of the cooperating teachers and student teachers but rather an understanding of how busy the participants are and the multiple obligations for which they are responsible.

During our initial meetings, I allowed for more time to discuss the project and was prepared to field many questions and comments as the project ensued. I served as a sounding board for the teachers as they brainstormed about potential projects, but, as is part of the definition of teacher research, the projects needed to be something about the teachers felt passionate. As such, identifying the problem that would be investigated needed to be the responsibility of the teachers. The participants quickly became comfortable with the procedural aspects of the teacher research project. In fact, once the cooperating teachers understood the parameters of the project more thoroughly, they were able to easily identify problems in their respective classrooms. I was able to help the teachers narrow their choices to projects that were more likely to be accomplished within the time frame of the student teaching experience. The teacher research projects that were chosen by the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs are described below.

Teacher Research Project: Kathy Kjelland and Amelia Summers

Kathy and Amelia chose to focus their teacher research project on helping their junior high boys develop a better understanding of the boys' changing voice. Kathy provided the impetus for this project, as she felt she could learn more professionally about this topic, and that

her students would reap the benefits as well. Amelia also was eager to become better versed in the various approaches on this topic.

Both Kathy and Amelia made a point of bringing their resources they had separately collected to school so that they could brainstorm about ways in which they would set up the study. Additionally, Amelia attended the state ACDA conference shortly after she and Kathy agreed on this topic. Amelia attended sessions and gathered information.

Kathy and Amelia decided to use a qualitative approach with this topic. They would begin by identifying a small sample of participants, all of whom were junior high boys whose voices were in various stages of change. Separate from the rehearsal, they interviewed the boys in a focus group setting to gather their knowledge, thoughts, and perceptions regarding the voice change. Throughout the course of the next several weeks, Kathy and Amelia included a more deliberate approach to teaching their students about the male adolescent voice change during the course of their choral rehearsals. After two weeks, they interviewed the participants a second time in a focus group setting.

The results indicated that the boys were much more aware of the changing voice, and some were even able to use specific terminology about their own particular stage of voice change. Overall, the boys felt more comfortable and knowledgeable about the voice change.

Teacher Research Project: Claire Swensen and Emma Gilmore

Claire and Emma decided to focus on guided listening with their band students. This idea came about as a result of Claire feeling, for quite some time, that the band rehearsal in its most traditional setting does not allow for a more comprehensive approach to music learning. She felt that by teaching and encouraging her students to listen more specifically for various musical aspects, her students might be more thoughtful and aware of how they listen in the context of a

band rehearsal. Together, Claire and Emma reasoned that, if a student has better listening skills, and is more knowledgeable about how the members of an ensemble work together in making music, the students will be more likely to make better choices within each section. Their purpose in doing this teacher research was to, eventually, improve the quality of the ensemble, both in overall sound and approach.

Though Claire initially developed the idea, Emma was very much involved in this research. Claire felt that by talking about the project and brainstorming ideas with Emma, the project was able to come together more fluidly. Once the ideas for the project became more concrete, Emma took the initiative to gather the materials that were needed. I helped in supplying some examples about how general music teachers approach guided listening. These examples served as a template, as Emma made the changes necessary both to find success with middle school students, as well as to meet the needs and purposes of the research.

Claire and Emma decided to use Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* during the guided listening portion of the band rehearsals. In the first lesson, the teachers began with an anticipatory set, including a brief discussion on Britten, as well as talking about how the piece is scored, and what similarities and differences there are between orchestra and band. The students were then told that they would be listening to a portion of this piece, and after listening, they would be asked to write down what they heard. Claire and Emma collected the students' responses.

The second step of the project consisted of Claire and Emma preparing a Google Presentation and using this to help better inform their students about specific aspects and qualities of the music. Together, they selected six aspects (tempo, melody vs. accompaniment, articulation, mood, dynamics, and timbre) upon which to focus, and after discussing these

aspects with their students, a portion of the Britten was played to give their students an aural representation. The teachers encouraged further discussion of these aspects at the conclusion of this part of the teacher research.

The final step of the research was similar to the first, in that the students were asked, once again, to write down what they heard after they listening to a portion of the Britten. Following this step, Emma and Claire compared the responses and looked for both qualitative and quantitative findings.

The findings indicated that many students in the second study used the definitions focused on during the presentation, but were not extremely specific in writing about them. For example, one student wrote, "I heard tempo," instead of expounding to explain what tempo was utilized. The students were specific in writing about the instruments and incorporated more of the terminology in their comments. Claire and Emma also compared the number of words the students used in the first response, hypothesizing that the students might have more of an idea of what to write about. The findings did not support this hypothesis. However, the findings did indicate that the students used nearly twice the amount of the specific words that were introduced in the second portion of the project.

Teacher Research Project: Suzanne Marks and Thomas Williamson

Suzanne and Thomas have decided to focus their teacher research project on the increased student understanding of music vocabulary. This initially began as a departmental goal in the school district where Suzanne teaches. She attempted to implement this goal prior to the beginning of Thomas's student teaching experience but was unhappy with the results.

Though Suzanne identified the problem, she and Thomas worked collaboratively in the creation and implementation of the project. As the problem was word-based, Thomas was able

to provide a variety of information for the related research from other educational methods courses he has taken in college. Ideas were developed from the related research that served to guide the choices made for the methodology. Thomas later shared that he felt the related research piece, while being the most difficult, was helpful in that it provided practical ideas for use in the project.

The implementation consisted of several lessons during which both Suzanne and Thomas collaboratively incorporated multiple techniques and approaches to help their students learn the vocabulary. Following these lessons, a second test was given. The results from this second test were compared to the first test given by Suzanne.

The average test scores in the three classes rose from 71.2% to 94.5%, 70% to 90.9%, and 63.4% to 83.5%, respectively. The standard deviations decreased from 16.3 to 8 in the first class, and 15.9 to 8.3 in the second.

During the course of the student teaching experience during which the teacher research projects were implemented by each pair, I collected the following types of data: individual interviews, focus group interviews, and field notes gathered from observations. These types of data were chosen based on Stake's (1995) recommendation for understanding both the individual and collective case studies. All three types of data were important in providing insight to the individual feelings, thoughts and actions of the participants. The individual interviews were designed and guided by me, and provided answers and insight to specific questions. The focus group interviews, although still guided by me, allowed the participants to shape the arc of the conversations. Last, the observations allowed the participants to act in their most natural setting and enabled me to provide a context for and better understanding of the information gathered during the interviews.

I conducted two formal interviews with each participant, one during the early part of the student teaching experience and one towards the end. Interviews for all participants were held at a location that was most convenient for them, and including their school, my school office, and various coffee shops. Interviews that were held at the participants' schools took place in a private office. I gave participants a copy of the individual interview questions prior to each meeting (see Appendix C).

I conducted one focus group interview for the student teachers and one for the cooperating teachers. These interviews occurred at the end of the student teaching experience. The focus group interviews occurred at my school office and a coffee shop. The participants received a copy of the focus group interview questions prior to the interview (see Appendix C).

All interviews were recorded using a Sony IC Digital Voice Recorder and transcribed as soon as possible following the interview (see Appendix D). The interviews and transcriptions, as well as field notes, were stored on an Apple MacBook. Participants received a copy of their interview transcript and were asked to review it and make any changes that they felt necessary to accurately convey their words, thoughts, and intentions. These changes were incorporated into the data prior to analysis.

Each cooperating teacher/student teacher pair was observed three times in their shared classroom. Most of these observations spanned the length of the school day, with two exceptions for delayed starts due to the weather. During the visits, I took field notes on interactions between the pair and interactions between the pair and other people in the school network, such as other faculty and students. I also observed shared teaching responsibilities as well as informal interactions, such as planning and eating lunch.

In addition to the observations that were dedicated to collecting data for this study, I also observed the student teachers in my role as college supervisor. While there were specific procedures set in place (i.e., separate observation forms) that helped to differentiate the reasons between the visits, I was nonetheless informed by these additional observations. Also, the student teachers in this collegiate music education program are required to journal as part of their experience. The journals for my participants, while not focused on this study, nonetheless informed my understanding of the participants and interpretation of the data.

Analysis

The interview transcripts were read multiple times prior to the analysis in an effort to increase my familiarity with the data. The data then were coded using a constant comparative method of analysis (Creswell, 1998). After an initial code list was established, I reviewed my field notes to triangulate the data, searching for supporting evidence of my initial analysis. Following this, a final code list was developed (see Appendix F), and emerging themes were identified and used for interpretation in a cross-case analysis.

Trustworthiness was established through three measures: data triangulation, member checks, and peer review. The use of these measures meets Creswell's (1998) recommendation for establishing trustworthiness. Multiple types of data (individual interviews, focus group interviews, and field work) served to support the emergent themes. The member check allowed participants to ensure that the interviews were an accurate portrayal of their words, thoughts, and ideas. Finally, a peer review was done with outside readers, both of whom are pursuing a doctoral degree in music education and are experienced in qualitative research.

This next section will better serve the reader in understanding the teachers who participated in this study. A brief description for each person is provided, beginning with the cooperating teachers and followed by the student teachers. I have then included the details for the teacher research projects that were implemented by each cooperating teacher/student teacher pair. This knowledge may provide the reader with a richer context in which to place and understand the findings.

CHAPTER IV

EXPECTATIONS AND FEELINGS, QUALITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHERS, QUALITIES OF STUDENT TEACHERS

You are their rock, and their cheerleader. I use that term in many ways: I am my student's cheerleader, my student teacher's cheerleader, and that's important. It's important that your student teacher knows you want them to succeed.

-Suzanne Marks, Cooperating Teacher, Individual Interview

After coding and analyzing the data, four major themes emerged. In this chapter, I will present three of these themes: Expectations and Feelings, Qualities of Cooperating Teachers, and Qualities of Student Teachers. Each theme begins with a vignette that is representative of the indicated theme and based on my interactions with the participants. Following each vignette, I will discuss the particular theme and use narrative examples provided by the participants.

Expectations and Feelings

Focus Group Interview with Cooperating Teachers: Kathy Kjelland, Suzanne Marks, and Claire Swensen.

I park my car in the quaint downtown area close to the coffee shop where the cooperating teachers and I have agreed to meet for our focus group interview. I walk carefully so as not to slip on the icy sidewalk, and hear my name being

called from behind me. It is Suzanne Marks, and, after greeting her, I wait so that we can walk into the shop together. As we open the door, I spot Claire Swensen sitting at a table and enjoying sandwich.

"Sorry!" she says, as she finishes chewing. "I got here early to grab a bite to eat. I'm heading over to the other middle school in our district following our meeting to help the band teacher with instrument selection night."

I introduce Suzanne and Claire to each other. Although they are both veteran, well-respected teachers in their neighboring districts, they've never met. They begin talking about mutual colleagues and friends, and while doing so, I notice Kathy Kjelland coming in through the door. She takes off her hat and gloves, and begins to explain why she is the last one to arrive.

"My husband just got home, and I needed to update him on one of the kids." Kathy is a mother to two young children: a boy, two, and a girl, 11 months.

"No worries!" I quickly say, reassuring her, and introduce Kathy to Claire and Suzanne. I ask each of them if they would like something to drink, and go to the counter to place our order. Once we have all received our drinks, I begin the interview by asking the cooperating teachers what kind of expectations they have for their relationship with their student teachers.

Claire is the first to answer. "Above all, I want a student teacher with whom I can be myself. I can't imagine spending the entire semester with someone that I don't have a natural connection with. I know that probably doesn't always work, so I guess I've been lucky with the student teachers I've had."

"I agree," says Kathy. "Amelia is my first student teacher, and I was really hoping for a personal connection with her. I thought that might be the best way, the most natural way, to really share all that I wanted them to know, and all the things I wish I had known when I started teaching."

"Yes, exactly!" says Claire. "And if you can't be yourself with that person, if you don't have that connection, then it's so hard to speak with them casually. It's like every conversation is hard work."

Suzanne offers her perspective. "I've had so many student teachers, and while most of them have been great, I had one fairly recently where things did not go so well. I'm definitely a bit apprehensive now when I take a student teacher, because of this experience I had a few years ago." Suzanne proceeds to give us the details of working with this particular student teacher.

"We just didn't get along at all, and, more importantly, he wasn't receptive to my thoughts and opinions. It was just a very difficult situation all around.

"I haven't refused taking a student teacher since then," Suzanne continues. "But I've approached things differently. My expectations are different, perhaps more specific, especially for those first few days and weeks. I really want to do everything I can to improve upon that experience."

"I think that's why I was hoping for a personal relationship with my student teacher," adds Kathy. "Because I didn't really have one with my cooperating teacher while I was out student teaching. She was fine, and certainly nice enough. But there was no real connection. It was kind of, well, awkward the

entire time I was with her. I think that really affected the teaching I did in front of her, and it took me longer to develop my own style of teaching."

"That's so important, too, for them to feel comfortable." Claire says. "I want them to be as comfortable in my classroom as I am. But, at the same time, I want them to be their own person. A personality match is important, but that doesn't mean my student teacher has to have the same personality I do."

Focus Group Interview with Student Teachers: Emma Gilmore, Amelia Summers, and Thomas Williamson

Late afternoon on a cold, blustery day in mid-December, I arrive at my school office where I am planning to meet with the student teachers to conduct their focus group interview. It is quickly getting dark outside, as one might expect this time of year, and I turn on my overhead light as well as the whimsical lamp on my desk. There is a poinsettia on my desk, a reminder of the busy weekend of Christmas concerts the college has just performed. I have a few minutes until I expect the student teachers to arrive, and use this time to arrange the chairs into a setting more conducive for our interview.

The first student teacher to arrive is Emma Gilmore. I offer her the sweets I picked up from a local coffee shop to share during the interview, and she graciously accepts. Almost everything Emma does is gracious, thoughtful, and sincere. She possesses a quiet energy, and because of this, one might wonder how effective she is in a rehearsal with 75 eighth-grade band students. However, having observed her teach on multiple occasions, I have seen her mature into a

gifted young teacher. I ask Emma about her day, and we talk casually about her teaching as we wait for the others to arrive.

After just a few minutes, Thomas and Amelia arrive together, having unexpectedly met in the parking lot outside of the music building. Their voices announce their arrival before Emma or I actually see them, and without knowing the specifics, it is obvious that Thomas is quite animated about something. Despite only having a few minutes to chat with each other prior to arriving at my office, they already seem deep in conversation about an incident that occurred at Thomas's school that afternoon. It is a situation that he will talk with me about after our focus group interview, but it is evident how important it is that he shares this with his friends and fellow student teachers, as well. As this initial conversation between the student teachers comes to a close, Thomas and Amelia investigate what treats are available and make their choices. I offer them bottled water, and we settle in for the interview. I begin by asking them what kind of expectations they each had for their relationship with their cooperating teacher.

"I was very excited and a bit anxious about meeting my teacher. After we got our placements, I emailed her several times trying to find a time to meet that worked with both of our schedules," Thomas shares, speaking, as usual, quite enthusiastically. He continues, "For multiple reasons, it became clear that we weren't going to find a time to meet until the end of the summer. I was disappointed, and a bit nervous. I'd been hoping for this great relationship, and then was worried based on those initial emails. But, actually, it turned out just fine." In fact, Thomas seems to be speaking quite fondly of those first few email

exchanges between he and his cooperating teacher. "We get along so well now, it's kind of funny to think about that all these months later. But, really, I was scared that maybe this relationship wouldn't be all that I was hoping for." I ask the student teachers to elaborate on this last statement.

"Student teaching is a really big deal," volunteers Emma. "You want to be able to get along well with your cooperating teacher. You know you'll be spending everyday with this person, so you're hoping it's someone that you like, and that likes you, as well. And, of course, you know how important this person will be to you professionally."

Amelia concurs, and shares that the professional aspect of the relationship was really all that she expected. "I mean, I assumed I would get along with my cooperating teacher, but I certainly wasn't expecting to be as close with her personally as I now am." Amelia and her cooperating teacher, Kathy, have developed a good friendship during her student teaching experience. "It's interesting, though," she continues. "Even though we *are* friends, I still respect her as an authority figure, as my superior. I mean, I've learned so much from her, and I was certainly hoping for that. Maybe that's why all I really expected at the beginning of this was a professional relationship. The personal stuff has been an added bonus."

"I know what you mean," adds Emma. "I expected Claire to be my superior, and while that has been the case, it hasn't been in a bad way. She just has so much to offer. It makes sense that our relationship would be like that, at

least initially. She has made me feel very comfortable, though. So, even though she is my superior, it's not as if she acts like one."

"Agreed. Totally," Thomas adds. "And, although I really would have been fine had my relationship been only professional, I do feel like it's been a different, better, experience because of the personal connection I have."

"Mmm hmm," Amelia says, nodding. "This is an experience that, and I think I speak for all of us, we really look forward to. I was so eager and excited about this, so I'm grateful for having the opportunity to grow professionally as well as developing this personal relationship with a terrific teacher."

One major theme that emerged after analysis of data was Expectations and Feelings. These two vignettes, written as focus group interviews with the cooperating teachers and the student teachers, respectively, illustrated the expectations and feelings that are brought into the student teaching experience by both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers. Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers hoped for a personal connection with one another. The cooperating teachers also wanted to be comfortable with their student teachers, and spoke specifically about the personality match that may help to create such a comfort level. Finally, the cooperating teachers wanted to improve upon past experiences, both with previous student teachers and in their own experiences as student teachers. The student teachers had multiple expectations regarding the student teaching experience and had feelings of eagerness and apprehension. They expected their cooperating teacher to be their superior and wanted both a personal and professional relationship with their cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teachers and student teachers alike discussed the importance of developing a personal relationship. However, the cooperating teachers seemed to believe more so that this might happen, while the student teachers were less sure. It appeared as if the student teachers were not sure if this was a possibility or even a desire on the part of the cooperating teachers. Nonetheless, the cooperating teachers did hope for this, and all agreed on the importance of attaining a certain level of comfort for the relationship to become more successful and personal. Claire spoke specifically on the importance of relationships:

> *I hope we can have a relationship that's comfortable, one where I can be who I am. I can't fake it. I've got to be who I am, and any sort of tension that would make me act differently…I just couldn't take it. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Cooperating teachers also hoped for a personality match between themselves and their student teachers, although they recognized that sometimes differing personalities can result in a successful match. They believed that a personality match would make for an easier relationship, one in which the aforementioned comfort level might be more attainable. Both Claire and Suzanne have had multiple student teachers, and they recognized that it is difficult to predict whether a match will occur. Suzanne elaborated on how different personalities of student teachers have been successful.

> *I had a student teacher last spring who was very quiet and very reserved, and that's not really me. But, it was very nice and refreshing, and I still felt like I could be myself with her, as well as be her mentor. The previous fall, I'd had a student teacher that was high energy at all times. She was a great, bright girl, but whoa! High energy. And then I had the girl with the quiet energy, and it was a relief! [Quote taken from focus group interview.]*

Cooperating teachers also wanted there to be a 'teacher presence' in their student teachers. They agreed that this is difficult to define and even more difficult to cultivate if it is not inherently present. Despite these qualifications, they nonetheless agreed to the importance of this personality trait, as explained by Claire:

> *Emma has such a quiet energy, and I was initially a little concerned, like, "What are my eighth-graders going to do?" But, she was great. She does have a presence; it was very natural. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]*

The cooperating teachers also talked about the difficulty in working with a student teacher that lacks any type of 'teacher presence.' Suzanne referenced a previous student teacher that seemed to have all the necessary qualities but was simply not comfortable in front of a large group. Because of this seemingly missing quality, it was difficult to bestow any kind of responsibility to this student teacher. Suzanne was very frustrated, as the other skills necessary for being a good teacher seemed to be in place. For these reasons, the cooperating teachers hoped greatly for their student teachers to have a 'teacher presence.'

The cooperating teachers spoke of how previous relationships with student teachers have affected the expectations they have with current student teachers. Although the vast majority of her relationships with former student teachers were positive, Suzanne described one past student teaching relationship that did not go well and how this impacted her initial opinion of Thomas.

> *After that negative experience, I was timid about having a student teacher. It was not a good experience for me, and it was not a good experience for him. It was a lose-lose situation. I've since approached taking a student teacher differently. In some of Thomas's initial emails, he seemed a bit too casual in his wording, and he didn't know me from Eve! I know that I was very firm with him initially because of that past*

experience. Of course, with Thomas, it all worked out perfectly. But, I definitely approach things differently after that negative experience. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

In addition to past relationships with student teachers, cooperating teachers are informed by their own experiences as a student teacher. Kathy was particularly influenced by her student teaching experience, and as Amelia was Kathy's first student teacher, Kathy found herself reflecting upon her student teaching both prior to and during Amelia's experience. In the vignette, Kathy spoke of the lack of personal connection between herself and her cooperating teacher. Kathy explained how this shaped the expectations she had for her relationship with Amelia.

My student teaching wasn't terrible, it just wasn't…great. Part of that is probably on me, I'm not sure I initiated enough conversations with my cooperating teacher, or enough teaching opportunities for myself. I just want Amelia to have what I didn't have. I want her to feel comfortable, and to enjoy this journey of becoming a teacher. I don't want her to feel like I'm only there to judge her. I hope that I can be of assistance to her and help her improve her teaching, but still be supportive. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The student teachers came into the student experiences with their own set of expectations. Some of these expectations were unique to the student teachers, such as feelings of eagerness and apprehension, and expecting their cooperating teachers to act as a superior. Like the cooperating teachers, the student teachers hoped to develop a personal connection with their cooperating teacher, although they expected the connection to be more professional in nature. Thomas

shared both the eagerness and apprehension he felt prior to beginning his student teaching experience.

> *We got our placement last April, and I remember really trying to meet with teacher before the end of the school year. I kept emailing her, and she finally got back to me saying, 'I have one daughter who is getting married this summer, and another who is expecting a baby, so we probably won't get to meet until the end of the summer.' I was like, ahh! I was really scared! But then I talked with the person who student taught with Mrs. Marks last year, and she was ecstatic about my student teaching there. So, I was still pretty optimistic. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]*

Like Thomas, all of the student teachers appeared to be both excited and nervous about this experience. As was portrayed in the vignette, the student teachers expect the relationship they make with their cooperating teachers to be highly influential. For these reasons, the student teachers have high expectations that served to guide their initial conversations and interactions with their cooperating teachers. While the student teachers hoped for a personal connection, the expectation was for a predominantly professional relationship with their cooperating teachers.

Perhaps the reason for the expectation of a professional relationship is due, at least in part, to the student teachers' deference to the cooperating teacher as a superior. The student teachers understand and respect the multiple years of experience that the cooperating teachers possess, and are eager to learn from them. Thomas shared his thoughts on an early conversation with his cooperating teacher.

> *I started out asking her what she wanted me to address her as, Suzanne or Mrs. Marks. She thought about it for a moment, and said, 'Let's go with Mrs. Marks.' I thought,*

'Okay, so this will probably be more of a professional relationship, but I'll still learn a lot.' Well, I found out quickly that Mrs. Marks is an extremely warm person in addition to that professionalism. I think she was just trying to make sure that I valued her experience. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

What Thomas was not aware of at this point was how a negative experience with a previous student teacher had influenced Suzanne's approach with him. Once Suzanne had a better sense of who Thomas was and the integrity with which he approached his student teaching, she was able to put more trust in him and allow for a more personal connection. Suzanne's request that he refer to her as Mrs. Marks may have been to initially establish herself as the authoritative figure in the relationship. However, neither Amelia nor Emma sensed that their respective cooperating teachers approached this relationship from a position of superiority, as is reflected in Emma's statement:

I think before student teaching, I would have thought of Claire as being more my superior. I suppose she was, but she didn't act like it at all. She acted more like a colleague than an authority figure. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The student teachers were all pleasantly surprised to find that a personal connection was possible with their cooperating teachers. Amelia, while still learning very much from her cooperating teacher on a professional level, also developed a strong friendship with Kathy.

Unlike Thomas, I did get to meet with my cooperating teacher last spring, and that was great. I got a feel for the way she did things, and knew that she was really laid back. We just clicked right away. But, I kind of went into this expecting it to be more professional than personal. We just really got to know each other because of all the time spent

together. You know, with prep, and talking about life and school. We got to be good friends as well as working together on a professional level. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]

Both cooperating teachers and student teachers approached the student teaching experience with multiple expectations and feelings. Some expectations were shared, such as the desire to develop a personal relationship, while others were unique to either the cooperating teacher or student teacher. The cooperating teachers hoped for a personality match and comfort level with their student teachers. Also, the experiences as both a student teacher and as a previous mentor to student teachers have influenced the choices they made as a current cooperating teacher. Student teachers approached the experience with feelings of eagerness and apprehension. They expected their cooperating teachers to be their superior, but were hopeful that a personal relationship might develop. Both the cooperating teachers' and student teachers' expectations and feelings greatly influenced the development of the roles and qualities particular to the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

Cooperating Teacher Qualities

Interview with Suzanne Marks, Cooperating Teacher

I enter the coffee shop where Suzanne and I have agreed to meet for our individual interview, and take the time to carefully wipe the snow off of my boots on the mats placed at the entryway. An unexpected, relatively minor snowstorm has developed this afternoon, and I had to brush off several inches of thick, heavy snow from my car prior to making the trip. I know that the weather will not

impact Suzanne's ability to come to the interview; she is a native of this region, and people who live here pride themselves on their ability to handle the winter. Indeed, after just a few minutes browsing some items available for purchase made by local artisans, I see Suzanne enter the shop.

On the multiple visits I have made to Suzanne's classroom, it became clear to me that, be it 7:30 in the morning or 2:45 in the afternoon, she always looks polished and meticulous. This afternoon is no exception. Despite the falling snow and the fact that she has already spent a full day at school, she looks as if her day is just beginning. As she removes her leather gloves and the black cape with leopard-print accents, she comments on the weather. She then wonders aloud whether she and her husband will be able to make the 60-mile drive north to another city, where they are planning on meeting friends for a collegiate hockey game this evening. This comment makes me laugh as Suzanne is anything but a typical hockey fan. She shrugs her shoulders and laughs with me, and it is easy to see the aspects of her personality that make her such a successful teacher and mentor.

We walk to the counter together and place our orders. Our conversation turns to preparations for holiday concerts (both hers and mine), a popular conversation this time of year for many music teachers. Suzanne shares with me an anecdote about Thomas, her student teacher. Like many of the stories she has shared with me over the course of his student teaching, as well as the course of this project, she talks openly about how wonderful it has been to have Thomas in her classroom.

"It has been such a joy to watch him grow as a teacher and as a young man. I feel like he has become so much more confident in who is, and that's really saying something, because I wouldn't ever have described him as insecure. It's more that he has really come into his own working with these students."

I recall my first visit to Suzanne's classroom, early in the student teaching experience for Thomas. I did not know either Suzanne or Thomas very well at that point, but had the sense that both were quite capable in their respective roles, and that the match was solid. I had arrived a bit early, as I like to check in with the cooperating teacher before I begin the observation of the student teacher. I casually asked Suzanne how Thomas was doing so far, and she replied, "Great. He already has a lot of the necessary qualities to do this job well. He's going to be good, fast." I quickly got the sense that Suzanne took her job as a cooperating teacher seriously, and enjoyed the role she played in helping to guide young teachers.

After receiving our drinks, we return to our table where we had already placed our coats and bags. I ask Suzanne to describe the kind of things she does as a cooperating teacher to facilitate the growth of her student teachers. She ponders this for a bit, taking a sip of her coffee while she thinks.

"Well, I think the first thing I do is simply try to be welcoming. You know, make sure they know that you're happy to be working with them. I try and share everything: my office, my classroom, my students. It drives me crazy when I hear about other cooperating teachers who will only let their student teachers work with certain groups. As if they didn't need to work on the skills necessary to

prepare the select ensemble. I just don't get it. I think that is related to how much trust you have in your student teacher, and I think it's important to trust them with all of your classes.

"I try to set a good example for them, showing them how I prepare and explain the choices I make throughout the day. This is tricky, because a lot of what I do now is second nature. I have been teaching for a long time! So, when I have a student teacher, I really try to have conversations about the choices I make so that the student teachers can learn from this, and me. And, I mean, I'm talking about why I choose specific literature, why the students sit where they do, how I assess them, how I handle behavior issues, the list is endless. Of course, you can't give them everything, at least I don't think so. There's a definite hierarchy of what they need to know, and that will change with each student teacher. With Thomas, he came in knowing so much that we were able to talk about some things I might not get to with another student teacher.

"So, I think a cooperating teacher also needs to be intuitive. You need to be aware of what each particular student teacher needs. I've often had more than one student teacher in a year, and last year, for example, they were *very* different people. Both were good teachers, and I enjoyed working with them immensely, but they were very, very different."

I ask Suzanne to talk about how her role as a cooperating teacher changes when working with student teachers that are so different. A barista, while clearing the table next to ours, is singing a Christmas carol along with the CD that is being played at the coffee shop. Suzanne considers her answer.

"As a cooperating teacher, we have to build upon the skills and strengths of the student teacher. Sometimes this means being positive about what they're already doing. For example, if a student already has a great vocal model, I would definitely encourage them to use this more while teaching. Conversely, if I get the sense that the student teacher isn't as comfortable using their instrument, we might talk about ways to build that confidence, and how important it is for our students to model.

"Some student teachers come to me with, dare I say it, almost too much confidence. It drives me crazy when I'm giving a student teacher feedback about their teaching, and they're nodding and saying, 'Yes, I know," but you know they're not really listening. Sometimes I just really want them to reflect on what they're doing in their teaching, and this includes reflecting on everything, both the good and the not so good. So, with some of my student teachers, I've needed to really to be a bit on the harsh side, and tell them, 'No, you don't know. Just listen.'"

Suzanne continues by discussing what she feels is the best way to handle a student teacher that comes to her with different issues. "Then there are those student teachers who aren't feeling very confident about what they're doing. They need for me to be in their corner, to cheer them on, to point out all the great things they're doing. With these student teachers, it's especially important to acknowledge their growth.

"But, you know, with all of my student teachers, I want them to know that I am interested in who they are, and the kind of teacher they become. As their cooperating teacher, their mentor, I am very much invested in this experience."

After analyzing the data, a second theme that emerged was Cooperating Teacher Qualities. In this vignette, Suzanne highlighted the various qualities that both the cooperating teachers and student teachers recognized as crucial for the success of student teachers. While all of the qualities were in some way applicable to all of the student teachers, certain qualities were more present in cooperating teachers based on the needs of the student teachers.

All of the cooperating teachers seemed very aware of the importance of such characteristics and discussed these traits in both their interviews and in casual conversations during my visits. Additionally, Claire, Kathy, and Suzanne demonstrated these roles consistently during my observations. The student teachers also recognized the various roles and qualities in their respective cooperating teacher.

In the narrative, Suzanne spoke to the importance of providing a welcoming environment to her student teachers. This included her belief that everything should be shared, such as the physical space in the classroom, as well as the teaching time with all the students. This approach was evident with all of the cooperating teachers. During my visits to their respective classrooms and offices, I noticed that each of the student teachers had a separate desk. The arrangement of the furniture was slightly different in each of the classrooms, and reflected the relationships between the cooperating teacher/student teacher pair.

Both Emma and Thomas had a desk that was situated on an adjacent wall to that of their respective cooperating teacher. Many times I would arrive at school for a visit to find Claire and

Emma or Suzanne and Thomas sitting at their respective desks, but with the chairs turned around to allow for a more natural conversation. Kathy did not have an office separate from her classroom, and her desk was situated in a corner of the room. In an effort to make her classroom more welcoming for Amelia, she set up a desk directly opposite hers, so that she and Amelia would sit facing each other during their constant conversations. It is reasonable to assume that this logistical arrangement was a factor in the close friendship that developed between Kathy and Amelia.

Cooperating teachers thought it necessary to be outwardly expressive in their welcoming nature to their student teachers. This is reflected in Emma's statement about Claire's demeanor.

> *I always felt like she wanted me to be here, and I think she's very appreciative and welcoming of her student teachers. She even said once that she thinks having student teachers makes her a better teacher. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The cooperating teachers, while never once referring to themselves as superiors, felt it was their responsibility to provide leadership and guidance to their student teachers. While all of the cooperating teachers were welcoming to their students and teachers and hoped for a personal relationship, they nonetheless owned the fact that they were in a leadership role. Claire recognized this quality in her relationship with Emma, stating that she, "was comfortable steering and setting guidelines for Emma." For her part, Emma recognized the leadership qualities in Claire, and shared the following statement:

> *I think [that Claire] always had ideas of what she wanted do, and I help to carry that out. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The cooperating teachers understood the inherent importance of positive and immediate feedback for their student teachers. This feedback was, in many ways, what delineated their role

as a leader, and suggested that it is possible for a cooperating teacher to give both guidance as well as develop the personal connection that all felt was important to form with their student teachers. Kathy spoke to the importance of providing leadership in the form of feedback for her student teacher.

> *I am not afraid to give constructive criticism, while being positive about it. I'm also the kind of person who will give her immediate feedback as soon as the class is over. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Suzanne addressed the importance of the specific quality and kind of feedback necessary for student teachers.

> *Sometimes you see that they're feeling a little defeated, and think, 'Okay, so what do I say or address at this point?' A cooperating teacher needs to be their cushion when they're feeling down. They need to say, 'It's okay. Let's try this again.' Thomas hasn't had many things that didn't work, but the few times when that did happen we talked through it. When the cooperating teacher and the student teacher can talk through it, that's when the student teacher gets the confidence to try again. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Emma discussed how the type of feedback she received from Claire reflected the personal connection that had been established between them.

> *[On] the feedback and comment sheets, it was always very positive, such as, 'Well, maybe you could try this…' And I think from getting to know me better, she knew what worked well with my personality. I've heard some people are downright mean about it, and that wouldn't work with me. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The cooperating teachers also felt that it was important to be accepting of their student teachers, including any idiosyncrasies and differences that may arise. Claire spoke to this in the following statement:

> *I try to be supportive of whoever walks in this room, be a good listener, pull out the strengths of the student teacher, whatever they may be. A sense of humor helps! [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Kathy also noted the importance of acceptance, sharing:

> *[I think it's important] to recognize your similarities and differences, and be okay with that. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The cooperating teachers, in recognizing the importance of being welcoming and accepting of multiple personality traits, allow for a wide variety of personality matches to occur between the cooperating teacher and student teacher and still have a successful match. They realized that, at times, it was more beneficial for them to be paired with a student teacher that did approach things differently, as it required the cooperating teacher to be more creative in their approach to mentoring.

Both Claire and Suzanne discussed the value of being intuitive in their relationship with their student teacher. They recognized that student teachers progress at different levels, and there are times when the best course of action with a student teacher is to simply stay out of his or her way. Claire shared the following:

> *I want to stay out of the way if need be. I've had some student teachers where it's like, "Whoa, let 'em go! I'm not going to get in the way here!" [Quote taken from focus group interview.]*

Suzanne shared a similar thought in her interview:

[It's important to] understand your student teacher enough to know when they're ready to do certain things. Sometimes you need to rein them in, and sometimes you need to let go of the reins. Sometimes I realize that I let go of the reins too soon. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

This statement illustrates the intricacies involved in being a cooperating teacher, and the personal reflection necessary to be an effective mentor. The cooperating teachers all seemed to be highly in tune with their own strengths and weaknesses, and to reflect upon them accordingly. For the most part, they agreed that serving as a cooperating teacher has improved their own teaching. Suzanne shared the following statement during the focus group interview:

I think that, sometimes, as veteran teachers, we do what we've done, and we kind of don't take that youthful, new approach, shall I say. (All laugh). It's so refreshing to see youthful, new ideas, and new techniques. It's just wonderful. And then they talk about the teachers they've had and the techniques they've learned, and I'll say, 'Where did you learn that? You've had good teachers!' I, absolutely, think that I am a better teacher because I've had student teachers in my classroom. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]

While all of the cooperating teachers recognized the importance in being welcoming, providing leadership, giving feedback, accepting differences and being intuitive, there are other roles that surfaced in varying degrees depending on the needs of the student teacher.

The cooperating teachers agreed on the importance of having confidence in their student teacher, but, as Suzanne spoke of during the vignette, how a cooperating teacher chooses to instill this confidence depends greatly on the specific student teacher. Certainly, one way to build confidence in the student teacher, as well as establishing trust, is by allowing the student

teacher to take control of the classroom. This is a complicated issue in student teaching, as many cooperating teachers have different approaches to how soon and in which particular classes the student teacher will have to assume responsibility. However, the cooperating teachers in this study considered it important for the student teacher to be leading classes early in the student teaching experience. Kathy spoke to this approach during her interview.

> *I think it's important to give [Amelia] some freedom. I think just sitting in the back of the classroom and observing is useless to a certain degree, except maybe in the very beginning. You have to trust. And even if you have a student teacher who you maybe don't get along with as well as I have with Amelia, you still have to give them a feeling of trust so that they feel comfortable in your classroom. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Thomas also spoke to how he felt after his cooperating teacher allowed him to take responsibility for the teaching when she was ill.

> *There were two days when Mrs. Marks was sick and she had the confidence in me to say, 'You teach them.' Although a substitute was required to be there, she trusted me with her students and her program. She could have easily just told the substitute teacher to push the play button for a music-related move and hand out a worksheet, but she did not! This greatly increased my confidence. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Amelia also appreciated the confidence that Kathy showed in her teaching.

> *She was willing to give me control, and relinquish some of it herself. And she even admits that she likes to be in control! But, to put trust in me is huge. To say, 'Here is my class, I trust you to work with my students.' She shows me that she trusts me, and she <u>tells</u> me that she trusts me and appreciates me. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

It is interesting to note how much, and how clearly, both Thomas and Amelia valued the trust and confidence their respective cooperating teachers had in them. This is especially important given the fact that both of these student teachers have a fair amount of confidence in their own abilities. This suggests that the cooperating teacher's opinion is held at high esteem, and further supports the powerful and influential position of the cooperating teacher.

Kathy spoke many times about the need for her student teacher to be comfortable, and this welcoming attitude was intertwined with establishing trust.

> *If you want students to be successful in your classroom, especially in music, they need to be comfortable. There needs to be trust in the classroom and a level of respect. No one is going to judge them or make fun of them. So, I feel like it's the same thing, essentially. Amelia needs to feel comfortable, and know that I trust her and respect her, for her to be comfortable teaching the kids. If she's worried about what I'm thinking of her or what I'm writing down, then she's not focused on what she is doing as a teacher. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

This last statement also focused on the evaluation piece that is inherent to student teaching. Kathy felt that Amelia's teaching might be compromised in some way if she was worried about Kathy's evaluation of her. This may help to better understand why, though the cooperating teachers view themselves as leaders, they also hope for a personal relationship with their student teachers. During the focus group interview, the student teachers shared the following:

> *Emma: [As my relationship with Claire progressed], my teaching style became more relaxed. It was still planned, but it was just more relaxed. I had a little more fun with*

it. I was just more comfortable in the environment. I wasn't always thinking, 'Oh, what will she say if I do this?' I would just do it.

Amelia: For me, I think that, like Emma, the way that [Kathy] evaluated me was different. The first few lessons I was more apprehensive, and after we would sit down and she'd go through what worked and what she thought I could improve upon. But, as our relationship progressed, I'd get done teaching the lesson and we'd laugh about something that had happened, and I could see the way I was realizing what might go wrong in the lesson and be able to change it. So, the way she evaluated me changed.

Thomas: I think I always had the constant reflection piece, but I remember one point when our relationship took a huge positive turn. It was right after conferences when we were both being snarky. It was kind of funny. (All of us laugh.) The comfort level between Mrs. Marks and I certainly increased after that. [Quotes taken from focus group interview.]

The student teachers were keenly aware of how the progression of their relationship impacted their evaluation. However, despite the recognition of the personal relationship that developed between them and their cooperating teachers, the student teachers still respected, understood, and welcomed the evaluation process. Further, the personal relationship did seem to affect the validity of the evaluation process, in that the student teachers felt as if their teaching was more authentic, and a better representation of their teaching skills.

The cooperating teachers discussed the importance of working with and adding to the skill sets that are present in their student teachers. Suzanne spoke specifically to this role, and discussed how this tactic may help to overcome the difficulties in "less-than-perfect" personality match.

Part of the mentoring aspect is figuring out what they're really good at. Some of the annoying stuff that you might have to deal with if you don't immediately hit it off with a student teacher might be taken care of if you know how to channel it. Find the thing they're good at; find the thing that makes them tick. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]

The student teachers all noted the interest that their cooperating teachers took in them and recognized the investment that was being made on their behalf. This interest served to increase the confidence that the student teachers had in their abilities. Emma noted this in her interview:

Claire was always very interested in me as a person, not just as a teacher (but, of course, as a teacher, too). [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Thomas also discussed Suzanne's interest in his opinions.

We were trying to update the rehearsal expectations, and we wanted to synchronize the language between what was in our syllabus and what we handed out to the students. She asked my opinion on the wording of some sentences and how to make it flow better. She really valued my opinion, and she took my suggestions very seriously and implemented many of them. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

It was important to Thomas that Suzanne value his thoughts, and he was impressed that Suzanne not only listened but also implemented his ideas. This helped Thomas to gain confidence in his teaching, as well as strengthen the relationship between Thomas and Suzanne.

The cooperating teachers assume many characteristics in their relationship with their student teachers. Often, these characteristics overlap each other, as is demonstrated in building confidence in a student teacher by trusting him or her to assume teaching responsibilities. These qualities are deemed important by both the cooperating teacher and student teacher, and are

informed and reinforced by the expectations and feelings that are brought into the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship.

Student Teacher Qualities

Interview with Amelia Summers, Student Teacher

Amelia and I have decided to meet in my school office for her interview today, despite my willingness to meet her at the elementary school where she is doing her student teaching. She assured me that she needed to be back on campus for an evening rehearsal, so it was not a problem to do our interview on campus. This is a busy week for Amelia, as she is busy student teaching, as well as participating in the choir that is involved in the upcoming Christmas concerts. When Amelia arrives, I express concern for her schedule, but she just shrugs it off, stating that she really is enjoying everything she is doing, both her teaching and singing, so it isn't a big deal for her days to be so full. "When you love what you're doing, you don't mind being busy. And I can't imagine not singing, it gives me focus, and I think this focus makes me a better teacher. Plus, I get to talk about my student teaching with my friends who are also out student teaching. It's a really good situation."

This statement, in many ways, is very typical of Amelia: she has an incredibly positive outlook on life. While some might view attending daily rehearsals after a full day student teaching as tiresome, she sees it as both renewing and as an opportunity to talk with her other student teaching cohorts.

In this aspect, she is also quite reflective, realizing that the casual conversations she engages in almost daily about her teaching serve to improve and inspire her teaching. Although this is not the focus of the interview, Amelia and I do talk about this situation, as I am also responsible for her supervision during her student teaching experience and want what is best for her and the other student teachers. It also helps for me to put her student teaching into a richer context, and allows for me to better understand her relationship with Kathy, her cooperating teacher, and her feelings toward the teacher research project.

I ask Amelia to talk about why she feels her experience has been so successful. She ponders this for a moment, and then begins, "I was very excited to begin my student teaching, and I wasn't shy about letting Kathy know this. She seemed excited, too, and we were able to get together last spring. I knew from this first meeting that she and I got along well, and this made me even more excited to start teaching in the fall.

"I can see that you and Kathy have a great relationship." I say. "What do you think you did to cultivate this? Or was it all Kathy?"

"Oh, well, Kathy is terrific and has done so much for me, both as a person and as a teacher. But, I think it helped that I showed her how excited I was about student teaching. And as I got to know her, I was very interested in her program and her teaching style. I asked a ton of questions. I could see how successful she is, and I wanted to know what she does to make this success happen.

"I was also able to relate to Kathy well, I think, because she is young. It was easy for me to see myself in her, so that helped our personal connection. I

really get sad when I think about not teaching with her everyday. I think she, too, enjoyed this connection, and has commented on how nice it is to have another adult in the room."

I share with Amelia that Kathy has said as much to me in our conversations, speaking positively to both Amelia's teaching abilities as well as her personal attributes. "She has said that it's been so easy working with you, that you get kids. She's been able to work on fine-tuning things with you, and that has been enjoyable for her."

"I really do think this experience has been enjoyable for both of us. There's been a lot of laughter, almost since day one. And because I felt so comfortable with her, I wasn't nervous at all about teaching. There were definite moments where I tried things and they didn't work, but then Kathy and I would just talk about what I could do differently the next time. I never felt like a failure. She always made me feel good about things."

I ask Amelia to talk how she planned for lessons, given the large number of preps that are involved. In this program, Kathy is responsible for teaching general music to grades kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as two choirs for the sixth through eighth graders. This is a fairly small school, allowing for each grade level to have music for 20 minutes everyday. "It's a lot of work." Amelia shares. "Sometimes I'm not sure how Kathy does it, because she doesn't have a lot of planning time. But she's figured out a system, and of course it helps that she's been doing this for eight years now. I've learned so much about different ideas for lessons and the great materials that are available.

"I've really tried to be completely open and trusting with Kathy, and just take everything in that she has to offer. I'm so grateful to have done my student teaching here. No matter where I end up, and even if I'm not teaching at the elementary level, I know that Kathy will be someone that I can ask advice of and support me as I begin my teaching."

A third major theme that emerged following the analysis of data was Student Teacher Qualities. This narrative illustrated the various qualities that a student teacher exhibits during the student teaching experience. Often, these qualities were informed by the expectations and feelings that the student teacher brought into the experience. Further, cooperating teachers took notice of these qualities in their student teachers, resulting in the strengthening of the cooperating teacher characteristics and in the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher.

The student teachers discussed the importance of being inquisitive with their cooperating teachers. They universally felt that this allowed the cooperating teachers to share with them all the skills that have been acquired over their years of teaching experience. Embedded in this quality is a level of respect that the student teachers have for their cooperating teachers and for their experience. The cooperating teachers appreciated the student teachers' inquisitiveness, and were especially thankful for the student teachers' ability and willingness to truly listen to their answers and apply their suggestions. During a discussion with Amelia towards the end of her student teaching experience, she shared the following statement about what enabled her to be successful.

[I think it's important] to be completely open, and ask your cooperating teacher about what they're doing in the classroom, and what has been helpful in their job as a teacher. They've had way more experience than we've had, and it would be good to know things that they wish they would've known when they began teaching. Don't be afraid to ask questions of them. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Emma also identified inquisitiveness as an important part of the student teaching experience, for multiple reasons.

I wasn't afraid to ask questions, and would ask Claire about the resources she used and why—what's good, what's bad. I think…if your cooperating teacher sees you getting to know the students, knowing their names, that shows you care. That improves your relationship with your cooperating teacher. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

For Emma, she also felt that it was important to show interest in and dedication to the program, a quality that was appreciated by Claire.

Emma came to school a lot before her student teaching actually began. She came in the spring, and it kind of surprised me. She also spent one whole week in summer band, and it was so cool. Then she came again early in the semester. So, I had spent quite a bit of time with her, and she knew a lot before she officially began. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The cooperating teachers appreciated when the student teachers showed initiative, and this was the case with Amelia, Emma, and Thomas. During the focus group interview with the cooperating teachers, Suzanne made a reference to a student teacher in the past who did not take any initiative: it impacted the amount of trust she felt in and responsibility she bestowed upon this student teacher. This is important given how much the student teachers appreciated being

trusted by their cooperating teacher, and what this trust does for their confidence in their own teaching.

The student teachers made multiple references to their cooperating teachers' experience, and how this experience benefited them while student teaching. Amelia would talk with Kathy about ideas she had for lessons, and shared that Kathy would "add a lot with her experience." Emma shared a similar thought, stating that when she would talk with Claire about her ideas, that Claire knew what was more realistically possible because of "all of her years of teaching experience." Thomas also felt it was important to share his gratitude about working with Suzanne, and how much he valued her knowledge. Although this was not his intent, he felt that voicing these feelings helped to strengthen his relationship.

> *After our first concert, which was relatively early during my time student teaching, I wrote her a long letter saying, 'Thank you for being you. Thank you for showing me what is possible. And thank you for being a great mentor.' So, maybe I positively reinforced our relationship. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The student teachers spoke to the importance of being prepared for all aspects of the student teaching experience, and noted that doing so not only allowed for them to be more successful in their teaching, but also more receptive to feedback given to them by their cooperating teacher. Emma shared this thought during her interview:

> *...and for me, a large part was being prepared—well-prepared—every day so that [Claire] could offer feedback. Then, with more feedback you get more comfortable with more honest feedback and constructive criticism. With me, I think that was one of my strengths and was what made this relationship so positive: being prepared and having a*

plan, even if that plan was deviated from almost every day! (We both laugh.) [Quote taken from individual interview.]

It stands to reason that, when the student teachers are better prepared, the cooperating teachers will be more willing to have trust and responsibility in them. This trust and responsibility, given the earlier statements made by the cooperating teachers, have a direct impact on the quality of the student teaching experience.

Student teachers embody many qualities that are important components in their relationship with their cooperating teacher and in their overall student teaching experience. Further, student teachers enter into the student teaching experience with expectations and feelings that influence how, and to what degree, these qualities are present. The qualities of cooperating teachers are also influenced by expectations and feelings, including previous student teaching relationships. Both cooperating teachers and student teachers desire a personal relationship with one another, in which respect, trust, and appreciation of each other are important qualities.

CHAPTER V

TEACHER RESEARCH: IMPROVING PRACTICE, COLLABORATION, PERSONAL SATISFACTION

After analysis of the data, Teacher Research emerged as a major theme. Upon further analysis, this theme was then delineated into three large sub-themes: (1) Improving Practice, (2) Collaboration, and (3) Personal Satisfaction. In this chapter, I will present three vignettes that will serve to illuminate each sub-theme and are based on my interactions with the participants. Following each vignette, I will discuss the particular sub-theme in relation to the vignette as well as the experiences of the three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs.

Teacher Research: Improving Practice

No classroom is ever perfect, but this project helped us figure out something that we wanted to fix and we focused on that. This focus pushed our students and made them better, and actually made the whole classroom better.

-Amelia Summers, Student Teacher, Individual Interview

Claire Swensen, Cooperating Teacher and Emma Gilmore, Student Teacher Explorer Middle School

I arrive at Explorer Middle School for a visit during the first week of December. Since my last visit just prior to Thanksgiving, the lobby/lunchroom of

the school has been transformed with various holiday decorations, including a large Christmas tree, upon which a handful of students are hanging lights. I sign in at the welcome desk, fill out and put on a nametag, and head to the band room, located just down the hallway from the lobby.

As I open the door to the band room, I hear the cheerful sound of voices laughing and talking, and follow the sound through the office into the rehearsal space. Both Claire and Emma welcome me, as does Terry, the choral teacher in the building whom I have previously met. I've arrived during a shared planning time for all of the music teachers. I know from previous conversations with Claire that this happens every other day, and that the music faculty really appreciates this time together. At times, the teachers discuss concerts, student issues or concerns, and other school issues. However, Emma has shared with me that there is also some "well-deserved" downtime, during which the music teachers talk about anything and everything, and enjoy each other's company. Emma has been welcomed whole-heartedly into this cadre.

The conversation continues as I find a seat in the front row, likely where the clarinets sit during rehearsal. Emma and Terry are also sitting here, and Claire is perched on the edge of the podium. I've noticed this about Claire during my observations: she rarely sits, and when she does, it's often on the edge of the desk, a table, or like today, the podium.

Claire, Emma, Terry and I continue talking for approximately ten more minutes. The conversation comes to a natural lull, and Terry says that she should probably go back to her room and take a look at what she has planned for

her seventh graders. "It was nice seeing you again, Julie!" she says, brightly, and I share that it was nice to see her as well.

"How has your day been so far?" I inquire to both Claire and Emma. They look to each other, eyebrows raised, and both nod.

"Good, funny," they reply, almost synchronized. Emma continues, "The sixth grade band had their concert on Monday night, and today was their talent show. It was pretty entertaining."

"Yeah," adds Claire. "How funny was Dylan's magic act? That kid, I'm telling you, he's a riot."

"I know!" says Emma. "And I never would've guessed it. He's so quiet in class. I also enjoyed Amanda's performance on the ocarina. She told me she got it when her family was in Mexico last year. She was really pretty good!"

I feel very included in this conversation, although I was not present for the talent show and have nothing to offer to this conversation. I reflect silently that it is partially due to the amount of time I've spent in this classroom, but also, in large part, due to the personalities of both Claire and Emma. They are both incredibly unpretentious, and seem to genuinely enjoy people. This results in a warm, sunny, and cozy atmosphere in their classroom, even in middle of the frigid winter.

The rehearsal room is fairly non-descript, and looks like many large rehearsal spaces. The building is newer, built only six years prior, and the room reflects this. There are large windows that line the upper part of the back wall, opposite the podium. The floor is carpeted and painted in neutral, almost

soothing colors, and one wall is covered almost completely with Wenger instrument storage cabinets. Various tables are set up around the room, upon which various band music and lesson books are stacked. The white board has reminders of important dates and upcoming events.

The office almost looks to be in a state of organized chaos. Upon closer inspection, I notice that it's not messy, just very full. Claire's desk lines the wall above which there is a window looking out into the band room. There is an overflowing bookcase next to her desk, containing a variety of pictures and books about music and teaching, including Claire's master's thesis. Hung on the wall perpendicular to the bookcase is a framed poster of a french horn with ice cream scoops in the bell, with "Louisville Orchestra" scripted across the top. This is fitting, as Claire is a horn player. She often plays in the horn section with her students when Emma is on the podium.

Directly opposite Claire's desk is Emma's, and it appears that she has made it her own during the course of this semester. Her coat hangs over the chair, and on the floor next to her desk lay her bag and winter boots. The desk itself is covered in teaching materials, and there are also a few cards that appear to be given to Emma from students in appreciation of her teaching and dedication.

Claire and Emma decide to move from the rehearsal space to the office so that Claire could input attendance on the computer. Claire and Emma each sit at their respective desks, and I sit in one of the extra chairs in the office. After Claire has entered the necessary input into the computer, the talk turns toward

their teacher research project, which they recently completed with the seventh and eighth grade band.

"Well, we haven't explored any of the findings yet, but the lesson went really well," shares Claire. "The kids seemed to like it, too."

"Yeah, and I was a little worried about that initially," adds Emma. "This project is so different from anything we've ever done, at least since I've been here."

"Oh, definitely," agrees Claire, her upper-Midwest accent coming through on the 'oh.' "I've actually thought about doing something like this, but never have. It's just so easy to get caught up in doing what you've always done, especially with all of the concerts that we're expected to do. It's really allowed me to think about and approach my teaching differently."

A handful of students appear in the doorway, and their body language indicates that they don't want to intrude. "Hi!" says Emma. "I'll be right with you!" Emma then turns to me. "I told these kids I'd do work with them on their honor band music." She reaches into her bag and pulls out her flute, then heads back out to the rehearsal space, closing the office door behind her.

"Isn't she just the greatest?" asks Claire. "I've really enjoyed having her here. I'll miss her so much come January!" she pauses, a wistful smile on her face. "You know, this project has been great for Emma. She came in so competent already, but this project has allowed her to do things with her teaching that I probably wouldn't have known she could do. It's created some nice opportunities for her."

I ask Claire to continue discussing the benefits of this project. "Well," she thinks for a bit. "It's done great things for me, too. Like I alluded to earlier, I've been kind of frustrated with the traditional band rehearsal for a while. I just don't feel like it gives me an opportunity to see everything that my students are capable of. This project gave me a glimpse into other facets of their personalities.

"I think, too, that this project gave both me and Emma different ideas of how to approach teaching in general. It kind of forced me to be more creative with my teaching. I mean, let's face it, it's really easy to do the same thing, or at least a variation of the same thing that I've been doing for so many years. It's worked. Parents are happy, the administration is happy…what's my incentive to change? So, this is been a good thing."

Claire and I continue talking for a few more moments, and then she excuses herself to take care of a few things prior to the next class period. I go to observe Emma as she rehearses with the honor band kids, which lasts approximately 10 more minutes until the bell rings. As is the case with any school, the next five minutes are frantic and hectic. Students enter the classroom, grabbing their instruments and finding their place. A few chairs and stands are moved to accommodate this particular band. A mixture of adolescent chatter and random sounds from various instruments fill the room until Emma stands on the podium. Without talking, she raises her arms and begins the warm-up portion of the rehearsal. The students know what is expected of them by looking at the board, where the rehearsal plan in written in large block letters. I

am proud that Emma has such poise on the podium, and it is a pleasure to watch her teach.

As was the plan, Emma leads the warm-ups and rehearses the first piece. Claire, as usual, is playing her horn with the band. This doesn't seem to faze the students or Emma. After the rehearsal, Claire and Emma have a brief discussion of how things went, although the discussion seems to be one that is occurring between two colleagues, rather than a mentor/mentee. I remind myself that Emma's student teaching experience is coming to an end, and she has progressed to the point where it seems to be a shared program between herself and Claire. I share this observation with Emma later in the day.

"Yeah," she nods, and thinks for a moment. "At this point, I do feel like it's a more collegial relationship. And that's interesting because, although Claire was my superior, we've had a great relationship from the beginning. But, for as much as she shared things, and treated me as her equal, this was still her classroom. You can't really change that. But, I think that because of the teacher research project we did, things did start to become more even between us. This was 'our' project, so I got to take more initiative with it, be more of a leader."

The first sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data was Teacher Research: Improving Data. This vignette, in many ways, illustrated both the progression of the relationship between the cooperating teachers and the student teachers, as well as the impact the collaborative teacher project had on the cooperating teachers and student teachers independent of each other. Cooperating teachers and student teachers alike recognized that the teacher research project

improved the practice of teaching in multiple ways. Additionally, both cooperating teachers and student teachers appreciated that this project created and allowed for more teaching opportunities for the student teacher. Cooperating teachers and student teachers were highly invested in this project, and interested in the student learning that occurred as well as the overall success.

Both cooperating teachers and student teachers felt that engaging in the teacher research project altered the focus of the classroom. All of the cooperating teachers made comments on the shift in their teaching perspective, as Suzanne spoke about during her interview.

> *Sometimes as music teachers, we're only focused on getting the music done, but then you see the validity in doing these things and how it really does help the students. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Kathy made a similar comment:

> *I think a big difference between this and they way we approach performances is that we're not listening for what you're doing wrong, we're just listening for what you're doing. Then we try and find a way to change what you're doing or make it easier. It's different. There's a different outcome, there will never be a right or wrong. Essentially it doesn't matter what happens at the end. Of course, we want it to get better, but that's not the goal. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

This altered focus to which the teachers refer is especially important for music teachers, considering the pressure music teachers feel to justify programs through public performances. The teacher research project seemed to provide a reason for the cooperating teachers in this study to focus more on the process, rather than the product, of how their students acquire skills. Although the cooperating teachers in this study seemed to pay more attention to this particular benefit, Emma also noted the following:

I think the whole idea of, 'Why don't we look at problems in our classroom? Why don't we admit them?' [is interesting], especially when in rehearsal everyday we are finding problems. It's kind of ironic. I think it also brings forth the point that we aren't just rehearsing everyday to learn the pieces for an upcoming concert. The kids are there to learn music. So, if they're not listening, why don't we devote time towards that? Or if their intonation is horrible, why don't we fix that? It's not just going to get better on its own. I think, again, it reminds us that, yes, the concert is important, but what else do our students need? I think it supports what is becoming my philosophy about that: you need to devote time to these issues. I believe that. This offered a chance for me to see that if you do take the time to do that, it will improve. [Quote taken from individual interviews.]

The cooperating teachers also noted that involvement in this project resulted in the use of more teaching strategies, and encouraged the development of more creative, outside the box, ways to approach problems in their classroom. I asked Suzanne if she believed that participation in this project would impact her future instructional practices. She answered as follows:

Oh, absolutely. I'll use a lot of different methods to teach things from now on. And, you know, that's what teaching is all about. When we have professional development days, that's what they talk to us about, but we never seem to implement it. We're like, 'Okay, this is good, but I've got to go back to my classroom now and teach.' But this was so do-able. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]

Kathy offered supporting evidence in her statement:

It's nice to know new tricks to try for the changing voice. I mean, you just don't ever learn everything. There are different ways to do things, and some of the ways I know don't always work for the groups I have. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Amelia also noted that this approach resulted in the more deliberate gathering and eventual knowledge of more strategies:

> *We're looking at a problem in a different way than we would have if we were just teaching it. You know, we might talk about different strategies and different techniques, but we've actually gone and looked at different literature and strategies that we're going to try. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

By partaking in this teacher research project, both the cooperating teachers and student teachers seemed to reflect more on their teaching in all aspects, from a philosophical standpoint to the incorporation of varied teaching strategies. The increased reflection is, in and of itself, an added benefit, one that might extend beyond the scope of the project. Though she has not yet begun her teaching, Amelia spoke to how she believes the teacher research project will impact her approach to the profession:

> *It makes you more aware of how things occur in the classroom. To go this in depth with it, and to implement these techniques in my classroom makes me realize how important it is. I know that working with the male changing voice is important, but I've learned so much more about it through this, and it makes me want to inform my students more. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The teacher research project also resulted in additional and varied teaching experiences for the student teachers. As Emma made reference to in the vignette, the project allowed the student teachers to take more initiative. She continues that thought in the following statement:

> *So much of this project was collaborative, but then, I kind of took it upon myself to make the lesson work. I made a little Google Presentation and found the listening examples,*

and then taught the lesson. I showed Claire the information I organized to look over before, and she would give input as to other things I might include. But I did most of it. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

I asked Emma if she did most of it because she wanted to, or if it was because Claire encouraged her to do so. Emma responded, "I just did it. I wanted to."

Amelia also felt that her opportunities to teach during the course of this project both increased and were unlike other teaching experiences she had done during the course of her student teaching.

I think that because we've taken the boys aside, separate from the class, that they view me differently and feel more comfortable with me. Although I've been working with them this entire time in the classroom, this project gave me the opportunity to get to talk to them about different things. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The cooperating teachers noticed the increased opportunities for their student teachers, and felt that there was an increased focus for the student teachers. They noted that this focus could prove especially beneficial for younger teachers, as it may help to shape the curricular choices they make in their own classrooms. Further, Kathy noticed that this project helped Amelia find focus at a state conference she attended during the course of her student teaching

This project has helped Amelia grow professionally. It helped her apply some of what we have worked on. I know she went to an ACDA conference, and she chose some of the sessions she went to because they were about middle school voices. It helped focus the conference for her, which makes a difference when you go to those because there is so much going on. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The cooperating teachers also felt that this project increased their focus, as well. Further, this increased focus was thought to be responsible for improved mentoring. The cooperating teachers felt that because this project increased the initiative of their student teachers, they could engage in a more direct and meaningful manner. Kathy spoke about this during her interview.

> *I think this has made me a better mentor because I can respond to a lot of the ideas that [Amelia] has brought up for discussion. I can tell her, 'This will work for this group, but probably not for this one.' It's also helped me to remember a lot of things I know I didn't know before I began teaching. You don't always remember to share everything that you've learned, because you're thinking about teaching, or what class is coming in next, especially with my schedule this year. Sometimes you're just trying to prepare for what's coming next in the day rather than thinking about the overall things you need to know about teaching. So, it's been helpful to streamline my thinking, and the share some of the good information I've learned. [Quote taken from focus group interview.]*

Claire shared her appreciation of this project for the focus in provided to her, as well.

> *This was a very concrete project, and that's a good thing. There's always something that needs work in the classroom, so it's nice to think very specifically about an aspect of teaching, instead of thinking generally. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The cooperating teachers and student teachers appreciated the increased knowledge of their students that a project such as this provided. Claire shared that she appreciated the opportunity to see her students participate in a different kind of setting than the one in which she normally shares with them. This was meaningful for her as a teacher, and continues to impact the interactions she has with her students.

Although my students were not playing their instruments, they were really involved, really listening. I got to see how my students think, and that's a side that doesn't always come out in the structure of a band rehearsal. So, it's been interesting to observe how they listen. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Kathy added that both she and Amelia enjoyed the incorporation of the project, and it enabled both of them to know their students on a different level.

It's been fun, especially working with the eighth grade boys. Eighth grade boys, and middle school kids in general, have a different personality as a class than they do when they're in small groups. Amelia hadn't really seen that yet, how they're totally different kids when they're by themselves. She was excited about this, and it was a good reminder for me, too. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The participants in this study noted that their students also benefited from this study. All three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs felt that student knowledge increased as a result of the instructional changes they incorporated. When asked about the benefits of this study, Thomas shared, "the big one was the students being able to apply the vocabulary. It was exciting." He also added that he and Mrs. Marks noticed, "a tremendous change in the students after using the suggestions from the research." Suzanne corroborated Thomas' statement, sharing that, as a result of the teacher research project, "the students' success rate skyrocketed."

The participants all shared that, given the relative ease of the teacher research project, it would be easy to implement in future. They would be inspired to approach their teaching in this aspect because of the effect it had on their students. The cooperating teachers were aware of their limitations, and were excited about a feasible strategy that resulted in measurable success.

Emma shared that teacher research was "intriguing" and questioned why teachers do not incorporate this strategy more often.

All participants identified improving practice as an important benefit of teacher research project. Cooperating teachers and student teachers felt the engaging in such a project resulted in the use of different and creative teaching strategies, created opportunities for reflection, and provided focus. The cooperating teachers stated that this project served to increase their mentoring skills. Student learning and understanding also increased as a result of the teacher research project. The participants were excited to report these findings and felt that teacher research is a worthwhile endeavor.

Teacher Research: Collaboration

> It was interesting for me to see what happened with Emma as we worked on this project. I think my getting to know her, learning what she could do and how she thinks, deepened.
>
> -Claire Swensen, Cooperating Teacher, Individual Interview

> I can also see this working with someone that you're not as comfortable with. I had a student teacher a few years ago with whom I did not get along. This project would have been so helpful. I would have had something else to focus on instead of everything that I didn't like about him.
>
> -Suzanne Marks, Cooperating Teacher, Individual Interview

Kathy Kjelland, Cooperating Teacher, and Amelia Summers, Student Teacher

Buffalo Creek Elementary and Junior High School

I arrive at Buffalo Creek Elementary and Junior High School prior to the start of the school day. As it mid-November, the sky is just beginning to lighten, and there was a light dusting of snow on the roads as I drove to the small town in which the school is located.

I enter the school and make my way down a long hallway, up one flight of stairs, and down a second long hallway before arriving at Kathy Kjelland's classroom. This building is a combined elementary and junior high school, and it is necessary to walk through the elementary hallway, festooned with a variety of Thanksgiving-themed decorations, before passing into the junior high portion of the school. Although Kathy is responsible for teaching all of the students in this kindergarten though eighth-grade building, her room is located all the way towards the end of the junior high wing.

Kathy's classroom is quite large, with two doors, and looks as if it had at one point been two separate classrooms. The floor is tiled with squares of purple, cornflower blue, teal, and white. During my observations, I have seen Kathy use these multicolored tiles as a means of grouping children for various activities, such as, "All the second-graders sitting on the purple tiles, please line up." There are dry erase boards that run the length of one of the walls, and close to this, a sound system set up on a cart with several stack of compact discs. The piano is in the center of the room, so that Kathy can use it for both the general

music students, if need be, as well as with the choir students. Choral risers are set up against the wall opposite that of the dry erase boards.

Kathy's desk is set up in one corner, and she has a second desk set up perpendicularly that holds her computer and printer. There are filing cabinets in this corner as well. Kathy has put another desk in her room for Amelia, and this desk is placed so that it is directly facing Kathy's. The two desks are the same height and made from the same material, and at first glance it looks like one large workspace. It is difficult to identify where Kathy's desk ends and Amelia's begins.

The teaching material that covers the desks, as well as the bookcases on the wall, reflect the wide range of Kathy's teaching responsibilities. There are the teacher resource manuals for the "Share the Music" textbook series, single copies of choral octavos, a video on the adolescent changing voice, and items that, as Kathy later shares with me, are props for an upcoming holiday performance with the primary-aged students.

Kathy and Amelia are already in the classroom when I arrive, and I notice that they are engaged in lively, animated conversation. It is obvious when observing Kathy and Amelia that they share a close bond, despite the fact that they have only known each other for a few months. Amelia did contact Kathy last spring upon receiving her student teaching placement, and she did spend a few hours observing Kathy teach in May. But between May and September, there was no contact. Also, because of Kathy's busy personal life as a mother to two young children, she and Amelia spend little time together beyond the school day. The

bond that exists between them has been created and fostered with little to no extra nurturing.

I have procured coffee for Kathy and Amelia, for which they are both grateful. "Oh, this is fantastic," Kathy says. "Thank you *so* much."

"Yes, thank you," agrees Amelia. "This is a nice way to start the day."

The three of us spend approximately twenty minutes chatting about mundane things, from the potential of an upcoming snowstorm and whether I am prepared for my first upper-Midwest winter, to our respective Thanksgiving plans. Both Kathy and Amelia possess an innate quality to welcome people into their worlds. It is not a surprise that such a close relationship has developed between them; not only do they seem to possess similar personalities, they also seem to bring out the best in each other. Based on my observations, this match has extended to their professional relationship as well.

As the discussion turns toward more professional matters, Amelia shares with me that she and Kathy are approximately half way through the implementation of the teacher research project. I eagerly ask both she and Kathy how it has been so far.

"Good, good," they share in unison. Kathy continues, "I'm having a really good time doing this. I was gone most of last year on maternity leave, so I feel like it's been a while since I've worked this closely with the middle school boys. I'd forgotten how enjoyable they can be, and how funny they are. I mean, I've got good kids, anyway, but this has still been a good reminder." I have observed the middle school boys that Kathy is referring to on many occasions, and feel that

her statement is accurate. The kids in this building are, for the most part, well-mannered and respectful.

"It's been great for me to see this, and I feel like I've already learned so much. I'm eager to hear the students' thoughts on this when all is said and done," adds Amelia.

I note that both Kathy and Amelia seem invested in this project, and ask them to talk more about the details of the project, including how they decided to focus on the changing voice and how the teaching responsibilities are being divided.

Kathy and Amelia look towards each other, gauging to see who will speak first. Kathy begins, "Well, there were so many things we could have focused on, and I was open to a lot of ideas. Amelia was interested in learning more about the changing voice, and already had some resources she could bring to the table."

Amelia, nodding, adds, "Yes, that's true. I was and am excited about this topic, and there seem to be so many different approaches out there. I kind of wanted to find out a bit for myself what things work and why."

"So have you taken more of the initiative on this, then?" I ask Amelia.

"Well, maybe," she says, after a moment, and looks to Kathy to confirm. "But we've continued to approach this pretty collaboratively, like we have most things."

"Definitely," adds Kathy. "I think this project has lent itself well to working together. Like, when we were first testing the boys to assess their voices, we fell into a nice rhythm where one of us was at the piano testing, and the other person

was documenting. We were able to get so much more accomplished in doing it this way.

Kathy and Amelia have collaborated on many projects and activities during the student teaching experience. This relationship has seemed, in many ways, to be more like one of team-teaching rather than mentor-mentee. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that this project would serve to increase the already present collaborative approach between Kathy and Amelia.

"But, you know," continues Kathy. "I've seen a different side to Amelia through this project, starting with the initiative that she took through the way she gathered the research. As I reflect on this more, it's almost been like she's taken the lead on this and I've assisted. And I think that's great."

The second sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data was Teacher Research: Collaboration. As the vignette portrays, increased opportunities for the cooperating teacher and student teacher to collaborate with one another was seen as a major benefit of the teacher research project. Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers felt that this project served to increase communication between one another. The student teachers were eager to collaborate, and felt that this project allowed for them more like equals to their cooperating teacher. All participants felt that this project was helpful in creating a common vision.

Each of the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs had a positive relationship prior to the implementation of their respective teacher research projects. Nonetheless, these projects led to a deeper understanding of each other, perhaps because of the increased communication that inevitably came out of this collaborative project. In many cases, the teachers learned something

about each other that may not have come out if not for the particular skills needed to complete this project. For example, Suzanne and Thomas worked on a project in which they compared a pre-test and post-test to measure results. Suzanne had assumed that they would simply average the results of the test scores for each class, and use this number for comparison. Thomas surprised her by recording the scores on a chart complete with other statistical information, including the standard deviation for each class. (As it turns out, Thomas has a math minor.) Suzanne shared the following during her interview:

> *I have a deeper understanding of Thomas now. For example, I didn't know he was a math guy. I knew he had a lot of attention to detail, and that he dug into things, but I didn't know to what extent. How he approached this project—the kinds of research that were out there, how he decided what activities would be done with the students—that spoke volumes to me. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Emma felt that this project allowed Claire to see a different aspect of her personality.

> *I think this project gave me a chance to be a little more creative, and kind of show Claire another side of what I could bring to the table. There was nothing else really like this that I did. This was something totally different than a rehearsal. I think it strengthened the relationship between us, because it's another thing you're working on. It worked well, and we worked well together. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

The communication that occurred between the cooperating teachers and student teachers also increased as they began to engage in meaningful discourse related to the project. Claire noted that she and Emma talked more about teaching in general as they brainstormed for this project. Kathy shared that she and Amelia devoted a large amount of time to brainstorming about the project.

We talked together about how we're going to do this, and now we're documenting everything together. I think we'll continue to go through the different ideas together. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Amelia shared that this project enhanced her already strong relationship with Kathy, stating "it made it stronger because we were connecting at a different level."

The student teachers, especially, were excited about further opportunities to collaborate, and felt that the collaboration on this project felt more equal than it did in previous discussions and activities with their cooperating teachers. This is interesting, especially given that the student teachers did not identify any of their cooperating teachers as especially power-hungry prior to the implementation of this project. Perhaps this is a reminder of this difficulty in attaining equality in a relationship where one person is in a position of power. The cooperating teachers also felt that they began to view their student teachers more collegially during this project.

Emma shared that as a student teacher, she felt that the majority of her actions were extensions of ideas given to her by her Claire. However, she felt that this project was more equal.

During our early conversations, there was a lot of, 'Well, what about this?' from my angle and other fresh ideas. That might lead to Claire saying, 'Well, what about this?' [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Claire confirmed that her relationship with Emma changed during this project. She stated:

We were teaching together, and figuring it out together. This project pushed us to get outside of the teacher/student teacher relationship. She became more like a colleague. I

just looked at Emma like a colleague; she wasn't a student teacher. It felt natural, doing this together. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Kathy shared that this also felt more collaborative, and that she looked forward to working on this project with Amelia.

It's interesting, because I feel like we've done most things together already, but it seems like the things we've done for this project have been more of a duel approach. So, we'll be working together a lot on this project, which I think will be really nice. Amelia is starting to take over the full-time teaching responsibilities, but we're trying to tag-team this project so that we're still both involved. [Quote taken from individual interview]

Amelia also felt that her relationship with Kathy changed during this project.

I think I started doing more of the research, and have taken more of the initiative with it. It feels like we're doing this together rather her giving me the idea. Also, when Kathy and I were discussing voice change with the boys, it felt very equal. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

All of the participants felt that this project helped to create a common vision. The entire process of identifying the problem, discussing various methodologies and approaching, and deciding on the various components of implementation and measurement, required the cooperating teachers and student teachers to participate in shared, meaningful conversations. Emma shared that she and Claire collaboratively brainstormed ideas, and narrowed the focus to those that were more in common. Thomas, reflecting upon the success in his project with Suzanne, shared the following statement, and in doing so, highlighted both the successful and collaborative aspects of the teacher research project, "Mrs. Wald and I made it work."

This inspired me. I need to do more research-based things in my classroom. To say, 'Oh, my gosh. This is the impact this project had on my students. This is how I can become a better teacher, and how they can become more successful learners.'

-Suzanne Marks, Cooperating Teacher, Individual Interview

Suzanne Marks, Cooperating Teacher and Thomas Williamson, Student Teacher
Riverside High School

Riverside High School is an older building that takes up an entire city block, and is located fairly close to the downtown area of a mid-size city. Surrounding the school are older, fairly well-maintained homes, and on this particular morning, the branches on the mature trees hold a few inches of freshly fallen snow.

I walk into the building at the same time as many of the students, and make my way down the corridor to Suzanne's classroom. As I enter the large room, I see Suzanne and Thomas watching the video of the previous night's concert.

"Hey, they sing in tune now!" shares Thomas, warmly.

"I know," responds Suzanne, beaming.

They welcome me as I pull up a chair and watch the video with them. I notice that Suzanne is using this as an opportunity to mentor Thomas. For example, she makes comments on the energy of the singers, and the quality of

the literature, saying things such as, "I'm glad we did this piece. It's nice and well-written, especially for freshmen and sophomore students."

Thomas is reminded of an anecdote, and shares this will Suzanne, who laughs. "So funny," she says.

Even to the most casual observer, it is obvious how successful this relationship has been for both Suzanne and Thomas. They enjoy each other's company, and seem to play off of each other well. As the video continues, I take in the classroom. Architecturally, it is obvious we are in an older building, given the low ceilings and lack of windows. However, there is an inherent warmth to this room, in no doubt a reflection of the energy that Suzanne has put into the space.

A multicolored carpet covers the entire floor, and the walls are essentially concrete blocks that have been painted white. Suzanne has divided the room into two parts: choral risers and chairs. A piano is located in the center of the room to accommodate wherever the students may be, and there are a handful of music stands towards the front of the room. Secured to the wall are several music-themes posters, including 'La Scala,' with the solfege syllables. The board is full of important information for the students, including upcoming concerts, the rehearsal plans for the multiple classes, and a reminder of where student should go after arriving to the class (either the risers or the chairs). There are framed pictures located in various locations, such as the top of the sound speakers, that showcase various students and memorable performances. The showchoir

recently had their picture taken with Santa during a performance at the mall, and the students had this framed before presenting it to Suzanne.

Suzanne and Thomas finish watching the video just as the bell is ringing. They do not have a class this period, but Thomas is expecting a student to come and work with him in an individual voice lesson. The door opens and the student enters, and after Thomas introduces me to this student, I follow Suzanne into her office where she and I can chat without interrupting Thomas's teaching.

Suzanne shares this office with the orchestra teacher, whose rehearsal space is entered through a second door leading out of the office. I have met her during my earlier visits and observations, but she is not currently present. Before Suzanne and I engage in conversation, I notice more details about her space. Her desk is packed with a wide variety of resources, music, and music catalogues. She has a mug that contains pens, pencils, sharpies, and scissors. Photos of Suzanne's family, printed off of a computer, are large and line the wall that her desk faces.

I comment on the shared watching of the video, and told her that I appreciated all that she shares with Thomas. "Well, it's just another opportunity for me to mentor," she says, shrugging her shoulders. "Sometimes the really good things are shared when you least expect for them to be, and you never know when you'll have opportunities to talk naturally about teaching. I think that's so important.

"And," she continues, "Thomas has been so open, so receptive. It's really been wonderful working with him."

I know from previous conversations with Suzanne that this is not something she takes for granted, having had a negative experience with a student teacher a few years prior. She has commented on several occasions how grateful she is for her relationship with Thomas, and how much she appreciates what he has brought to the classroom.

"In so many ways, Thomas made our teacher research project work. I will be eternally grateful for his role in that." I ask Suzanne to elaborate on this.

"Well, our music department had decided to focus on the implementation of certain musical vocabulary terms in an effort to more easily communicate with our students. In retrospect, we talked about this as something we wanted to do, but didn't really talk about how. So, I thought I had a good idea of how I wanted to approach this, but it was terrible. I didn't enjoy it, the students certainly didn't enjoy it, or get it, and the test scores were awful.

"So, I was really frustrated. And then, you approached Thomas and me about incorporating this teacher research project, and it just made sense to go after this. Thomas added so much. He really did the bulk of the research. I'm not sure this would have been as successful without him, and I certainly wouldn't have been as creative about this approach.

"It was so cool to see what a difference this made with my students. I will, absolutely, do something like this again. And that's saying something, because I'm four years away from retirement!" Suzanne laughs.

"But really," continues Suzanne. "This was great. This was exciting. This was inspirational."

The third and final sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data was Teacher Research: Personal Satisfaction. The participants in this study were excited and inspired by the process of completing the teacher research project. For the cooperating teachers, each of them were able to easily identify many problems in their teaching settings, and this project gave them an opportunity to approach this problem in a more deliberate manner. The cooperating teachers felt that this project aligned with their own personal and professional goals. The student teachers were also personally satisfied with the implementation of this project, although the main reasons for this satisfaction seem to be the increased teaching responsibilities and collaboration, and have already been discussed in the first two sub-themes.

As was indicated in the vignette, the project that Suzanne and Thomas implemented started as a department goal. Suzanne indicated that she was unhappy in her first attempt to implement this goal, which happened prior to the beginning of Thomas's student teaching placement. She indicated these feelings in the following statement:

> *I felt like I had failed [my students] the first quarter, and I wanted to do better. I'm not above that. [Quote taken from individual interview.]*

Suzanne credits Thomas for the variety of teaching strategies that were used to implement the concept during the process of the teacher research project, and acknowledges that it was this more research-based approach used by Thomas that resulted in the students' success. When I asked Suzanne about the most beneficial part of the teacher research project, she answered as follows:

> *I think it was most beneficial for my students first, for me second, and for my relationship with Thomas third. The students really mastered this concept. I felt better about our*

teaching. And my relationship with Thomas was already strong, but like I said, I got to know him on a different level. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

Claire also found great personal satisfaction in the teacher research project.

What I personally enjoyed was working on the project. I've been wanting for years to do a guided listening project in the band rehearsal, and, for one reason or another, haven't. And so it was very nice to do this. [Quote taken from individual interview.]

The cooperating teachers, especially Suzanne and Claire, found great personal satisfaction in doing this project. Perhaps this is due to their experience both in the classroom and as a cooperating teacher. Suzanne and Claire are veteran teachers who have already found great success in their respective classrooms. This project seemed to allow, and indeed, encourage them to be very deliberate in their teaching and to focus on their own personal teaching goals. Both Suzanne and Claire are confident in their teaching persona, and it was easy for them to acknowledge and identify aspects that they were unsatisfied with in their respective classrooms. Kathy, though less experienced, also seemed comfortable identifying the problem and altering her teaching approach to accommodate the teacher research project. She, too, was satisfied in the results, but was less effusive than Suzanne and Claire.

The student teachers enjoyed the benefit of additional teaching opportunities, increased collaboration, and the more collegial relationship with their cooperating teachers that seemed to grow out of the collaborative teacher research project. Additionally, they seemed comfortable with the idea of identifying a problem in one's classroom, and using a more research-based approach in an attempt to better understand the problem.

CHAPTER VI

CONNECTIONS AMONG THEMES

In the two previous chapters, the four themes that emerged from this research were introduced and discussed. These themes were Expectations and Feelings, Cooperating Teacher Qualities, Student Teacher Qualities, and Teacher Research, which included the three sub-themes of Improving Practice, Collaboration, and Personal Satisfaction. This chapter will serve to provide further understanding of each theme by situating the findings in the literature. I will also include a discussion of the connections among themes. I will conclude the chapter with a presentation of a visual model that illuminates the connections among themes.

Expectations and Feelings

Cooperating teachers and student teachers enter into the student teaching experience with very defined expectations and feelings regarding this experience. Cooperating teachers wanted to feel comfortable with their student teachers, and believed that a personality match with their student teachers would help to create this sense of comfort. This feeling supports previous research (Krueger, 1985; Schmidt, 1994a; Schmidt, 1994b; Schmidt & Knowles, 1994). Draves (2008) commented that, in a better effort to provide for this personality match and comfort level, "university supervisors should explicitly discuss with each party what they want from the student teaching experience" (p. 212).

Cooperating teachers' previous experiences greatly influenced their expectations and approach with their current student teachers. The cooperating teachers drew from their previous

relationships with student teachers to inform their current approach. Two of the cooperating teachers had served as a mentor to student teachers on multiple occasions, and reflected upon these experiences as a factor in determining their expectations and feelings for their current and future student teachers. While the vast majority of the previous experiences had been positive, Suzanne's expectations were also defined by a less positve experience with a former student teacher.

All of the cooperating teachers felt prepared to mentor their student teachers, including Kathy, who was serving in her first capacity as a cooperating teacher. This is notable as none of the cooperating teachers received any formal training, such as the type suggested in the clinical supervision model designed for preparing cooperating teachers (Drafall, 1991; Kent, 2000). Hawkey (1997) also suggests that cooperating teachers are not greatly impacted by a model of mentoring.

The cooperating teachers also drew from their own experience as a student teacher to prepare for their role, a finding that supports similar existing research (Agee, 1996; Hawkey, 1997). This experience served to form the expectations and feelings the cooperating teachers had in reference to their current student teachers. This is true even for the two participants who had been teaching for more than 20 years. Also, both Claire and Kathy wanted their student teachers to have a better experience than they felt they had, and this was reflected in the effort that was made on their part to give their student teachers a positive experience. This finding is supported by Draves (2008), who stated,

> Cooperating teachers' own student teaching experiences profoundly impacted their approach to and disposition as a cooperating teacher. A positive experience resulted in a cooperating teacher who wished to re-create the experience for their student teacher. A

> less positive experience or even negative experience resulted in a cooperating teacher who attempted to right the wrongs they experienced, or provided opportunities they did not enjoy as student teachers themselves. (p. 183)

Cooperating teachers expressed their desire for their student teachers to have a "teacher presence." When asked to clarify this further, the cooperating teachers had difficulty defining exactly what qualities came together to form this personality trait. Despite this, the teachers felt strongly that without this trait, it would be difficult for the student teacher to find success in the classroom. Based on my conversations with the cooperating teachers as well as on my observations of the cooperating teachers and student teachers, I attempted to define this personality trait as one's ability to command students' attention. Additionally, there seems to be an element of the amount and type of energy that a student teacher brings that is relevant to this trait. The cooperating teachers' made reference to either previous or current student teachers that possessed different, yet successful types of energy.

Both cooperating teachers and student teachers hoped for a personal relationship with one another. The cooperating teachers felt that having a close, personal relationship with their student teachers would allow for greater growth during the student teaching experience. This finding supports the existing research done by Draves (2008), who stated that, "cooperating teachers desired a personal connection with their student teachers and a relationship that was trusting, respectful, and resulted in learning for both parties" (p. 206). Further, Berthelotte (2007) found that, while there were many differences among the cooperating teachers' and student teachers' expectations, one similarity was the desire for a positive, learning experience.

The student teachers had both feelings of apprehension and excitement in anticipation of their student teaching experience. They universally felt that this was an important step in their

development as a music teacher, and recognized that their cooperating teacher could potentially be an important figure to them professionally. The student teachers in Berthelotte's (2007) study also had fears and concerns regarding the student teaching experience. However, while the student teachers in Berthelotte's study worried that they may not possess the required skills to be a good music teacher, it appears that the participants in the current study were most worried about not having a good relationship with their cooperating teachers.

It was interesting that, although the student teachers hoped for a personal connection with their cooperating teachers, they actually expected the relationship to be more professional in nature. There was also an expectation that the cooperating teacher would be their superior. This is likely due to the fact that the cooperating teachers are required to evaluate the student teachers during their placement. However, because of their role as an evaluator, the cooperating teachers felt that developing a personal relationship with their student teachers allowed the evaluation to be more authentic. The student teachers appreciated this opportunity for meaningful feedback, especially given the role that their cooperating teachers play in their professional development. Berthelotte (2007) stated that, "student teachers need to rely on their co-operating teachers to confirm or deny that what they are doing was "good" and were hoping to accomplish this through feedback sessions with the co-operating teachers" (p. 171).

Cooperating teachers are greatly influenced by their past experiences as both a student teacher and as a cooperating teacher. The vast majority of these experiences were positive, and allowed for the cooperating teachers to recreate a similar experience with their student teachers. In this study, the negative experiences for the participants resulted in the cooperating teachers making careful choices for their student teachers in an attempt to avoid repeating such experiences. While the cooperating teachers in this study seemed to be very reflective about this

(as is evidenced by their decisions), this is no guarantee "that in other cases a negative experience will not be replicated due to a lack of awareness on the part of the student teacher-turned-cooperating teacher" (Draves, 2008, p. 210). Therefore, it is important that the university personnel responsible for placing student teachers have a good understanding of the cooperating teachers with whom they are working. This knowledge will also be beneficial in matching the cooperating teachers and student teachers. A successful match is more likely to result in the personal relationship desired by both cooperating teachers and student teachers, and will allow for more authentic and meaningful feedback to take place.

Cooperating Teacher Qualities

Cooperating teachers and student teachers identified many qualities that are believed to be important for cooperating teachers to possess. The cooperating teachers took their role as a mentor to their student teachers very seriously. Abell et al. (1995) discovered similar findings, and stated that the mentors in their study, "believed it was their responsibility to their individual school system and to the teaching profession to get new teachers off to a good start" (p. 178). The student teachers also felt that their cooperating teachers were highly influential to them in terms of their professional development.

The cooperating teachers felt that it was important for them to be welcoming to their student teachers. This welcoming approach manifested itself in both their personality and energy, as well as in the acceptance of any differences between themselves and their student teachers. The student teachers were appreciative of this quality in their cooperating teachers, as were the participants in Schmidt (199b). The cooperating teachers felt it important to give their student teachers access to all classes and students. This belief seemed to stem more from their

conversations with and knowledge of other cooperating teacher practices, during which the student teacher is given limited access to certain classes.

The cooperating teachers felt it necessary to be intuitive and receptive to their student teachers' needs. This intuition seemed to be based in an inherent knowledge of the student teachers' skills, both strengths and weaknesses. The cooperating teachers stated that it was necessary to know when to intervene and when to have less control over a student teachers' professional growth. Draves (2008) discovered similar findings, and stated that, "cooperating teachers strived to differentiate for their student teachers' developmental needs, and searched for their strengths and weaknesses in order to promote growth" (p. 181).

Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers agreed that it was important for the cooperating teacher to have confidence in the student teachers. At times, this confidence is implicit, such as when the cooperating teachers gave the student teachers more teaching responsibilities. However, for as much as this was appreciated, the student teachers also stated the importance of the cooperating teachers being more explicit in their confidence in them. This confirms the value that the student teachers have in their cooperating teachers opinions. Further, all of the student teachers in this study realized how meaningful it was for them to know that their cooperating teachers had confidence and trust in them. It is important to note that the student teachers in this study earned this confidence and trust from their cooperating teachers. That said, assuming confidence and trust has been earned by a student teacher, it seems important that this be shared in multiple ways by the cooperating teacher. Researchers have found that when student teachers felt valued by their cooperating teachers, there is higher likelihood of forming a better relationship, and one that results in a more meaningful experience

for the cooperating teachers and student teachers (Agee, 1996; Schmidt, 1994a, 1994b; Schmidt & Knowles, 1994).

Cooperating teachers felt it important to foster meaningful reflection with their student teachers. For the cooperating teachers in this study, this mainly took the form of informal conversations regarding teaching. Certainly, the close relationship that was developed between each cooperating teacher/student teacher pair allowed for these conversations to happen more frequently, and were likely more honest.

The cooperating teachers in this study embody specific qualities that have enabled them to be successful in their role as well as creating a positive experience for their student teachers. Cooperating teachers are welcoming of their student teachers, and are genuinely interested in their professional growth and development. It is important that the cooperating teacher shows confidence and trust in the student teacher, if earned, both implicitly and explicitly. Given the importance of the music student teaching experience, it seems reasonable that university personnel responsible for identifying potential cooperating teachers should look for these qualities.

Student Teacher Qualities

The student teachers in this study felt that it was important to be dedicated to the student teaching experience. This included dedication to the school itself, the program, the students, and the cooperating teacher. This dedication manifested itself by being proactive, such as making contact with the cooperating prior to the beginning of the student teaching experience. The student teachers in this study all made an effort to become familiar with their cooperating teacher and the program, and were met with varying degrees of success. Thomas was not able to meet

with his cooperating teacher, as there were scheduling difficulties on Suzanne's part. Amelia did meet with Kathy, and there was an immediate connection that continued into the student teaching experience in the following semester. Not only did Emma meet with Claire, but she was also able to spend meaningful time at school, a factor that both impressed Claire and helped Emma gain familiarity with the program. It is fair to say that Emma began her student teaching in a different place, both personally and professionally, than did Thomas or Amelia.

Claire appreciated the initiative that Emma showed, especially given that it was prior to the beginning of the student teaching experience. Thomas and Amelia found other ways to show initiative once their placement began. This initiative fostered feelings of confidence and trust on behalf of their respective cooperating teachers. This is notable given the importance the student teachers placed in their cooperating teachers feelings towards them.

Both cooperating teachers and student teachers felt that it was important for the student teacher to show responsibility and preparation. The cooperating teachers appreciate these professional qualities, in combination with dedication, initiative, and motivation, as they recognize the importance of such characteristics in being a successful teacher. Neither the cooperating teachers nor the student teachers spoke about the importance of the musical skills necessary for the student teachers to possess. This finding is supported by Draves (2008), who also found that the professional and personal skills previously mentioned were more salient. As in Draves, it is possible that the current student teachers possessed musical skills that were adequate in meeting the needs of the students, and as such, not a concern for either party.

The student teachers felt that it was important to approach the student teaching experience with a sense of openness. When asked to expound upon this, they stated that it was important to be open to ideas suggested by the cooperating teachers, open to different approaches

to teaching music, and open to different philosophies regarding programming for literature. Draves (2008) found that the cooperating teachers in her study wanted their student teachers to have an "openness, a willingness to learn, and the ability to adapt and adjust" (p. 186). The student teachers seemed to acknowledge that, although intelligent and talented, they have much to learn from their cooperating teachers, and the cooperating teachers' experience needs to be appreciated. Thomas was explicit in his appreciation of Suzanne's experience, and felt that this served to foster a positive relationship between them.

All of the student teachers felt that it was important to be inquisitive. This, again, reflects the student teachers' appreciation of their respective cooperating teacher's experience. The student teachers in this study did not express any concern when asking questions of their cooperating teacher. This is in contrast to Berthelotte (2007), whose student teacher participants felt that being inquisitive was seen as a negative reflection of their skills. Perhaps the student teachers in this study felt comfortable in this role due to their close relationship with their cooperating teachers. Stanulis and Russell (2000) also identified the characteristic of inquisitiveness as an important quality for student teachers.

There are few existing studies that identify desirable qualities for the student teacher. Draves (2008) identified many of the same personal and professional qualities for student teachers that were believed to prove successful for the student teachers in this study. In an effort to make student teachers better equipped for success during the student teaching experience, Draves also stated that, "music teacher educators must make this implicit knowledge of effective personal and professional characteristics explicit to preservice teachers." The findings in this study support this statement.

Teacher Research: Improving Practice

The act of participating in a collaborative teacher research project was determined to improve the practice for cooperating teachers and student teachers alike. The cooperating teachers felt that this project helped to provide focus for their student teachers in a notably different way than other teaching activities had done throughout the student teaching experience. The focus was extended to the cooperating teachers, as well. All the teachers felt that this project helped to realign the focus from the product, such as concerts, festivals, and competitions, to the process of how their students learn and think about both the music they are making, and music in general. This increased focus seemed to align with a broader definition and understanding of what it meant to teach music.

Participating in the teacher research project also encouraged both the cooperating teachers and student teachers to approach their teaching with different strategies. The different strategies were, in many ways, a direct result of the specific project that was chosen by the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs. For example, Claire and Emma chose a project that included guided listening, perhaps not something that many band teachers normally do in their daily classrooms. Suzanne and Thomas, in doing a project that incorporated vocabulary, incorporated teaching strategies from the language arts curriculum, and in doing so, felt empowered to be more creative in other aspects of their teaching. In this way, all of the participants felt that this project would impact their future instruction, and therefore, continue to improve practice.

The cooperating teachers enjoyed that this project led them to take a more deliberate approach to their teaching, and commented that, although they may have wanted to do something like this before, for a variety of reasons it did not happen. Claire made reference to this feeling

many times throughout our conversations, and it seemed to hint at a slight level of frustration that she felt staying within the confines of her position, as it is traditionally defined. Suzanne felt this project enabled her to be proactive with a situation that she was unhappy with in her classroom. Kathy enjoyed learning new approaches to a traditional concern for middle school choral teachers, and was reminded of the joy that can be found in building rapport with students.

The cooperating teachers and student teachers noticed an increased amount of reflection as a result of the participation in this project. Reflection has been noted as an important aspect to the professional development of preservice teachers (Stegman, 2007; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). The participants in this study felt that by engaging in this project, especially given that it was a collaborative approach, encouraged them to talk with one another as they proceeded through the multiple layers. For example, both the cooperating teachers and student teachers thought deeply about the identification of the problem, although usually the cooperating teachers steered this aspect of the research as it was taking place in their practice. In contrast, in many ways the student teachers seemed to take more initiative in the development and implementation of the methodologies, and in doing so, reflected on the various existing research that had been done concerning their particular problem. Cooperating teachers and student teachers were motivated by the increased student understanding and skill that occurred as a result of this project, and all three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs engaged in meaningful discourse regarding these results.

The student teachers appreciated that the teacher research project allowed for increased opportunities for them to take initiative. As was previously mentioned, in most cases the student teachers did the majority of the reading about the related research out of which developed the respective methodologies. Amelia attended a conference and was able to gather helpful

materials as well as attend sessions with leaders in her field that enabled her to become a leader upon her return to her student teaching placement. Emma commented that this project allowed for Claire to become aware of other skills she possessed that had not been displayed in the context of a rehearsal. Thomas was able to compile and provide deeper understanding to the results in a way that surprised and pleased Suzanne.

All of the participants were especially pleased with the increased abilities of their students as a result of this project. Suzanne and Thomas measured their results by testing their students a second time after a change in their instructional approach. Every student showed an increased ability to process the information, and both Suzanne and Thomas felt this increased knowledge allowed for more time-effective and meaningful rehearsals. Claire and Emma noticed an increased amount of descriptive words and responses used in their students' writing, and felt that this increased ability to listen would encourage their students to think more inclusively about other important aspects of the ensemble. Kathy and Amelia saw that their students had a deeper understanding of the adolescent voice change, and felt strongly that this understanding would allow the students to better navigate their own experience. This increased sense of concern for students rather than their own teaching, especially for the student teachers, showed that the student teacher has progressed through Fuller's (1969) three stages of concerns of teachers.

Participation in the teacher research project was shown to improve practice in multiple areas for both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers. This finding supports existing research in general education (Farrell, 2003; O'Connor et al., 2006). The cooperating teachers appreciated the opportunity to focus specifically on a problem, and shared that this focus enabled them to shift their priorities, or perhaps become more inclusive with their priorities, than they

have normally done. The cooperating teachers felt that they became better teachers as a result of this project, as it provided impetus to engage in new and creative teaching strategies. The student teachers felt similarly, and noted the increased opportunities to take initiative as a result of this project. All of the participants felt more empowered as a result of increased student learning and understanding. These findings are important given the increased pressure that teachers feel to produce results in their classrooms.

Teacher Research: Collaboration

Prior to the implementation of the teacher research project, all three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs exhibited a strong relationship that incorporated high levels of collaboration. It is interesting to note then, given these high levels of collaboration, that all the participants reported increased amounts of collaboration as a result of this project. The teachers in this study felt that this project provided increased opportunities to collaborate, especially as they navigated their way through the various steps necessary to complete the project. In addition to increased opportunities for collaboration, cooperating teachers and student teachers alike spoke to an eagerness to collaborate with one another.

Having already developed a personal relationship with their student teachers, the cooperating teachers nonetheless felt that this project resulted in an increased understanding of their mentees. Suzanne had been previously unaware of Thomas's mathematical interests and abilities. Claire noted that Emma was able to bring certain qualities, including leadership skills and technological knowledge, to the project that enabled its success, something about which Emma was also aware. Kathy appreciated the leadership qualities in Amelia that she felt increased as a result of the implementation of this project.

All of the participants noted increased levels of communication as a result of this project. Communication and conversation have been found to be important components of a successful cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship (Agee, 1996; Liebhaber, 2003; Sanders, et al., 2005; Sanders & Russell, 2000). The teachers in this study remarked that it was necessary to communicate more to complete the multiple layers of this study, beginning with the brainstorming necessary to identify the problem, continuing with discussion regarding the methodologies, and culminating with the implementation of the project. The cooperating teachers and student teachers engaged in meaningful discourse as they collaborated to understand and interpret the results.

Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers felt that their relationship became more equal as a result of this project. This was especially notable, given that the student teachers all felt as if they were respected, valued, and trusted by their cooperating teachers prior to the implementation of the teacher research project. Emma felt that, despite these feelings of respect, value, and trust bestowed upon her by Claire, ultimately she was still teaching in Claire's classroom. While the teacher research project still took place in Claire's classroom, it was different in that Claire and Emma conceived and implemented this project collaboratively.

The cooperating teachers echoed this feeling in that all looked more upon their student teachers as colleagues during the course of the teacher research project. It is possible that this shift happened not only as a result of the teacher research project, but also that the implementation of the project occurred during the later stages of the student teaching experience. Also, the student teachers in this study seemed less influenced by the hidden curriculum (Krueger, 1985) of performances than the research suggests. The cooperating teachers were comfortable sharing all aspects of the teaching responsibilities, including complete ensemble

preparation. Given this understanding, it seems that the cooperating teachers had progressed to the far end of the power sharing continuum, as defined by Draves (2008), during which the student teaching relationship is defined as a collaborative partnership.

Because of this increased sense of collaboration, and understanding this in the context of Draves's (2008) power sharing continuum, it might behoove more cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs to participate in a collaborative teacher research project. Draves further defined the continuum as beginning with a student/teacher relationship, and then progressing to a team-teaching relationship before ending with the aforementioned collaborative approach. She also recognized this is closely aligned with Fuller's (1969) stages of teacher concern, and noted that, "as student teachers moved through Fuller's stages, cooperating teachers shared more power with them" (p. 193). The cooperating teachers in this study, especially Claire and Suzanne who had multiple experiences as a cooperating teacher from which to reference, speculated that this project might be especially beneficial in developing a stronger relationship with certain student teachers. Suzanne discussed a particularly difficult relationship she had with a previous student teacher, and felt that this project would have provided a common vision. She felt that collaborative participation in this project would have increased communication between herself and her student teacher, and would have resulted in a more positive student teaching experience.

Teacher Research: Personal Satisfaction

All of the participants reported high levels of enjoyment by partaking in the teacher research project. Enjoyment was felt due to the increased sense of understanding and collegiality between the cooperating teachers and their student teachers, the increased sense of empowerment, and the increased understanding and abilities of the students. Though the student

teachers also felt similarly, the cooperating teachers were able to provide more specific feedback on the enjoyment that was experienced, perhaps as a result of a greater sense of investment in their classroom than was felt by the student teachers.

Suzanne entered into the project with feelings of inadequacy regarding an earlier attempt to increase her students' vocabulary knowledge. Given that the music department in which she worked had decided to focus on this knowledge as a departmental goal, Suzanne felt that she had failed both the other members of the music department as well as her students in her first attempt to improve her students' knowledge. To this end, this project became a personal goal that she felt great satisfaction in meeting through this project.

Claire also spoke to feelings of personal satisfaction after her involvement in this project. Throughout my conversations with her, there seemed to be an underlying sense of frustration that Claire felt in relation to the particular kind of instruction that was typical in a band rehearsal. She had expressed a desire to implement similar ideas to the one that she and Emma chose to do prior to this project, but for a variety of reasons had not done so. The implementation of this project allowed Claire to feel more fulfilled professionally. This project, then, became an extension of Claire's philosophy.

Kathy was excited to participate in this project as it was a reminder for her of the enjoyment of teaching. Upon completion of the teacher research project, Kathy spoke to the fact that her current schedule does not allow the time for her to reflect on her teaching. She appreciated the opportunities that participating in this project provided, and is hopeful that she can continue to create additional opportunities for reflection.

The student teachers expressed satisfaction in this project as well, for many of the same reasons identified by the cooperating teachers. However, the overriding reason for enjoyment on

the student teachers' part was the increased sense of partnership felt between themselves and their cooperating teachers. The student teachers' need for a close, personal relationship with their cooperating teachers has been an underlying thread throughout the findings of this study. As has been previously discussed, this finding is supported by the existing research. Given this, it seems logical that teacher educators discuss the importance of this relationship with their student teachers, and make it a priority to control what variables they can to create this important relationship.

Connections

The cooperating teachers and student teachers both entered into the student teaching experience with defined expectations and feelings. While none of the cooperating teachers had any formal training to serve in this capacity, they nonetheless felt prepared in doing so and looked forward to their role. The greatest influence for the cooperating teachers was past experiences with student teachers, and even their own student teaching experience. This last statement was true even for the veteran teachers. The student teachers greatly anticipated the student teaching experience. Based on comments made from previous student teachers in their collegiate program, the current student teachers understood this experience to be very important to their development as a teacher. Because of this understanding, the student teachers were also anxious regarding this placement. Both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers hoped for a close, personal relationship.

These expectations and feelings felt by both the cooperating teachers and student teachers served to inform the qualities that each party displayed in their respective roles. Cooperating teachers welcomed the student teachers into their classrooms, and felt it was their responsibility

to be a positive influence on and ensure a successful experience for their student teachers. These factors were important in creating the personal relationship that was desired on their part.

This relationship was deemed crucial for multiple factors. The cooperating teachers felt that without a personal connection, the entire student teaching experience would suffer. Claire spoke specifically about her need to feel comfortable in her classroom, and felt that without this comfort level, her ability to mentor would be diminished. Additionally, the cooperating teachers in this study felt that if their student teacher was unable to connect on a personal level with them, this might indicate an inability to connect with their students. This finding is supported by Draves (2008). The cooperating teachers in her study "alluded to this issue of a personal connection and its role as a potential indicator of teaching success" (p. 199).

The student teachers felt that it was important to show interest in the program, and when possible, the student teachers made a concerted effort to establish a connection prior to the beginning of the student teaching experience. This effort helped to establish the personal connection that was desired. Additionally, the student teachers thought it important to be open to suggestions made by their cooperating teachers, and that doing so showed respect for their experience and expertise.

The student teachers showed initiative whenever possible and this was appreciated by the cooperating teachers. In turn, the cooperating teachers felt that they could put more trust in their student teachers, usually in the form of greater teaching responsibilities. This was noted as highly important by the student teachers, and was also instrumental in establishing a deeper connection with one another.

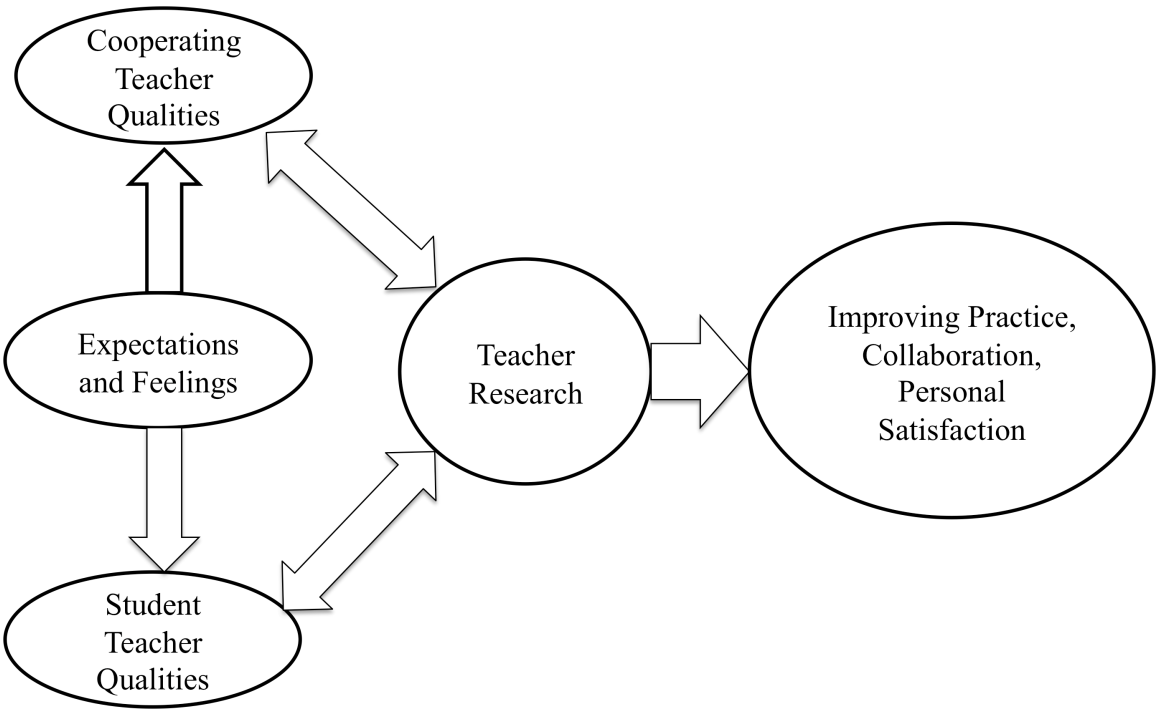
The teacher research project that was implemented by each of the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs resulted in all parties feeling, to varying degrees, that their practice

of teaching improved, their collaboration with one another was greater, and a greater sense of personal satisfaction. In many cases, the act of participating in the teacher research project served to strengthen the positive qualities that embody both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. However, it should be noted that the success of the teacher research projects in this study was likely influenced by the qualities and insights that each cooperating teacher/student teacher pair brought to the projects.

In addition to providing opportunities for building stronger relationships during the important student teaching experience, the teacher research project resulted in qualities that the participants in this study talked about as impacting their future practice. To this end, it appears that participating in a collaborative teacher research study may have both immediate and long-term effects.

An awareness of the complex nature of these relationships will serve to better understand the multiple influences that enter into the student teaching experience, and the impact that a collaborative teacher research project might have on the current and future instructional practices for both cooperating teachers and student teachers. A model of these relationships is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Model of Thematic Relationships



Summary

The findings from this research study suggest that there are multiple factors working together that determine the eventual success of the student teaching experience and the relationship formed between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The themes that emerged from this study are as follows:

1. Both cooperating teachers and student teachers come into the experience with a defined set of expectations and feelings.
2. Cooperating teachers and student teachers embody specific qualities, many of which are informed by the aforementioned expectations and feelings. The cooperating teachers and student teachers alike hope for a personal connection with one another,

and the qualities that were valued as most important were ones that would enable such a relationship, such as trust and confidence.

3. Participating in a teacher research study was seen to improve practice, increase collaboration, and result in both the cooperating teachers and student teachers feeling a sense of personal satisfaction in their teaching.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Purpose and Problems

With the intent of better understanding the mentoring relationship during the music student teaching experience, the purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the impact of a collaborative teacher research project on the development of the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The following research questions were designed to guide this investigation:

1. How do cooperating teachers describe the impact of the teacher research project on their relationship with the student teacher (and vice versa)?

2. Do cooperating teachers believe the teacher research project makes them a better mentor? If so, how?

3. What other factors contribute to the development of a meaningful mentoring experience between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher?

4. Does participating in a teacher research project impact the cooperating and student teachers' sense of empowerment?

Secondary research questions include:

a) Are all aspects of the teacher research project approached collaboratively? If not, how was the division of work between the cooperating teacher and student teacher determined?

b) What do both the cooperating and student teachers report as the most difficult component of the collaborative teacher research project?

c) Does participation in a teacher research project impact the cooperating and student teachers' current and future instructional practices? If so, how?

Method

This research project was a collective case study, and as such, multiple forms of data were collected. Interviews, both individual (see Appendix B) and focus group (see Appendix C), as well as in-depth field observations of the participants in their natural setting were the main sources of data, while informal conversations, field notes, and journals provided further insight. Trustworthiness was established through data triangulation, member checks, and peer review, and met the standard set for qualitative research (Creswell, 1998).

As soon as was possible following the individual and focus group interviews, the interviews were transcribed (See Appendix D). These transcriptions, as well as the field notes taken during the observations of the participants, were coded and analyzed. Following the analysis, initial codes were determined and themes began to surface. As familiarity with the data increased, a final code list was established (see Appendix F). Four themes emerged from the data: (1) Expectations and Feelings, (2) Cooperating Teacher Qualities, (3) Student Teacher Qualities, and (4) Teacher Research. The final theme, Teacher Research, included three large sub-themes: Improving Practice, Collaboration, and Personal Satisfaction. The themes were, in many ways, connected to and informed by one another. I proposed a model (see Chapter 6) to further illustrate the relationships among the themes. In this chapter, conclusions, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Conclusions

Cooperating teachers are informed in their practice by their own student teaching experience and by their relationship with previous student teachers.

While none of the cooperating teachers in this study received any formal training to serve in this capacity, they all felt capable in doing so. When asked to elaborate further on what most informed their practice, cooperating teachers cited their own student teaching experience, even when this experience had occurred decades earlier. This finding supports existing research (Agee, 1996; Draves, 2008; and Hawkey, 1997). The cooperating teachers were informed by both positive and negative student teaching experiences. Positive experiences provided the cooperating teachers with a model for designing the experience for their student teachers. A negative experience had by the cooperating teachers served to inform the choices made in an effort to provide the student teachers with a better experience.

The cooperating teachers in this study took their position seriously, and seemed to understand the influence they had on their student teachers. Given this, they sought to provide their student teachers with the best possible situation. This was true even for the cooperating teachers in this study who did not have a positive experience upon which to refer. However, as is posited in Draves (2008), this cannot be assumed to be the case for every student teacher-turned-cooperating teacher. It is possible that cooperating teachers who had a less than optimal student teaching experience may unknowingly recreate a similar experience for their current student teachers.

The cooperating teachers were also informed by their relationship with their previous student teachers. If relationships had been positive, it was likely that the cooperating teachers would continue to mentor in a similar fashion. Less than positive or negative experiences

resulted in the cooperating teachers reflecting upon the situation and pondering the reasons for the outcome. Reflection is a positive attribute for educators, and served the cooperating teachers in this study well. However, cooperating teachers who are less aware may be adversely impacted by negative relationships, and this might affect their ability to benefit their future student teachers.

Cooperating teachers and student teachers alike desired a personal connection with one another that would allow for an authentic, comfortable relationship.

Cooperating teachers universally hoped for a close relationship with their student teachers, and felt that the student teaching experience would suffer if this connection were not present. Cooperating teachers identified specific qualities that were believed to foster this relationship, such as being welcoming to their student teachers and accepting of any differences that might be present.

Also, the cooperating teachers in this study all spoke to the importance of sharing all the teaching responsibilities of their classroom, which appeared to have positively impacted the ability to create a close relationship. The apparent lack of a hidden curriculum (Krueger, 1985) allowed the student teachers to participate fully in the student teaching experience, and the student teachers often spoke to how appreciative they were in being allowed to assume all teaching responsibilities. Further, the student teachers felt that when the cooperating teachers shared the responsibilities, it showed a sense of trust and confidence. This trust and confidence appeared to foster the positive relationship that was desired by both parties.

Draves (2008) also found the cooperating teachers desired a close relationship with their student teachers. Some of the student teachers in her study split their student teaching

experience between two cooperating teachers. This issue of a split placement adversely affected the ability to form a personal connection between the cooperating teacher and student teacher, as less time was spent with one another. The cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs who spent the entire placement together developed closer ties with one another. All three of the student teachers in this study spent their entire time with one cooperating teacher. This seems to have positively impacted the ability to forge a personal connection between the two parties.

While the student teachers hoped for and eventually developed a personal connection with their cooperating teachers, they initially entered into the experience expecting a more professional relationship. This seems to have stemmed from the expectation that the cooperating teachers would be their superiors. While the cooperating teachers did evaluate their student teachers, both parties felt that the evaluation was a better representation of the student teachers' abilities to teach as a result of a closer relationship between one another.

Student teachers exhibit specific qualities that shape their experience. The cooperating teachers appreciated these qualities in their student teachers, and as a result, were more willing to share teaching responsibilities. This, in turn, resulted in a more positive and educative student teaching experience.

The student teachers in this study entered into their placements with expectations that student teaching would be a seminal experience in their development as a teacher, and that their cooperating teachers would serve as important role models. Perhaps because of the expectations, the student teachers felt strongly that certain qualities should be present that would help to foster the desired personal connection between themselves and their cooperating teachers.

The student teachers felt that it was important to be open with their cooperating teachers. This quality manifested itself in their willingness to trust in what was being required of them by their cooperating teachers, whether that meant being asked to spend time observing earlier in their experience, or being encouraged to work on a specific aspect of their teaching that was identified as needing improvement. The student teachers also felt that this was a reflection of their respect for their cooperating teachers' knowledge and experience.

The student teachers spoke to the importance of taking initiative in their teaching. This included making contact with their cooperating teachers and when possible, spending time in their placement prior to the beginning of their experience. The cooperating teachers recognized and were appreciate of this quality in their student teachers, and the presence of this quality may have resulted in the cooperating teachers' willingness to share more responsibility with their student teachers.

These findings are similar to Draves (2008), who also discovered that personal and professional characteristics, such as those discussed above, were important to the quality of the student teaching experience. Similar to Draves, while the cooperating teachers valued these qualities, it appears they expected them to be present in their student teachers prior to student teaching. She posited that the cooperating teachers might believe that the university is responsible for instilling these qualities in the student teachers prior to this point in their education. In the conversations with the student teachers in this study, it does seem that they believe the onus to be on them to have these qualities, and that they must take at least partial responsibility for success in their student teaching placement.

Participating in a teacher research project provided opportunities for both the cooperating teachers and student teachers to improve their practice.

The collaborative teacher research project in this study resulted in each party feeling that their teaching skills improved. The cooperating teachers and student teachers alike discussed the use of more creative teaching strategies that were developed as a result of this project. It appeared that this project was the impetus for the cooperating teachers to incorporate different teaching strategies, and in some cases even alter the curricular choices made in their classrooms. All of the teachers appreciated that this project resulted in an increased focus on the process of how teaching and learning are approached in their classroom.

This project provided increased opportunities for the student teachers to take initiative. This is notable as both the student teachers and cooperating teachers felt that taking initiative was important for the student teachers' growth. It appeared that the student teachers took initiative in all aspects of the project, from the gathering of the related research to the implementation of the methodology. As a result of the increased initiative on the student teachers' part, the cooperating teachers felt that they became better mentors.

Both the cooperating teacher and student teachers felt that there was an increased knowledge of the student as a result of this project. They spoke about having a better understanding of their students' skills, interests, and learning styles, and felt that this informed their teaching in a positive manner.

The teacher research project resulted in increased opportunities for collaboration between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. This collaboration led to a relationship that was more collegial in nature.

Although all of the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs already enjoyed a positive relationship prior to the implementation of the teacher research project, all pairs reported an increased collaboration between one another as a result of this project. Moreover, both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers reported that they were excited to collaborate with one another, and enjoyed the process.

This project helped the cooperating teachers develop a deeper understanding of their student teachers. Also, the student teachers felt that this project allowed for their cooperating teachers to see other aspects of their professional personality that had not yet manifested during the student teaching experience. The student teachers appreciated the opportunity to take initiative on certain aspects of this project, and felt that this resulted in a more collegial relationship. This belief was echoed by the cooperating teachers, who reported thinking of their student teachers more as colleagues during this project. However, it is possible that this increased sense of collegiality was also due to the timing of this project. In all three cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs, the project was implemented during the latter stages of the student teaching experience. Nonetheless, the student teachers felt that this project was important for the development of their professional relationship with their cooperating teachers.

Implications for Practice

All of the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs in this study enjoyed a positive relationship that resulted in a meaningful and educative experience for both parties. The participation in a teacher research project served to strengthen the relationship between the cooperating teachers and student teachers as well as providing opportunities for improved practice. This study, then, provided insights for the music student teaching experience as well as

an understanding of the ways in which this relationship might be strengthened. Additionally, the teacher research project provided opportunities for the cooperating teachers and students teachers to improve their practice. As a result of these findings, the following implications for future practice are suggested.

1. The university personnel responsible for placing student teachers need to have a thorough understanding of the cooperating teachers with whom they are working. This knowledge will help to ensure a positive and meaningful experience for both the cooperating teachers and student teachers.

It is important that the universities work closely with the schools in order to identify potential cooperating teachers. When considering potential cooperating teachers, specific criteria need to be in place to ensure that people are being chosen based on more than their willingness to serve in this capacity (Berthelotte, 2007). The experiences of former student teachers as well as the information reported by those responsible for observing the student teachers should be carefully considered in determining whether a specific cooperating teacher should continue to mentor future student teachers. This is especially important given the influence that the cooperating teacher has on the student teachers, as was indicated by the student teachers in this study.

A thorough understanding of potential cooperating teachers, as well as a similar understanding of the student teachers, will assist university personnel in making a good match between the two parties. The importance of this match has been well documented by researchers (Krueger, 1985; Draves, 2008; Schmidt, 1994a; Schmidt, 1994b; Schmidt & Knowles, 1994).

Knowledge of the specific qualities that each person brings to the experience will be helpful in determining whether a potential connection might be made.

2. Student teacher qualities that were found to be important and beneficial during the student teaching experience should be fostered throughout various coursework. Additionally, an understanding of the expectations of the music student teaching experience should be made explicit during the course of the preparatory program.

It is important that music teacher educators foster the necessary qualities that have been identified for the music student teacher to find success during the student teaching experience. Many of the qualities were more personal in nature, and it is therefore both possible and understandable that these qualities were not the focus of any specific coursework. Additionally, Draves (2008) suggested that the focus in many music teacher preparation programs is on musical and educational characteristics, and less so on the personal and professional qualities that appear to be so important. It also appears that these personal qualities helped to define the 'teacher presence' that was so valued by the cooperating teachers in this study.

It is possible that the specific qualities could be nurtured through conversations with the students in their methods classes as well as other educational coursework. Draves (2008) also suggested that music education faculty members could serve as "gatekeepers through barriers like interviews, recommendations, and juries" (p. 216) in an effort to ensure that preservice music teachers are developing the necessary qualities.

3. Cooperating teachers and student teachers should communicate and collaborate with one another on a scheduled basis prior to the beginning of the student teaching experience.

It is notable that all of the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs in this study had positive relationships prior to the implementation of the teacher research project. Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers exhibited certain qualities that made this relationship possible, including the initiative that was shown on the part of the student teachers to make contact with their cooperating teachers prior to the beginning of their placement. The cooperating teachers appreciated this quality, and recognized it as a factor in their successful relationship with their student teachers. Claire was especially impressed that Emma made it a priority to spend meaningful time with both her and the students through the summer band camp. While Amelia and Thomas did not spend as much time with their cooperating teachers as Emma did with hers, they nonetheless established contact with Kathy and Suzanne.

An important aspect of the student teaching program in this particular institution is that the full-time student teaching experience does not begin until the fifth week of the semester, resulting in a minimum of ten weeks of student teaching. During the first four weeks, the student teachers are enrolled in specific education courses, and are also required to spend each Wednesday with their cooperating teachers in their placement setting. Perhaps this arrangement, in combination with the initiative shown on the part of the student teachers, may help the development of the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. Draves (2008) stated that, "by accelerating the formation of the relationship, power sharing may be greater over the course of the student teaching experience, result in greater teacher identity formation in the student teacher, and overall be more beneficial to both parties" (p. 213). This appeared to be the case with the cooperating teacher/student teacher pairs in this study.

4. A collaborative teacher research project undertaken by the cooperating teacher and the student teacher provides opportunities for increased collaboration between one another as well as meaningful professional development for the individual parties.

The cooperating teachers and student teachers in the study reported both increased opportunities to work with one another as well as an excitement about the collaboration. This is notable given that these pairs already reported having a positive relationship. Participating in a collaborative teacher research project might be especially worthwhile for cooperating teachers and student teachers that are not connecting on a personal level, in that it may provide a common vision for the pairs that might then lead to increased collaboration and meaningful discourse. The cooperating teachers in this study, when referencing former student teachers with whom they did not share a close relationship, speculated that a teacher research project might have dramatically altered the student teaching experience in a positive manner.

The teacher research project also served to provide meaningful professional development for all participants, and most notably for the cooperating teachers. Perhaps the act of a collaborative teacher research project could result in the same benefits as professional development partnerships (PDP). Cited as a model of field experience for preservice music teachers (Conkling & Henry, 1999), PDPs focus on the development of the preservice music teacher, the professional development of the practicing music teacher, and continued inquiry into teaching and learning to improve music education practice. Additionally, PDPs encourages meaningful discourse between music educators with varying degrees of experience. Conkling and Henry also state that PDPs require subject matter expertise, collaboration, ongoing inquiry and learning, and reflection as necessary components (p. 5).

It appears that many of the same components, both in the creation and in the outcome, are found in collaborative teacher research. Both the cooperating teachers and student teachers in this study cited individual professional development as a result of their involvement in the teacher research project. Also, the intention of a teacher research project is to focus on an area that needs improvement in one's classroom, therefore fostering the continued inquiry into teaching and learning as a means of improving practice. Finally, the participants all reported increased reflection, both individually and through discourse with one another. Certainly an added benefit of PDPs is the increased knowledge that university personnel have by working closely with the cooperating teachers. While the university personnel do not necessarily need to be actively involved in the implementation of the teacher research project, it is possible that university personnel might see different facets of the cooperating teachers' personalities as well as strengths and weaknesses as a result of the project. This knowledge may prove useful in the future determination of cooperating teacher/student teacher matches.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study illuminates the experiences and perspectives of three cooperating teacher/student pairs as they collaborated on a teacher research project. The findings of this study are not generalizable, and therefore, do not represent the viewpoints of all cooperating teachers or student teachers. While the findings do add to the existing research regarding the relationship between cooperating teachers and their student teachers, there remains much to be learned about this important relationship and experience.

It is notable that the cooperating teachers in this study continued to be influenced by their own student teaching experience. This was true even for Claire and Suzanne, both of whom had

completed their student teaching over 20 years prior to this study. What makes this finding even more interesting is that the student teaching experience continues to impact the current practice of these cooperating teachers, despite having served as a cooperating teacher many times over. Draves (2008) also discussed the persistent influence of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers in her study. Given the immediate and long-term impact that student teaching has on the profession, it is imperative that researchers continue to investigate this important phenomenon.

The cooperating teachers in this study were also impacted by their own socialization into the profession. Claire recalled wanting a relationship with an experienced teacher that would have "provided some socialization into the grown-up world." While research into mentoring is becoming more prevalent, there still exists a lack of knowledge concerning ways in which to improve the mentoring experience for new music teachers. Given the findings of the current study, it is reasonable to suggest that a collaborative teacher research project undertaken by the mentor (more experienced music teacher) and mentee (beginning music teacher) would provide valuable insight. It would be intriguing to compare the findings to the current study, and ascertain whether the teacher research project resulted in a similar, highly collaborative relationship. This relationship, along with the other possible results (including improved practice and personal satisfaction) could be important findings for the profession.

The cooperating teachers in the current study cited a high level of enjoyment as a result of implementing the teacher research project. Additionally, they were pleased that the study encouraged the development of new and more creative teaching strategies, and allowed for a deeper knowledge of their students. Based on their positive feelings regarding these specific findings, researchers should continue to look into meaningful opportunities for professional

development, both for cooperating teachers and other practicing teachers. Perhaps these teachers valued the professional development this project provided because they could do it in the context of their own classroom. Suzanne emphasized this point by saying it was "so do-able." Further, Robinson (2005) suggested that the very act of serving as a cooperating teacher allows the inservice teacher to grow professionally without having to leave the classroom. Clearly, practicing teachers yearn to grow and improve their teaching, and researchers need to investigate more ways for this development to occur.

Cooperating teachers should be provided opportunities to engage and interact with one another. After the focus group interview for the cooperating teachers had officially ended, Kathy needed to leave to attend to her young family. While Claire also had a commitment that evening, she did not immediately have to leave, and Claire, Suzanne, and I continued to talk for approximately 30 minutes. However, it was mainly Claire and Suzanne who were talking, and they shared stories about teaching in the same geographical area for many years, stories about serving as a cooperating teacher, and stories about shared acquaintances. I wrote in the field notes I was keeping, in addition to the recorded interview, that it was so nice to see Claire and Suzanne talking about teaching and their similar journeys as a teacher. It seems obvious that experienced teachers, and especially those serving as a cooperating teacher, should continue to be the subject of investigation for researchers.

Draves (2008) posited that the willingness for cooperating teachers to power share the various aspects of their classroom had a notable impact on their student teachers' experience. The student teachers in the current study benefited greatly from their cooperating teachers' willingness to approach the classroom from a team-teaching perspective, one that was to the far right on the power sharing continuum (Draves, p. 146). Further investigation on the power

sharing practices of cooperating teachers and the impact this has on the student teaching experience is warranted. It is also important for researchers to provide continued understanding of the hidden curriculum (Krueger, 1985) and its effect on the student teaching experience.

A follow-up study of the participants in the current study would be interesting to investigate. The student teachers in this study all had remarkably positive experiences that were enhanced by the implementation of the teacher research project. The cooperating teachers in this study were most notably impacted by the teacher research project and its perceived ability to improve their practice. Also, the cooperating teachers were excited and empowered by this project and felt strongly that they would continue to approach future problems in their classroom through the implementation of a teacher research project. The student teachers felt similarly, but also cited that they would feel more comfortable implementing the project in a collaborative manner. It would be interesting and important to investigate whether the teachers in this study show continued professional growth as a result of their participation in this study.

Teacher research projects have been found to increase instructional efficacy, increase teacher empowerment, and put teachers in control of their own professional development (Farrell, 2003; O'Connor et al., 2006), findings that are supported by the current study. However, it is important to note that the cooperating teachers and student teachers in the current study were willing to participate in the teacher research projects. Music teacher educators must continue to nurture these qualities in their student teachers, as well as find meaningful ways to support the cooperating teachers who play an important role in the development of the new teachers. The teachers in this study appreciated the opportunity to be heard; it is likely that by continuing to listen to these voices that researchers can continue to find ways to improve upon the preparation of our future colleagues.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent Document

You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Study Title: Mentoring through Collaboration: Investigating the Impact of an Action Research Project on the Development of the Cooperating Teacher/Student Teacher Relationship

Primary Investigator: Mitchell Robinson, Ph. D.; Associate Professor in Music Education
Secondary Investigator: Julie Hagen, Ph. D. Candidate in Music Education
Department and Institution: College of Music, Michigan State University

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Mitchell Robinson at 517-355-7555, or email mrob@msu.edu, or regular mail at: 208 MPB, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have any questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this research study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, FAX 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu, or regular mail at: 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:
You are being asked to participate in a research study investigating the impact of an action research project on the development of the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a student teacher or a cooperating teacher. From this study, the researcher hopes to gain insight into how an action research project impacts the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. Your participation in this study will take approximately six weeks.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO:
The researcher will conduct two individual interviews with the participants to gather information as it pertains to the relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. Additionally, the researcher will gather data through two focus group interviews: one with the cooperating teachers and one with the student teachers. Finally, participants will be asked to journal about their experiences by responding to prompts by the researcher. The researcher will share all findings with the participants.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

It is possible that your professional practice may benefit from participating in the action research project that is part of this study. Additionally, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of successful elements of mentoring and may benefit future new teachers.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS:
There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:
Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Names of the participants will be changed and the school-settings will be generalized. The secondary investigator will be the only person who will have access to the names of the participants. The de-identified data will be stored (for a minimum of three years as required by law following completion of the study) in a locked filing cabinet in a private office at Michigan State University. Only the researchers and the Institutional Review Board of Michigan State University will have access to the data. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous. The participants will be digitally recorded so the researcher can accurately transcribe in interviews. After the interviews have been transcribed and any identifiable information has been generalized, the recorded interview will be deleted. Please respond appropriately to the statement below:

I agree to allow the interviews to be digitally recorded.
___Yes ___ No Initials_____

6. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may also refuse to answer any particular question without penalty.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name:

Participant's signature:

Date:

Appendix B

Teacher Research Guidelines

- Identifying the Problem: What are you interested in changing/improving about your classroom?

- Review of Literature: What have researchers already learned about the topic you're investigating?

- Design and Methodology: How will you implement the project? Is it directed at all of your students or just a select few (i.e. one class, one section, one grade level)? Over how many lessons will the project be implemented, and will it take the entire lesson or just part of the class period?

- How will you measure the effectiveness of your project? This could be done in multiple ways. For example, you might design a rubric to assess the students' skills before the project begins and then again when the project has finished. Alternatively, you might talk to a certain group of students to assess their thoughts about the skill set you chose to address.

- Discussion: Researchers are encouraged to discuss the process and findings of their projects so that all can learn from their experience. Would you be willing to disseminate the information you discover during this project? This could be done during an inservice in your district with other music teachers or even at state conferences designed for music teachers.

Appendix C

Individual Interview Questions

How do cooperating teachers describe the impact of the action research project on their relationship with the student teacher (and vice versa)?

Do cooperating teachers believe the action research project makes them a better mentor? If so, how?

What other factors contribute to the development of a meaningful mentoring experience between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher?

How does participating in an action research project influence/impact the teachers' sense of empowerment?

What aspects of the action research project are approached collaboratively? What was the division of work and responsibilities between the cooperating teacher and student teacher?

What do teachers report as the most difficult component of the collaborative action research project? What was the most beneficial component?

How does participation in an action research project impact teachers' current and future instructional practices?

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Questions

What was the expectation of the relationship between the mentor/mentee? What was the reality of that relationship?

Has the progression of the mentor/mentee relationship affected your teaching style? If so, how?

Do you feel that this is a relationship that should continue? How do you feel the mentoring experience should continue for new teachers?

If you could change the mentoring experience in any way, how would you do it and why?

Appendix E

Sample Transcription

Interview: Kathy Kjelland

JH: How you would describe the impact of this project on your relationship with Lenora?

> KK: Well, it's been good. It hasn't changed much of our relationship. It has given her more responsibilities in a lot of way, because she did a lot of the research about the methods we would use. I already had some of them here, but she's spent more time outside of the classroom on it than I have.

JH: So, do you think it's helped her growth?

> KK: I think so. It helped her apply some of what we have worked on. I know she went to an ACDA conference, and she chose some of the things she went to because they were about middle school voices. It helped focus the conference for her, which makes a difference when you go to those because there is so much going on.

JH: So, if her growth has been affected by it, has that helped you relate to her more professionally?

> KK: I think it will, though we've just started this project. We're really going to go through things together this week and begin applying things. We've been working together on things, such as when we were testing the boys yesterday it was more of a dual approach, although we've worked on the programs together. But we'll be working together a lot on this, which I think will be really nice.

JH: Cool, and that kind of leads right into the next question. Do you think that this project helps to make you a better mentor?

> KK: Yeah. I think so, especially because I can respond to a lot of the ideas she's brought (back from the conference, for example). I can tell her, "This will work for this group, but not for this one." It's helped me to remember a lot of things that I know I *didn't* know before I began teaching. You don't always remember to share everything that you've learned, because you're thinking about teaching, or what class is coming in next, especially with my schedule this year. Sometimes you're just trying to prepare for what's coming next in the day rather than, "Here are the overall things you need to know about teaching." So, it's been helpful to streamline my thinking. To share some of the good information I've learned.

JH: I think that's so important, especially, like you said, with your schedule. There is very little downtime, and so much planning that's required, so I imagine it doesn't leave a lot of time for

Appendix F

Final Code List

Expectations and Feelings

Cooperating Teacher

- Hopes for personality match
- Wants to feel comfortable
- Wants to improve upon past experience (both as cooperating teacher & student teacher)
- Wants personal relationships
- Hopes student teacher has teacher presence

Student Teacher

- Eagerness
- Apprehensive
- Expects cooperating teacher to be superior
- Expects professional relationship
- Hopes for personal relationship

Cooperating Teacher Qualities

- Highly influential
- Leadership
- Guidance
- Welcoming attitude
- Accepts differences
- Intuitive
- Positive energy
- Gives feedback
- Has confidence in student teacher
- Assists student teacher
- Builds the strengths of student teacher
- Encourages reflection
- Appreciates student teacher
- Has trust in student teacher
- Values opinions of student teacher
- Is interested in student teacher
- Acknowledges growth of student teacher

Student Teacher Qualities

- Dedicated
- Inquisitive
- Prepared
- Shows initiative
- Is interested in program

- Is open
- Trusting
- Responsible
- Appreciative of cooperating teacher experience

Teacher Research

Improving Practice

- Improved teaching
- Improved student skill
- Resulted in more teaching strategies
- Created opportunities for reflection
- Provided focus for student teacher
- Increased focus for cooperating teacher
- Valid
- Increased knowledge of students
- Student teacher teaching style more relaxed
- Awareness of personal limitations
- Assessment more natural
- Student teacher applied knowledge
- Process v. product
- Interest in student learning
- Desire to improve
- Interest in success of project
- Creates teaching opportunities for student teaching

Collaboration

- Creates common vision
- Led to deeper understanding of each other
- Collaboration
- Equality
- Eagerness to collaborate
- Good feedback
- Communication
- Increased ability to mentor

Personal Satisfaction

- Inspirational
- Aligned with personal goals
- Excitement about teaching
- Excitement about project
- Eagerness to collaborate
- Personally satisfied
- Process v. product

Other

- Has multiple layers

- Relatively easy
- Time management concerns

Other
- First impressions
- Communication with other student teachers

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