

THE STORY OF RELATIONSHIP: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO MENTOR TEACHER
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR MENTORING EXPERIENCES WITH
TEACHING CANDIDATES

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

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by

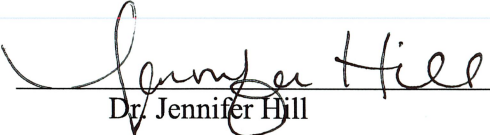
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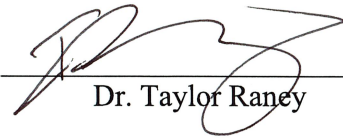
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Major Professor: Jennifer Coles Hill, Ed.D.

AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Serena Hicks, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a major in Educational Leadership and titled “The Story of Relationship: A Narrative Inquiry into Mentor Teacher Perceptions of Their Mentoring Experiences with Teaching Candidates” has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates given below, is now granted to submit final copies.

Committee Chair  Date 4-6-18
Dr. Jennifer Hill

Committee Members  Date 4-6-18
Dr. Taylor Raney

 Date 4-6-18
Dr. Julianne A. Wenner

Doctoral Program Director  Date 4-6-18
Dr. Heidi Curtis

College of Adult and Graduate Studies, Dean  Date 4/19/18
Dr. Michael Pitts

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DEDICATION

To my sister, Shawn, whose relentless presence in my life teaches me the power of relationship and the joy in the story it tells.

ABSTRACT

The relationship between pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers has long been defined by roles that mentor teachers play in the relationship. Research indicates that mentor teachers evolve into a variety of roles, from evaluator to critical friend, but we understand very little about how the relationship develops into these different forms, or how to improve relationship development. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore how a mentor teacher experiences the relationship with a pre-service teacher candidate and to compare the relationship to the elements of a story. Data was collected through written story, interviews, and visual representations of the data. The goal of the study was to understand how mentor teachers experienced their relationship with a pre-service teacher candidate through the lens of a common Narrative Story Arc. Data was analyzed using codes determined by the Narrative Story Arc and through emergent codes present in narrative surveys and semi-structured interviews. Themes and codes were then compared between methods and participants, then recoded to explore themes in the data to demonstrate connections between codes.

Findings from this research reveal the following: 1. Mentor teachers experience a variety of emotions in their relationship that shift based on the alignment between their expectations and reality; they experience the relationship through collaboration, a desire to help, and concern for their students. 2. Data demonstrates a connection between the teaching candidate's perceived personality traits and abilities in pedagogy or management and the mentor teacher's willingness to engage in a positive relationship. 3. Mentor teachers provide access or withhold access to teaching and learning in the practicum placement based in part on the relationship that develops. 4. Mentor teachers conceptualize their relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story, indicating that the beginning of the story determines access to teaching; the events of the story

open or close access to learning and the way in which conflict resolves. Specifically, this study informs teacher preparation programs and stakeholders how to mitigate disruptive emotions, outlines steps to communicate expectations, and confirms the importance of attending to the beginning of the relationship between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate.

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Stories are not some kind of a “narrative hook” to enter the pillared temples of principles and points. Stories are the temple itself. –Leonard Sweet

In these reconstructive processes, the story is the most powerful and illuminating education force we have. –Katherine Dunlap Cather

Chapter I

Introduction

Mrs. Gott perched on a stool in the back of her Spanish 8 classroom, holding a small white board and a black marker. Ms. Pratt, a pre-service teacher from a local university, walked through the aisles, asking students to finish their bell ringer activity. A few minutes later, Ms. Pratt walked to the front of the room and gave directions in Spanish for the next lesson segment. From the back of the room, Mrs. Gott wrote: “Again. Slower.” and held the board up for Ms. Pratt to read. The student teacher nodded, almost imperceptibly, then repeated the directions she had just given, slowly, with more expression, and additional pauses. “Comprende?” the student teacher asked the class. Many students nodded, but her mentor, still sitting on the stool, shook her head, “No.” The pre-service teacher immediately asked students to participate in a quick survey where they used a thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or thumb-to-the-side, indicating the degree to which they understood the directions. Some thumbs went up; some turned to the side, and a few pointed decidedly down. Still from the back of the room, Mrs. Gott gestured toward posters with vocabulary words and pictures, and Ms. Pratt walked toward them, using images to reteach the words necessary to understand the directions.

While relationships between mentor and teacher candidate in the pre-service context have primarily been evaluative and managerial, recent shifts promote a more collaborative relationship that includes the informal observation and feedback seen in Mrs. Gott and Ms. Pratt’s classroom (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Long, Fish, Kuhn, & Sowders, 2010). This shifting perspective orients the mentor as a critical friend and thinking partner, requiring interpersonal and communication skills (Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Keller & Pryce, 2010). Mrs. Gott and Ms. Pratt illustrate the shift. The professional relationship developing between mentor and teacher

candidate impacts their experiences and ability to increase student learning, and partially determine Ms. Pratt's success as a novice teacher (Cuenca, 2011; Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012). A difficult relationship has an impact on the practicum experience, while a positive relationship enables progress and increases a new teacher's sense of autonomy (Rhoads, Samkoff, & Weber, 2013; Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2012; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). Developing a professional relationship between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates is also necessary to respond to the needs of 21st century learners (Poole & Russell, 2015). As learning needs increase and become more complex, educators must be able to articulate the teaching process in order to transfer skills to novice teachers (Andreotti, Major, & Giroux, 2009; Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Knight, 2013). Mentors provide access to the rituals of teaching, which makes this transfer possible, and helps build legitimacy for their teacher candidates by allowing access to learning and guiding them through the challenges within a professional, supportive relationship (Ali, Othman, & Karim, 2014; Cuenca, 2011; Sheridan, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The state of the relationship between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates often includes an inability to communicate, miscommunication, imbalanced relationship expectations, and a fear of transparency (Harris, 2013; Hoffman, 2015; Russell & Russell, 2001). This alters the direction of a professional relationship, impacting mentor teachers, their teaching candidates, and potentially the students in the classroom. To successfully train teachers, it is necessary to identify elements and events which point to the development of a professional relationship, including the knowledge and skills needed for effective dialogue (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Smith, 2001). In Ms. Pratt and Mrs. Gott's classroom, the working relationship is centered on student learning and strong classroom leadership, which may be an indicator of a

successful relationship (Edwards-Groves, 2012; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Thorsen, 2016).

Historically, researchers study relationships as a way to inform policy or define mentor roles, but have not used data to develop necessary relationship skills or to study the experience of mentor or teacher candidate (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Hochberg, Desimone, Porter, Polikoff, Schwartz, & Johnson, 2015). In order to maximize the student teaching experience, which in turn impacts student learning in the K-12 classroom, it is important to learn how the relationship develops between a mentor and teacher candidate, beginning with how the mentor experiences the relationship.

Developing a professional, working relationship is a prerequisite to successful student teaching, and the absence of a dialogue-rich relationship creates barriers to collaboration that may sabotage the student teaching experience (Barrera, Braley, & Slate, 2008; Hoffman et al., 2015; O'Dea & Peralta, 2011). For example, if pre-service teachers do not feel comfortable approaching their mentors with questions or clarifications, dangerous assumptions cast toxicity into the partnership (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Keller & Pryce, 2010). Likewise, when mentor teachers do not take the time to plan with their teacher candidates, explain observation notes, or trust a new process in the classroom, the relationship becomes imbalanced (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Korver & Tillema, 2014; Long et al., 2010; McMillan, 2012). The relationship between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates has included both evaluative and interpersonal elements, which research shows are both necessary, but studies do not explain the experience and *process* for achieving a professional relationship (Barrera et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Hochberg et al., 2015; Schein, 2011).

A complex, dynamic, multi-faced relationship between mentors and teacher candidates develops over time into agreement and acceptance as pairs learn to trust each other and accept

different opinions (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Lesham, 2012). Current studies indicate the types of relationships that develop and which are essential to a successful experience and student learning, but research does not detail how that relationship develops, how mentors experience the relationship, nor how to intervene when the relationship is not developing (Ali et al., 2014; Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Leshem, 2012; Long et al., 2010; McMillan, 2012; Rhoads et al., 2013).

The purpose of this research is to explore how mentor teachers experience the mentoring relationship through comparing it to a traditional story arc. Using Freytag's Narrative Story Arc as a theoretical framework for understanding, this study deconstructs events in the experience of the relationship by comparing it to a story, allowing the researcher to reconstruct the relationship to better explain its development (Bal, 1997; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Bruner, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Freytag, 1895). Teacher preparation programs need a means to guide professional relationships between mentor teachers and their teaching candidates (Leshem, 2012; McMillan, 2012). There is currently no context from which to build the relationship, no narrative to follow. Understanding the nuances of a complex relationship requires a frame of reference where none exists: This study provides a genre for understanding relationship as a story (Bruner, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Creswell, 2015; Ravnich & Riggan, 2017; Riessman, 2005). Additionally, this study uncovers the series of events experienced by mentor teachers within the context of the mentor-teacher candidate relationship, drawing parallels between a narrative story arc and the mentoring experience.

Background

Teacher preparation programs evolve based on a combination of public opinion, policy changes, current research, and trends in the field (Ashby, 2012; Bagley, 1919; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Education Commission of the States, 2014; Labaree, 2004; Zeichner, 2012). Twenty-first century skills outlined by the National Education Association, as well as state reports calling for change, impact curricula for teacher preparation and practice (Poole & Russell, 2015). The movement to reform teacher education programs also stems from social and political pressures to address cultural diversities, rural and urban areas, and technical, vocational, and career training (Ashby, 2012; Brady, 2007; Fishman, 2015; Zeichner, 2012). This results in a complex process for teacher preparation, including courses and practicum in content-area literacy, methods, and class management (The Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium, 2013; Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008). Although standards exist for the quality of beginning teachers, the standards for field experiences and mentor teacher training are inconsistent (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Education Commission of the States, 2014; Hammond, 2010; National Council of Teacher Quality, 2011).

Clinical experiences for student teachers vary widely, and do not include consistent guidelines for building a professional relationship between mentor teachers and teacher candidates learning in their classrooms (Council for Accreditation of Teacher Preparation, 2015; The Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium, 2016; The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008). Student teaching field experiences are a significant aspect of teacher preparation, and provide a unique opportunity for developing collaborative inquiry and critical reflection essential for beginning teachers (Herzog, Grmek, & Cagran, 2012; Richter, Kunter, Ludtke, Klusmann, Anders, & Baumert, 2013; Russell & Russell, 2011). The field

experience exposes teacher candidates to a variety of teaching scenarios that influence beginning teachers, allowing them to address the gap between theory and practice, thereby increasing confidence, and promoting motivation for remaining in the profession (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011; Hemmerich, Hoepner, & Samelson, 2015; Wood & Turner, 2014). Teaching candidates who experience a practicum which connects to their coursework also note an improvement in professionalism, communication, teamwork skills, and agency in the classroom (Cuenca, 2011; Hemmerich et al., 2015; Sprague & Percy, 2014). Overall, the student teacher experience and a positive mentoring relationship primarily determines how effective a teacher will be in their first years in the classroom (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017; He, 2009; Richter, Kunter, Ludtke, Klusman, Anders, & Baumert, 2013; Russell & Russell, 2011).

Although national research has not been conducted since 2011, data shows that roughly half of the students in clinical experiences nationwide are supervised by a mentor, but the nature of the relationship between mentor and teacher candidate is not clear (Maphalala, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Because of this inconsistency, it is not certain what works in the relationship, what the barriers are to the relationship, and how we can build professional relationships (Hammond, 2010; Levine, 2006). Preparation for building professional relationships has not been a priority in university coursework and the preparation varies widely in time and frequency (Ambrosetti, 2012; Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Mentor teachers receive little or no training for their job as mentors either in their schools or university programs, and the uncertainty about what type of relationship to engage in impacts their confidence and ability to play any role in new teacher development (Hoffman et al., 2015; Maphalala, 2013; Thorsen, 2016). Co-teaching encourages a collaborative relationship built on constructivism rather than transmissive principles of learning where both parties plan, teach, and learn together (Merk,

Betz, & O'Mara, 2015; Richter et al., 2013; Theis, 2013). Both strategies result in improved student learning and relationships, but miscommunication, assumptions, and differing perspectives regarding evaluation, support, and feedback can create barriers to building a strong relationship between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates (Birmingham, 2013; Harris, 2013; Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Lesham, 2012).

Research has suggested potential categories for mentor roles and relationship development, but teachers say they are unsure what these categories should look like in the classroom, and do not know how to develop a relationship with their teacher candidates (Heeralal, 2014; Knight, 2013; Schwille, 2008; Sheridan, 2015). Mentors state they need a more defined role, but express confusion about the specific practices needed to achieve those roles. They feel doubt and discomfort in their role as mentor, but also feel they do not have the skills that allow them to build professional relationships (Hoffman et al., 2015; Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Mentor teachers and teacher candidates operate without specific guidelines or timelines for building a relationship, and they lack the skills to communicate about their roles and responsibilities (Hoffman et al., 2015; Maphalala, M.C., 2013; Thorsen, 2016). Mentor teachers and their teacher candidates benefit from both frequent and quality communication centered on sharing knowledge and reflections regarding classroom events and practices (Edwards-Groves, 2014; Smith & Engeman, 2015; Richter et al., 2013). It is therefore essential to promote thinking in dialogue, remain open to feedback, and develop a practice of discourse about student learning (Fulford, 2012; Korver & Tillema, 2014; Herzog et al., 2012).

The relationship built between a mentor and a teacher candidate directly impacts student learning; when teachers make time to meet and communicate about student learning with their teacher candidate, active learning activities increase (Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Hochberg et al.,

2015). Specifically, mentoring on instruction and teaching practices is significantly associated with communication between mentor and teacher candidate. When mentor teachers remain engaged with their teacher candidate during classroom instruction, pre-service teachers learn more (Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Hochberg et al., 2015). Alternately, if mentors step back in their role as a guide and do not give specific directions during instruction, the minimized interactions regarding teaching practices result in decreased learning (Kahrs & Wells, 2013). A professional relationship laced with frequent communication helps pre-service teachers prepare for the classroom, but research does not yet communicate how to build professional relationships and clear communication (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Herzog, Grmek, & Cagran, 2012; Smith & Engemann, 2015). Effective relationships are necessary, but there are no clear methods to define or measure the presence of effective relationship characteristics, nor a path to develop them.

Research Questions

The goal of this research is to explore the ways mentor teachers experience the development of their relationship with teacher candidates. By drawing a parallel between the experience of the relationship and a narrative story cycle, the study explains and explores an unseen phenomenon within a common framework—the story. The leadership team of several professional education associations collaborated with the researcher to select mentor teachers with a variety of experiences, based on the likelihood of developing a valid, successful relationship in order to explore a variety of experiences for inquiry (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This research study relies heavily on the features of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, and leverages its structure for data collection and analysis (Bruner, 2002; Freytag, 1895). The story arc provides shape to describe what the participants' world was like, and how they construct and reconstruct those experiences (Bruner, 2002; Creswell, 1998; Newkirk, 2014; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000;

Riessman, 2005). The research questions are developed to open possibilities for understanding the phenomena and maintain an inquiry stance (Van Manen, 1990). Research questions allow the researcher to notice the process of operating in relationship, and reflect how mentor teachers experience the story of relationship (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Bruner, 2002). During the course of this study, the following questions are addressed:

1. How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teaching candidate?
2. In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story?

Description of Terms

Theorists and practitioners in the field of education debate the definitions and usage of a variety of terminology trends in the global education context (Marshall, 2015). Although terminology sometimes reflects a shift in policy, curricula, or school structure, terms and definitions in this study are written to provide consistency (Marshall, 2015; Meakim et al., 2013). Educators and researchers may forget that their adopted language or specialized terms require explanation to give guidance and promote clear communication for practitioners and researchers (Meakim et al., 2013; Wolcott, 2009). Terms that require explanation are provided here to avoid confusion. A brief description of important vocabulary words used in this study are defined below.

Teacher preparation program. A process of systematic training that leads to teacher certification. This includes coursework in pedagogy and content knowledge, as well as a practicum experience in a K-12 classroom setting with observation and evaluation elements. Synonymous with “Educator Preparation Program” (EPP) (Carter, 1974; Education Commission of the States, 2014; Labaree, 2004).

Mentor teacher. A certified teacher who helps develop the career of a teacher candidate through coaching, providing both a role model and a support system. Assigned to a teacher candidate through a teacher preparation program (American Psychological Association, 2016).

Teacher/teaching candidate. An individual in the role as learner with a mentor teacher. Assigned to a Mentor Teacher through a teacher preparation program. Synonymous with “Pre-service teacher” and “Professional year candidate.” (American Psychological Association, 2016).

Student teacher. An individual enrolled in a teacher preparation program completing their practical field experience prior to certification. Synonymous with “Teacher/teaching candidate,” “Professional year candidate” (O’Dea & Peralta, 2011; Payant & Murphy, 2012).

Pre-service teachers. Individuals enrolled in a teacher preparation program completing their practical field experience prior to certification. Synonymous with “Teacher/teaching candidate,” “Student Teacher,” and “Professional year candidate” (O’Dea & Peralta, 2011).

Professional year candidate. An individual enrolled in a teacher preparation program completing their practical field experience prior to certification. Might also be referred to an “intern” or “student teacher.” Synonymous with “Teacher/teaching candidate” and “Preservice Teacher” (Boise State University Teacher, 2016).

Co-teaching. Two certified or non-certified teachers working together in a classroom and sharing the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction. Both teachers are actively involved and share both the physical space and the understanding that both teachers are leading instruction equally (Merk, Betz & O’Mara, 2015).

Narrative story cycle/arc. A retelling of what came to pass and how those events are different from what was expected; an explanation of what happened distinguished by the beginning possibilities; the events, rising actions and conflicts; and the resolution (Bal, 1997; Bruner, 2002; Newkirk, 2014).

Significance of the Study

This narrative inquiry explores how mentor teachers experience the development of their relationship with a professional year teacher candidate. It examines how their relationship resembles a story, and analyzes their relationship by leveraging the understanding of a traditional story arc. The study uses Freytag's Narrative Story Arc to provide a systematic process for understanding the unseen phenomenon of relationship (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Prior to this study, the role of mentor teachers and teacher candidates was well-defined as evidenced in the forthcoming literature review; however, this study details how the mentor teacher perceives the relationship, and provides a theoretical framework through the Narrative Story Arc for discussing the phenomenon. Presentation of a common, useful metaphor increases the significance of this study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

Results of this study inform college and university teacher preparation programs by naming and visualizing a process that contributes to professional year success. With information from this study, teacher preparation programs can better equip their mentor teachers and partner schools for building professional relationships from the beginning of field experiences. Teacher education program administrators and secondary school administrators will also benefit from this study's understanding of the mentor teacher experience, assisting them with teacher candidate placement and highlighting areas for support. This study provides a new way of conceptualizing the development of the relationship between mentor teachers and teacher candidates, extending

previous understanding from naming a role to developing a relationship (Bruner, 2002; Newkirk, 2014). Overall, noticing the relationship as a story provides context for better planning and preparing mentors and teacher candidates for the practicum experience.

Theoretical Framework

Freytag's theory of story shapes the theoretical framework for this study. Drawing on the narrative tradition, the lived experiences of participants in this study are organized around the structure and discourse provided by Freytag's Narrative Story Arc (Bruner, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Freytag, 1895). Narrative frames our understanding of the world, and Freytag's work is used to tell the story of relationship both sequentially and by event (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Freytag, 1895; Prince, 1987). The Arc provides five phases of a story which informed data collection and analysis, and is used to interpret and discuss the results of the study.

Overview of Research Methods

Pre-service teachers spend up to 16 weeks in a teaching practicum designed to prepare them for the classroom, depending on state requirements. During this time, interns and student teachers work closely with a mentor teacher who is intended to guide, train, and evaluate their classroom experience. As a result, it is important to identify and assess whether a professional relationship develops (Ambrosetti, 2012; Smith, 2011). As learning needs increase and become more complex, educators must be able to name and notice the teaching process in order to transfer skills to novice teachers. This happens through relationships (Andreotti et al., 2009; Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Researchers have studied relationships as a way to inform policy and define roles, but have not used data to identify how a relationship develops in order to teach requisite skills (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Hochberg et al., 2015; Hoffman et al., 2015). Studies define how mentors and teacher candidates see their roles separately, but do not explore how

mentor teachers experience the relationship, trace the development of the relationship, or suggest a relationship protocol for continuous improvement (Carr, Herman, & Harris, 2005; Harris, 2013; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005; Thorsen, 2016). This study gathers rich, description of the story of the relationship that develops between a mentor and teacher candidate, clearly framing the experience (Bruner, 2002; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

This narrative inquiry study involves mentor teachers and their teaching candidates. Theory-based, criterion sampling is used to select 10 mentor teachers with a variety of mentoring experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants are selected based on their inclusion in a culture-sharing group with similar beliefs, vocabulary, and professional development experiences that enhance the likelihood that they will contribute unique understandings to the phenomena under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2015; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants identify themselves as both teachers and mentors, and are willing to tell their story to learn about the theory and practice necessary to best prepare teacher candidates for the classroom (Richter et al., 2013; Thorsen, 2016).

The research questions guide an exploration of the way mentor teachers experience their mentoring relationship with teaching candidates, and discover how mentor teachers experience the relationship with teaching candidates in terms of a story. The first question orients mentor teachers to the experience of mentoring. As the literature review in Chapter 2 details, mentor teachers primarily focus on their role as mentors, and communicate their experiences based on a role rather than a relationship (Hoffman et al., 2015; Thorsen, 2016; Wood & Turner, 2014). The first research question asks mentor teachers to consider the experience of their relationship without the construct of a role by writing about the beginning, middle, and end of their mentoring experience in a digital reflective journal entry survey. Data is confidentially collected

and stored using Qualtrics Research Software and coded for emergent and structural themes. Patterns from reflective surveys are also used to suggest prompts for semi-structured interviews, which further describe participants' lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Riessman, 2008; Smith & Engeman, 2015). Interviews also allow the researcher to ask participants to respond directly to the research question: How did you experience the relationship with a teaching candidate? This retelling allows the researcher to generate additional data for categories and concepts from initial coding based on reflective journal entry surveys (Creswell, 2015; Freytag, 1895; Riessman, 2008). After interviews are recorded and transcribed, the data is coded for emergent and structural themes, and analyzed for connections in data between the methods.

The second research question explores how mentor teachers see their relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story. This question offers a framework for coding the relationship experiences with a teaching candidate using codes determined by Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. An explanation of the events and situations occurring in the relationship might change narratively when given a particular framework for retelling, and comparing the relationship to Freytag's Narrative Story Arc gives the experience structure and language that may otherwise remain unexpressed (Bal, 1997; Bruner, 2002). A member checking process asks mentor teachers to place a series of events that the researcher culls from their reflective journal entry and semi-structured interviews into a visual framework in the shape of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. This visual framework represents a concept map using the mentor teachers' own lived experiences, supplemented writing, and interviews to capture teacher reflections (Butler-Kisber, 2010). The researcher analyzes the visual framework, comparing the participants' coding of the data to her own. This process validates the data and uses multiple perceptions and modes of

engagement to clarify the meanings gathered in initial surveys and semi-structured interviews (Bagnoli, 2009; Stake, 1994; Tracy, 2010).

Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to collaborate in building a descriptive story that explores the lived experiences of a mentor teacher, and establishes a collective sense of the experience (Bruner, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998; 2015). A story-like rendering of the problem and data collection extends the explanation of the phenomena in a common language that moves the context beyond the class and into a general understanding of the story of the relationship which previously existed unseen (Lyons, 2009; Merk et al., 2015; Van Wynaesberghe & Khan, 2007).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into four subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review regarding student teaching and teacher preparation. The chapter begins with the history of teacher preparation and student teaching, the role of the mentor teacher, and how it has changed over time. It concludes with barriers to relationship development between mentor teachers and teacher candidates. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study, data collection methods, and how the inquiry was implemented. Chapter 4 includes results and findings of the research. Chapter 5 contains a conclusion which includes a discussion and analysis of the data, including the theoretical implications, and final thoughts.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Student teaching is the milestone experience of teacher preparation, and its success is largely determined by the relationship established between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates (Hoffman et al., 2015; O’Dea & Peralta, 2011; Polikoff et al., 2015; Richter et al., 2013). Changes in education, society, and legislative policy frequently shift the standards for teacher preparation, including the requirements for coursework and clinical practice (Ashby, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Education Commission of the States, 2014; National Institute for Work & Learning, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). Calls for reform are constant and most recently include requirements that address urban, rural, cultural, and technological shifts in teacher preparation programs-- all which impact student teaching and the link between theory and practice (Ashby, 2012; Banks, 2015; Brady, 2007; Fishman, 2015; Thorsen, 2016; Zeichner, 2012). Student teaching is the culminating experience that prepares teaching candidates for the rigor of the classroom, creating a space where theory and practice come together in continuous practice (Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation, 2015; Herzog et al., 2012; Hoffman et al., 2015; Levine, 2006). In this space, student teachers address the gap between what they have learned in coursework and its application in diverse classroom settings (Greenberg et al., 2011; Hemmerich et al., 2015; Wood & Turner, 2014).

Student teaching success hinges in part on the relationship developed between the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher (Hochberg et al., 2015; Hoffman et al., 2015; O’Dea & Peralta, 2011). Novice teachers need guidance, and are specific about the type of feedback that helps them grow and learn in the classroom, but mentor teachers remain unsure of their role and tend

to coach the same way they teach, rather than respond to teacher candidate needs (Bullock, 2017; Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Heeralal, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Izadinia, 2015; Maphalala, 2013). Additional barriers to the relationship include differing perspectives, ineffective feedback, and miscommunication (Birmingham, 2013; Harris, 2013). To promote growth, mentor teachers must also provide student teachers with access to learning through a co-teaching, constructivist approach followed by critical reflection (Cuenca, 2011; Lesham, 2012; Richter et al., 2013; Robertson, 2016). Research indicates a variety of roles and categories possible for approaching the relationship development between a mentor teacher and teacher candidate, but little detailed protocol exists to guide mentors into a successful relationship with their teacher candidates (Ambrosetti, 2014; Knight, 2007; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005).

Communication is an essential feature of an effective relationship between mentor teacher and teacher candidate, and defines the principles for relating during their time together in the classroom (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017; Barrera et al., 2008; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Schwille, 2008). Effective communication provides a guide for the relationship, aiding reflection and decreasing opportunities for conflict (Edwards-Groves, 2014; Kee, Anderson, Dearing, Harris, & Shuster, 2010; Smith & Engemann, 2015). Sharing knowledge through clear communication not only builds an effective professional relationship, it promotes shared decision-making and pedagogical dialogue (Izadinia, 2015; Lesham, 2012). A focus on classroom pedagogy and classroom learning helps student teachers analyze their own practice, turning communication into a learning opportunity and deepening the relationship between mentor and teacher candidate (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010; Knight, 2013; Payant & Murphy, 2012).

Promoting a positive relationship requires developing specific features of communicating and relating based on student learning and inquiry (Carr et al., 2005; Knight, 2007; Robertson, 2016; Schwille, 2008). Mentoring that leverages collaborative inquiry around student learning benefits both mentor and teacher candidate, and fosters teacher efficacy; this type of quality mentoring provides crucial support for classroom practice (Richter et al., 2013; Robertson, 2016; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). Inquiry also promotes continuous assessment and reflection, encouraging questions that allow teacher candidates to take risks, become vulnerable, and accept feedback (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Knight, 2013; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). Although the relationship between mentor teachers and student teachers has historically been both evaluative and interpersonal, the nature of these complexities requires additional research to determine how this essential relationship develops (Ambrosetti, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The purpose of this study is to understand how a relationship develops between mentor teachers and student teachers. It establishes indicators of effective relationships and communication patterns to build a protocol for developing professional relationships during the professional year. The literature review summarizes information regarding mentor teacher relationships as applied to pre-service teacher candidates. After reviewing the theoretical framework for this study, the relationship between mentors and teaching candidates in the classroom will be explored by examining the following: (1) The history of teacher preparation programs; (2) The importance of student teaching; (3) Student teacher and mentor relationships; (4) Barriers to building relationships, (5) Effective relationship characteristics between mentors and teacher candidates; (6) The significance of communication and situated context communication; (7) Building a relational protocol; and (8) Mentoring as a form of coaching. These topics also provide a historical background, outline recent changes that impact mentor-

teacher candidate relationships, and identify gaps in the literature that this research aims to answer.

Theoretical Framework

Freytag's Narrative Story Arc provides the theoretical framework for this study. The Narrative Story Arc is drawn from narratology, and provides a structure to analyze a variety of texts (Bal, 1997; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Creswell, 1998; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). According to Newkirk (2014), narrative is not a specific type of writing, but a property of the mind that frames our understanding of the world. The theory of story conventionalizes individual experiences and shapes experiences in a "collective coin" (Bruner, 2002, p.16). The broad frame of narratology informs the methodology of this narrative inquiry by putting the lived experiences of participants in the center of a literal story and provides a discourse for exploring how a mentor teacher experiences the mentoring relationship (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Newkirk, 2014). Bruner (2002) proposed that when we have the wrong story, the shape of a story gives us clues to a more accurate perspective. In this study, the literature outlines the roles that mentor teachers play in the lives of their teacher candidates, but our collective understanding is limited by the confines of those individual roles. The Narrative Story Arc is a means to discover what truly happens (Bruner, 2002; Newkirk, 2014). Freytag's Narrative Story Arc provides a "ready and supple means" (Bruner, 2002, p. 29) for gathering, placing, and explaining the events as they unfold in the relationship between a mentor teacher and their teacher candidate (Bruner, 2002; Newkirk, 2014). When a phenomenon can be told as a story, readers are more apt to understand it (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2015; Newkirk, 2014).

The way that we tell a story matters, therefore Freytag's Narrative Story Arc is used to tell the story of relationship both sequentially and by event (Freytag, 1895; Prince, 1987). Several aspects of story are assumed as fundamental to the application of Freytag's Narrative Arc theory in this study (Bal, 1997). The researcher assumes that the events of the story are arranged in a sequence which may or may not occur chronologically:

- Time is relative, based on the need for explanation;
- Participants are recognized with distinctive traits;
- The setting is bound by the constraints of this study;
- Relationships outside the ones traced in this study may have an impact on the story;
- Various perceptions are allowed to color the story.

These assumptions put the lived experiences of the participants in the center of their own story and allow both a bound context and an interpretation of events (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The assumptions also guide a "landscape of action" (Bruner, 2002, p. 26) where the story may play out and challenge the way we understand the phenomena. It allows the researcher the freedom to not only see solutions to the problem through the research questions, but to find additional storylines to follow in the spirit of true inquiry (Bruner, 2002; Stake 1995).

Freytag's Narrative Story Arc names five specific phases of a story and provides the theoretical framework that also informs data collection and analysis for this study. Freytag intended the parts to be both explored individually and bound together in a collection of events (Freytag, 1895). For this study, each phase informs data collection and analysis, and is used to interpret and discuss the results. The first phase, called the Exposition or Introduction, presents the circumstances prior to the story's beginning (Prince, 1987). The Introduction helps fix the

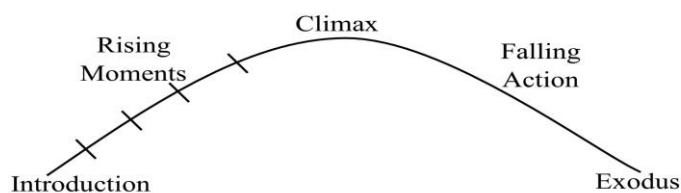
characters of the story in a setting, shows the diverse forms a character may represent, and gives direction to the story (Freytag, 1895; Prince, 1987). Second, the Rising Movement, or Rising Action includes a series of events that are “full of activity of meaning” (Freytag, 1895, p. 125). These events may progress in intensity, pose problems, or create tension and excitement (Freytag, 1895). Third, the Climax defines the “sublime struggle” (Freytag, 1895, p. 130) of the story, and may include a truth, a frenzy, or a middle point in a group of forces (Freytag, 1895; Prince, 1987). Next, the Return, or the Falling Action, follows the climax, and is identified by the new roles characters must play in response to the struggle (Freytag, 1895). During the Return, the audience or reader understands how the events of the story are connected and may begin to see the purpose of the story (Freytag, 1895). Last, the Closing Action, or Exodus, includes finding a solution to the problem in the story and adjusting based on that solution (Freytag, 1895).

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc.

Figure 1

Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc

Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc



The unique aspect of this theory features both the sequence of events in the narrative and the story inherent in those events (Hyeon-Suk Kang, 2014). Narratives can be solicited, collected, and interpreted in a variety of ways unless they are explained. Freytag’s Narrative

Story Arc, originally used to create a framework for writing dramas, now provides a common structure for analyzing and writing narrative (Freytag, 1895). For purposes of this study, the Story Arc details a common structure and language for understanding the lived experiences of the participants in this study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hyeon-Suk Kang, 2014).

The History of Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher education programs in the United States have evolved based on necessity. From the first Normal School in Massachusetts to alternative certification programs like Teach for America, teacher preparation programs have been molded by accreditation standards, population density, politics and policy, and social and cultural need (Banks, 2015; Carter, 1974; Fishman, 2015; Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011; Labaree, 2004). Clinical experiences within the programs have also shifted in order to respond to alternative certification programs, rural contexts, and a need to continue educational reform (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Fishman, 2015; Tshida, Smith, & Fogarty, 2015).

The first state Normal School opened in 1839 in Lexington, Massachusetts, with the sole purpose of preparing teachers through systematic training that lead to professional certification (Carter, 1974; Larabee, 2004). The Normal School set the “norm” for good teaching under the assumption that if teachers mastered many content areas, they would then be qualified to teach. As early as 1919, policies regarding teacher preparation reflected the attitude of the public about teaching as a career, and argued that normal schools were unable to attract qualified youth because they were not places of high esteem (Bagley, 1919). Teacher preparation was seen as indicative of the limited training available, and a movement began to require four years to prepare specific types of teachers, including those necessary to teach in rural schools, additional practice teaching, and lab teaching (Bagley, 1919).

Regardless of the call for change, the Normal School structure remained for 100 years until the first national standards for teacher education institutions were enacted by the American Association of Teachers College in 1927 (Education Commission of the States, 2014; Labaree, 2004). A slow move toward accreditation bodies who would write and evaluate teacher preparation programs ensued, beginning with the establishment of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which began an accrediting function in 1965 (Education Commission of the States, 2014). In 1997, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council was formed, eventually combining with NCATE to become the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Education Commission of the States, 2014).

Standards for teacher preparation change frequently, partially based on a growing public interest in teacher preparation and its impact on education (A Nation at Risk, 1983; National Institute for Work & Learning, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). Changes in teacher preparation programs became a necessary response to policy changes and funding shifts, necessitating adjustments after new legislation or reports were published (Ashby, 2012; National Institute for Work & Learning, 2011; Sykes, 1984). Unresolved difficulties continued in the teacher education reform movement due to the dubious perception of teaching, a reputation of mediocrity in the teacher education programs, and an unstable relationship between schools and university teacher preparation programs (Sykes, 1984). Private and public organizations have attempted to reform teacher education programs with innovations that allow alternate routes for certification or compliance with federal attempts to mandate equity such as the Education Professional Development Acts (EPDA) which requires vocational, bilingual, and special education programs within their preparation protocols (Sykes, 1984).

The call for 21st Century Skills outlined by the National Education Association (NEA)

and detailed in the Common Core Standards prompted research into teacher preparation in global perspectives which resulted in new coursework for implementing 21st century skills for global understandings into one university's teacher preparation program (Poole & Russell, 2015).

Individual states compiled their own reports of performance as a first step to opening dialogue to improve the strategies for teacher preparation, but clinical preparation remains poorly defined and inadequately supported (The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010). Although national reports suggest systematic, parallel changes to teacher preparation for all students and universities, a call to action is a recommendation rather than a requirement (The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010).

There has been a movement in the United States to reform teacher education programs as a response to increasing social and political pressures to improve education (Brady, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Zeichner, 2012). The NEA partners with school districts to adopt protocols for reform, including placing internal consultants at schools to work directly with teachers (Brady, 2007). Changes in our society and an awareness of cultural diversities create unique needs in teacher preparation (Ashby, 2012; Banks, 2015; Fishman, 2015). The needs of rural and urban areas require resources to expand technical, vocational, and career training, and stimulate a shift in teacher preparation programs to include competencies with diversity during student teaching internships and a change in coursework (Banks, 2015; Fishman, 2015). As a result, teacher preparation includes a variety of content and methods courses and practicum: content area literacy, content area methods courses, psychology, pedagogy, behavior management, and multiple field experiences (The Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium, 2013; Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008). A variety of undergraduate, graduate, and alternative programs offer options to certification and teacher

licensure, resulting in inconsistent paths and requirements. Although there is greater flexibility for gaining certification, federal requirements do not exist, and each state and accreditation body sets different standards for teacher certification (Education Commission of the States, 2014; Hammond, 2010; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011; Roth & Swail, 2000). The National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ) indicates these inconsistencies lead to weakening teacher candidates and that even accreditation boards like NCATE have no means to detail procedures and programs that are specific and apply to all teacher education programs (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2011). Standards exist for the quality of beginning teachers, and represent principles that should be present in all grade levels and content areas (Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium, 2013). These standards include knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to enter the classroom, and are defined differently by the variety of organizations setting the standards (Interstate New Teacher Assessment & Support Consortium, 2013; Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008). Most recently, policies and standards governing how clinical practice is developed and assessed has gained increased attention (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Clinical Requirements

Nearly 200,000 teacher candidates are placed as apprentice student teachers in thousands of school districts across the United States (Roth & Swail, 2010). Student teaching experiences vary in length and design, with roughly half the states requiring a minimum of 12-14 weeks of full time apprentice teaching (Hammond, 2010; International Literacy Association, 2015; Levine, 2006). Of those enrolled in full-time practicum experiences, half receive supervised clinical experiences (United States Department of Education, 2011). Most institutions require some type of practicum hours, but experiences vary within those hours, and such differences

between states and higher education institutions prevent a comparative analysis of the programs (Hammond, 2010; International Literacy Association, 2015; United States Department of Education, 2011). Institutions within states require different assignments, ending requirements, or capstone projects prior to certification that may include a portfolio, reflection journal, or observation evaluations (Hammond, 2010; International Literacy Association, 2015; Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008).

In 2013, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) blended their standards in an attempt to consolidate expectations for clinical preparation of teachers (Tatto et al., 2016). The resulting Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) became a standards and accreditation body that is the basis of a federal regulatory plan for teacher education (Tatto et al., 2016). The plan includes collecting data regarding clinical partnerships and practices on a continuous basis in order to understand how to consistently prepare teachers to have a positive impact in the K-12 classroom (Tatto et al., 2016). Consistency in clinical practice ensures high quality preparation that improves and increases how pre-service teachers approach practice teaching (The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010). New teachers vary in their preparation experiences due to the tension between theory and practice, and the clinical experience creates a third space to consider what to teach and how to teach it, carefully guided by university liaisons and mentor teacher partnerships (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wood & Turner, 2014).

The importance of student teaching. Student teaching begins an induction process into the education profession that signifies the crucial beginning stage of teacher development, often noted as an unpredictable, mysterious entry to the teaching profession (Darden, 2001; Levine,

2006). Because student teaching represents the only extended practical experience, it serves as a critical milestone for teaching candidates (Herzog et al., 2012; MacKinnon, 2017; Russell & Russell, 2011). A survey of new teachers suggests that the student teaching experience is the most important part of teacher preparation, and serves as an application of theory and pedagogy in a culminating experience (Levine, 2006). For example, field experiences encourage candidates to learn by doing within the school context, and provide a variety of settings to engage in regular, continuous practice (Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation, 2015; Levine, 2006). A quality experience also requires student teachers to reflect on and justify their practice (CAEP, 2015). Student teaching is the hallmark of an institution's teacher education program, and presents student candidates with an opportunity to practice the teaching craft in authentic context (Hammond, 2010; Hemmerich et al., 2015; Levine, 2006).

Student teaching requires teacher candidates with various teaching backgrounds to immerse themselves in the classroom, applying theories and methods learned in the classroom to beyond-simulation fieldwork (O'Dea & Peralta, 2011; Payant & Murphy, 2012). Research shows that the practicum is one of the most influential practices for pre-service teachers, combining coursework, fieldwork, and research (Hemmerich et al., 2015; O'Dea & Peralta, 2011). When teacher candidates enter their student teaching experience, they begin to address the gap between what they have learned, and what they need to *do* because of what they have learned (Greenberg et al., 2011; Hemmerich et al., 2015; O'Dea & Peralta, 2011). The experience also increases self-efficacy and promotes a desire for teaching (Hemmerich et al., 2015). Student teaching is deemed so significant that 99% of teacher education programs require teaching candidates to devote a minimum of ten weeks to a full-time classroom field experience, disallowing candidates from working outside the classroom during this time (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Student teaching experiences provide the training that boosts professional skills after graduation. Students who are engaged in practical application of their coursework through student teaching benefit from shared insights and collaboration (Hemmerich et al., 2015; Payant & Murphy, 2012). They also gain a deep appreciation for the connections between pedagogy, learning, and practice (CAEP, 2015; Cuenca, 2011; Hemmerich et al., 2015). Students who experience a practicum connected to their coursework report a variety of ways the practicum influences their day-to-day work after graduation (Sprague & Percy, 2014). Students also note that their communication skills and teamwork skills improve as a result of their practicum experience, and that the practicum increases their interest in the profession (Hemmerich et al., 2015; Sprague & Percy, 2014). In addition, the practicum experience enacts legitimacy for the craft of teaching and allows preservice teachers to make sense of teaching from their own experiences in the classroom as they solve daily problems (CAEP, 2015; Cuenca, 2011). The student teaching experience is a primary determinant of how effective a teacher will be in their first years in the classroom (He, 2009; Richter et al., 2013; Russell & Russell, 2011).

Student teacher and mentor relationships. Mentoring relationships are based on assumptions and beliefs that both veteran and emerging educators hold about teaching and learning. These professional values and perspectives of a teacher's duties and obligations guide how the relationship develops during a teaching candidate's practicum (Lesham, 2012; Russell & Russell, 2011). The majority of student teachers find their practicum experience enjoyable due to the positive relationship that is created and maintained by their mentor teacher (O'Dea, & Peralta, 2011). In support of this, a five-year study of effective features of mentor relationships noted a correlation between establishing an initial relationship between mentor and teacher candidate, and the ongoing success of the relationship (Hochberg et al., 2015). Additionally,

improved relationships develop when the mentor and teacher candidate spend time together in meaningful conversations based on specific, active classroom learning, problematize classroom challenges, and address the content in the classroom (O’Dea & Peralta, 2011; Hochberg et al., 2015; Sheridan & Young, 2017). This regularity of contact benefits the mentor and student teacher, and may also impart positive change on other relationships (Herzog et al., 2012). Effective professional relationships are the outcome of the type of effort and amount of time invested by the mentor and teacher candidate (Jaeger, Bertot, & Gorham, 2015; Hochberg et al., 2015).

The mentor relationship can offer a non-hierarchical, reciprocal opportunity to share knowledge about content and process in the classroom (Ambrosetti, 2012; Carr et al., 2005; Knight, 2007). Teacher candidates state their need to develop a guiding teacher relationship with their mentor, and want to feel as if they are equal partners on a team, revealing a need for an egalitarian relationship through a constructivist approach, rather than one of power or control (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Izadinia, 2015; Russell & Russell, 2011). On the other hand, mentor teachers should be aware of an institutionally-positioned assumption of power that can negatively impact the relationship and step back to let the teaching candidate’s voice be heard. (Ambrosetti, Dekkers, & Knight, 2017; Wetzel, Taylor, & Vlach, 2017).

Laneve, Gemma, and Agrati (2010) assert that the relationship between mentor and teacher candidate is significant because the transfer of knowledge in the classroom is based on relational dialogue. The researchers positioned four mentor teachers in a testimonial confrontation where they were asked to recall and detail an event in the classroom in which the mentor and trainee had different perspectives. They compared the transcripts, looking for how interpretations of the event differed. Data revealed that mentor teachers use inferences to explain

and explore the teaching context with their teacher candidates. Without an effective relationship, it is not possible to clarify the process of instruction during practicum. The relationship, therefore, is a necessary prerequisite to learning (Laneve et al., 2010).

The co-teaching relationship. The co-teaching model reinvents the relationship between mentor teacher and teaching candidate (Theis, 2014). Co-teaching positions both the mentor and teacher candidate as equal partners in the classroom, and encourages a collaborative relationship from the beginning of the student teaching experience (Merk et al., 2015). In the co-teaching model, mentors and teacher candidates embrace a developmental approach; they plan together, deliver instruction together, and alternate between leading and supporting classroom instruction, which increases the need for professional communication based on the nature of working in tandem in the classroom (Ginkel, Verloop, & Denessen, 2015; Merk et al., 2015; Theis, 2015; Tshida et al., 2015). Roles are planned in advance, and allow a student teacher to experience classroom dynamics and become more attentive to classroom management, rather than observe them from the back of the classroom (Merk et al., 2015; Theis, 2014). Co-teaching assumes that both mentors and teacher candidates have the need for a reciprocal relationship of learning, where both parties learn from and are influenced by each other as co-thinkers and co-planners (Ginkel et al., 2015; Knight, 2013; Long et al., 2010; McMillan, 2012). Engaging in this parallel process encourages shared learning during student teaching, and mentors benefit from the ideas that teacher candidates bring into the classroom (Ginkel et al., 2015; Herzog et al., 2012; McMillan, 2012).

The co-teaching model requires buy-in from teachers, candidates, and university support, and usually involves additional training for all stakeholders to learn new ways to plan, organize, and teach (Hartnett, Weed, McCoy, Theis, & Nickens, 2013; Knight, 2007; Tshida et al., 2014).

As a result, co-teaching increases professional communication, emotional connections, and the stance of equity between mentor and teacher candidate (Knight, 2007; Merk et al., 2015). Additionally, mentors and teacher candidates involved in co-teaching experience stronger relationships with purposeful conversations regarding instruction, management, and student learning (Merk et al., 2015; Theis, 2014). This collaborative model of co-planning and co-teaching is not only more effective, it creates a feeling of preparation for the teacher candidates (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Hudson & Hudson, 2013). In this model, teacher candidates feel more prepared to develop and execute their own instruction because they were part of a learning community and engaged in the planning, preparation, and execution of content alongside a supportive coach (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Zeichner, 2010).

Situated learning. Co-teaching promotes a situated learning context in which mentor teachers transfer legitimacy to student teachers by granting access to teaching and learning (Cuenca, 2011; Hudson & Hudson, 2013). Within this common context, mentors and teacher candidates learn to read each other, and teaching competencies are built which impact student learning as mentors and teacher candidates practice, give feedback, and share ideas and experiences (Cuenca, 2011; McMillan, 2012). Novice teachers cannot learn alone, and a shift in the entire community of practice is necessary to provide a temporary bridge into a collaborative professional learning community (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). When mentors reflect, communicate, and collaboratively review classroom processes, students are able to identify when theory and practice come together (Hughes, 2006). In this way, the roles and relationship between students, mentor, and teacher candidate are constructed within the classroom, which creates a crucial element only learned in the classroom with the support and guidance of a mentor (Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012; Zeichner, in press).

Situated learning also requires practice (Fieman-Nemser, 2012; Gawande, 2011; Ginkel et al., 2015). Mentors and teacher candidates learn over time and through practice, and gain confidence, skills, and gain judgment when they accept the burden of practice, regardless of the learning curve or flexibility required for those involved in the practicing context (Ginkel et al., 2012; Gawande, 2011).

Barriers to Building Relationships

Several important types of relationships emerge from analyses of patterns between mentors and teacher candidates, but the quality of the relationship is the most important aspect of the practicum experience (Bullock, 2017). Mentors must allow student teachers an access to learning, which includes shared classroom resources, taking on daily rituals of teaching, and teaching with the support of a nearby expert (Cuenca, 2011; Lesham, 2012). Mutual learning through the process of teaching builds trust and indicates a relationship of support and sensitivity (CAEP, 2015; Cuenca, 2011). While building professional relationships, mentors and teacher candidates often encounter barriers. Initially, student teachers and their mentors have a different perspective about the relationship (Birmingham, 2013; Harris, 2013). Where the mentor expects to provide personal support, role modeling, and professional development, the teacher candidate expects to listen and follow advice (Harris, 2013; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Russell & Russell, 2011). Although both are committed to the goal of student learning, mentors and teacher candidates see through a different framework based on different levels of experience and need (Birmingham, 2013; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Bullock, 2017; Lesham, 2012). Different perspectives create uneven communication and uncertainty as both learn to trust each other during the process (Birmingham, 2013; Lesham, 2012). If mentors and teacher candidates do not

share their expectations in advance, tension develops between the roles and expectations of the relationship (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Rhoads et al., 2013).

Existing perceptions and expectations of the mentor role, as well as ineffective communication, may become barriers to building effective professional relationships (Barrera et al., 2008; Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Robertson, 2016). Mentor teachers are unsure of their roles in the classroom, shifting between the two paradigms of evaluator and relator (Ambrosetti, 2014; Payant & Murphy, 2012; Robertson, 2016; Schwille, 2008; Wetzel et al., 2017). Although the concept of mentoring is shaped by a professional practice, perceptions regarding the role of mentor shift due to policy changes, existing culture in a school or district, or studies of effectiveness (Smith, 2001). Classroom teachers who become coaches and mentors may initially find themselves accepting the mindset of correction rather than collaboration, and need clarification of the relationship before committing to sharing socialization or instructional information (Payant & Murphy, 2012; Robertson, 2016). Mentors want teaching candidates to feel welcome, but also feel the importance of creating boundaries and an explanation of the classroom culture (Payant & Murphy, 2012; Sheridan & Young, 2017).

When mentors and teacher candidates are uncertain about their role in the classroom and with each other, confusion also prevents effective relationships (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010; Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Research by Barrera et al (2008) shows how the absence of guidelines and expectations for mentor teachers, in addition to reduced time to collaborate about pedagogy in the classroom, creates a barrier to relationships established with their teacher candidate. A lack of training and guidelines leads to confused perceptions that impact the ability to build professional relationships (Ambrosetti, 2014; Barrera et al., 2008; Schein, 2011; Zeichner, in press). Mentor teachers and their student teachers should expect their relationship to begin with

ambiguity and a lack of boundaries; an initial sense of uncertainty is not necessarily a barrier to developing an effective relationship over time (Birmingham, 2013).

Ineffective communication or the absence of pedagogy-based dialogue also creates barriers to building relationships between mentors and teacher candidates (Jaeger et al., 2015; Kahrs & Wells, 2013; Payant & Murphy, 2012). Payant and Murphy (2012) identify a cause and effect relationship between sufficient dialogue and the entire student teaching experience. Their research ties the quality and nature of the collaborative relationship developed with the practicum teacher to the quality and nature of the entire practicum experience (Payant & Murphy, 2012). Their research also explores how a mentor teachers' fear of discussing problems in the classroom with teacher candidates might hinder a constructive, working relationship. Without the opportunity to clarify potential problems early in the student teacher experience, effective communication during the course of their relationship is in jeopardy (Payant & Murphy, 2012; Sheehan, Gonzalvo, Ramsey, & Sprunger, 2016). Because past experiences influence the ability to communicate, collaborating teachers should have a process to follow during new situations, including new relationships (Scheer, Noweski, & Meinel, 2012). Starting with the first meeting between mentors and teacher candidates, conversations should aim at developing perspectives and knowledge about teaching. Conversations should continue at a steady rate and over time in order to establish a vulnerable, receptive culture (Schein, 2011).

Lack of time to communicate also impacts the working relationship between a mentor and teacher candidate (Barrera et al., 2008; Jaeger et al., 2015; Payant & Murphy, 2012; Sheehan et al., 2016). In a five-year study that included multiple cohorts of teachers and their teacher candidates, researchers found that mentors and teacher candidates who scheduled time during the day to meet were statistically more likely to improve relational interactions (Hochberg et al.,

2015). Mentors who planned time to communicate more than doubled active learning and professional collaboration, and discovered that common planning times are essential to developing a relationship of substance (Hochberg et al., 2015; Payant & Murphy, 2012). During this time, mentors and teacher candidates must be aware of potential interferences to clear communication, including internal and external distractions which may impact active listening (Knight, 2007).

Finally, a combination of perceptions and confusing communication increases barriers to the relationship. Inconsistent views of mentor roles prevent mentors from acting with authority, which results in their withdrawal from interactions with their teacher candidate (Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Specifically, teacher candidates feel removed from the relationship with the mentor teacher due to doubt and hesitancy regarding their role as mentor; this culture of isolation and conflict avoidance increases barriers to communication (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008). Some mentors indicate a desire to increase feedback, shared planning, and informal conversation, but express discomfort articulating their relationship needs and often feel the mentoring relationship is exhausting (Herzog et al., 2012; Kahrs & Wells, 2013).

Effective Relationship Characteristics Between Mentors and Teacher Candidates

Relationships are complex, and no single interpretation or definition can account for all the details of a professional relationship between mentor teacher and student teacher. In order to improve the relationship, however, we must determine what is significant about it, define the way it works, and keep focus on the issues that are likely to be most pressing (Andreotti, Major, & Giroux, 2009; Knight, 2007). Mentor teachers and student teachers enter their relationships with different frameworks for noticing what is important in the classroom, and view student learning from a variety of perspectives and experiences (Andreotti et al., 2009; Birmingham,

2013; Keller & Pryce, 2010). Even though these different backgrounds create different identities and allegiances, a professional relationship puts the commitment to student learning in the center of the relationship (Birmingham, 2013). Complexities in the relationship require mentors and their student teachers to adapt to their dynamic roles and focus their work together on a careful analysis of classroom practice (Andreotti et al., 2009; Lesham, 2012).

Descriptors and Roles

Despite the complexities, professional relationships have specific, defining characteristics. Although personal relationships are based on mutual affection, professional relationships in education are most effective when specific features are present. The literature builds a definition of the mentor as a type of professional relationship. Professional relationships in schools require an understanding of diverse styles and effective approaches to communication. Using style inventories and noticing stages of the mentoring relationship helps teachers identify their interactions needs and biases that may forestall communication and blunt relationships growth (Carr et al., 2005; Sheridan, 2015). Mentor teachers indicate that it takes a special person to be a mentor, and they take their role seriously, even when they do not fully understand it (Heeralal, 2014; Maphalala, 2013; Thorsen, 2016).

The relationship between a mentor and a teacher candidate is a journey that is holistic, reflective, and dynamic (Ambrosetti, 2012; Carr et al., 2005; Knight, 2007). Research splits here, and begins to show how a variety of specific characteristics are necessary for success, although some themes in the literature overlap. This overlap points to the complexity of the relationship, and the need to determine a protocol for developing characteristics that lead to support (Ambrosetti, 2014; Carr et al., 2005). For example, pre-service teachers perceive the mentor's most important role as a provider of feedback in regards to both practical suggestions and an

interpersonal role of counselor and observer (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Mentors and teacher candidates see feedback differently, however. Mentors tend to overrate the importance of the feedback they give, and student teachers tend to use feedback only when they see a specific application to how it improves their work (Korver & Tillema, 2014; Marie, 2016). Teacher candidates expect feedback as a symbol of value in their educational process, but need specific, operational instructions to help develop their thinking and problem solving processes (Moussay, Falvier, Zimmermann, & Meard, 2011).

Mentor relationships are defined by both mentors and teacher candidates as supportive, but also include features of a complex relationship of unequal partners that require developing specific teaching skills and knowledge (Keller & Pryce, 2010). According to Ambrosetti (2012), the roles of mentor relationships can be divided into three specific categories: (1) pragmatic, who observes, gives feedback, and instructs; (2) interpersonal, who acts as a counselor, critical friend, or equal partners; and (3) managerial, who assesses and provides quality control. In her study of 259 mentors, the mentor relationship was described most as a helper who encouraged and trained teacher candidates through a reciprocal relationship that leads novice teachers to their own best understanding of the practice of teaching (Ambrosetti, 2014).

The mentor-teacher candidate relationship can also be described collaboratively. Knight (2007) names it a partnership, and presents the Partnership Principles as a framework for coaching relationships in education. Deep respect for the practice of teaching, Knight says, is at the heart of this relationship, and he describes seven principles of relating between mentors and teacher candidates that provide a conceptual language for how those in a mentor-teacher candidate relationship should work with each other (Knight, 2007). Knight compares the theory of coaching new teachers to other theories we live by and details the way in which theories guide

our choices in and out of the classroom. Knight's Partnership Principles in Table 1 explain what an effective relationship might look like in the classroom.

Table 1

Jim Knight's Partnership Principles

Equality	People are created equal and have something important to contribute.
Choice	Colleagues have a say in what they do and do not do.
Voice	Partners voice their opinions; their opinions count.
Dialogue	Partners agree, disagree, and reflect openly.
Reflection	Teachers consider ideas before they adopt, accept, or reject them.
Praxis	Together, teachers shape and adopt new ideas to their real-life practices.
Reciprocity	Teacher knowledge and expertise equals that of their coach.

(Knight, 2007)

Significance of communication. Communication is the most significant aspect of the professional relationship between mentors and teacher candidates, and helps define the principles by which a mentor and teacher candidate relate to each other (Barrera et al., 2008; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Schwille, 2008; Sheridan & Young, 2017). Effective mentoring is conversation in action, and communication within the mentoring relationship can be seen as a reflective practice, guiding the relationship between a mentor and teacher candidate (Edwards-Groves, 2014; Kee, Anderson, Dearing, Harris, & Shuster, 2010; Knight, 2007; Schwille, 2008). Mentoring conversations influence a student teacher's experiences, and an increase in dialogue alleviates conflict and creates a classroom resource (Edwards-Groaves & Hoare, 2012; Smith & Engemann, 2015). Communication is a vital component of mentoring, with results in relationship development and increased trust (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Herzog et al., 2012; Killion, 2010).

Genuine conversation is a critical aspect of the relationship, helping teaching candidates negotiate the social world of schools and improve open conversation during negative experiences (Sheridan & Young, 2017).

Specifically, informal and formal interactions between a mentor and teacher candidate that are both planned and intermittent create a chain of interactions during their working time together, which increases sharing and increases confidence (Izadinia, 2015). This process of sharing knowledge transfer, based on events happening in the classroom, builds an effective professional relationship (Lesham, 2012; Schwille, 2008). Shared decision-making from a constructivist approach also promotes an effective relationship characteristic between mentors and teacher candidates in the classroom setting (Carr et al., 2005; Izadinia, 2015; Knight, 2007).

Both mentor and teacher candidate require a voice in their relationship, so conversation between them should be frank, with the assumption that both are competent adults (Bullock, 2017; Fallis, 2013; Payant & Murphy, 2012). Student teachers who are willing to ask questions can explore new learning through dialogue with their mentor, and gain the opportunity to practice communication in a low-stakes setting. It is important for mentors and their teacher candidates to communicate without fear, and move through the degrees of high stakes communication. When mentors and teacher candidates can speak their minds, they begin to understand the shared perspective behind pedagogical procedures (Lesham, 2012; Warner, 2008). On the other hand, conversations about the practice of teaching may become too standard or stifling, and get in the way of the dialogic thinking and talking necessary for authentic feedback (Fulford, 2012; Warner, 2008).

Communication itself is a form of education and provides a benchmark to develop and transform the work of teaching and learning (Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012; Gordon &

Brobeck, 2010; Haynes, 2009). A recent case study examines how the role of dialogue operates as a pedagogical practice in the classroom setting and traced how mentoring conversations develop and are experienced. Data from the research suggests a new definition for mentoring in teacher education through themes in conversations and show a connection between types of conversations and success in teaching (Edwards-Groves, 2014). Collaborative, analytical and dialogic conversations are a critical pedagogical strategy for pre-service teachers, and there is power in tracking the dialogue between a mentor and teacher candidate for personal and professional growth (Edwards-Groves, 2014; Gordon & Brobeck, 2010). When mentor teachers reflectively follow dialogic cognitions, their influence as a mentor increases due to developing communication competencies (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2010).

Conversations between mentor teachers and teacher candidates should be used as a resource for deepening all relationships in the classroom context, naming the dialogue process along the way (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010; Fulford, 2012; Lesham, 2012). When K-12 students are taught how to communicate in small groups, blog posts, and oral practice, it helps them see the philosophies of others and think critically about their learning context (Warner, 2008). If a student teacher feels comfortable asking detailed questions, communication becomes a resource for the educational process and impacts their ability to make sense of experiences (Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Fallis, 2013; Fulford, 2012; Warner, 2008). Additionally, when student teachers ask their mentors questions, the mentor teachers feel they have been recognized and are significant to the classroom experience (Payant & Murphy, 2012).

Situated context communication. Conversations specific to teaching create an opportunity to build relationships between mentor teachers and their teacher candidates. Once student teachers and mentors have developed a conversational comfort, dialogue which moves to

the craft of teaching deepens the professional relationship (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010; Darden, 2001). Deliberate practice in the classroom extends feedback as student teachers learn the skills, knowledge, and dispositions embodied in the teaching craft (Ramani & Krackov, 2012). Some research shows that when mentor teachers recognize and openly discuss different teaching strategies, constructive, two-way feedback results (Darden, 2001; Payant & Murphy, 2012; Warner, 2008). Communication should be focused on a critical analysis of student learning, based on evidence, and should name goals for learning and teaching (Edwards-Groves, 2014; Knight, 2013). Situating communication around student learning provides a more effective framework for dialogue (Knight, 2007).

Teachers and their teacher candidates can engage in conversations about mutual issues and concerns only when they see each other as contributing peers who bring value and distinction to the relationship (Warner, 2008). Therefore, using neutral language based on classroom observation maintains a positive relationship and helps student teachers achieve expected milestones (Ramani & Krackov, 2012). Conversely, research has shown that conversations about the practice of teaching might create a context that is too dense, and have a stifling effect on open conversation. Teachers and mentors must be able to think in dialogue, which leads to open communication, and should include feedback regarding topics other than instructional standards (Fulford, 2012). Regardless of the topic of conversation, direct approaches have the most positive impact on feedback and communication, and are preferred by the teacher candidate (Korver & Tillema, 2014). Gomez and Arias (2015) found a positive relationship between comments and performance when mentors made specific suggestions for change, suggesting that specific dialogue between mentor and teacher candidate results in growth and change (Gomez & Arias, 2015).

Specific communication skills can be leveraged despite the context for communication. In an increasingly complex school culture, classroom leaders like mentors must develop a new set of essential communication skills (Kee et al., 2010). Table 2 provides a summary of these skills.

Table 2

Essential Communication Skills

Communication Skill	Intended Outcome
Committed Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek clarity • Gather data • Listen for patterns • Understand need
Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and clarify • Summarize and organize • Shift focus
Presuming Positive Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send positive messages • Affirm the best in others • Framed expectation
Reflexive Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify communication • Identify values • Mediate thinking

(Kee et al., 2010)

Mentors must do more as communicators: they must develop specific skills that promote congruence within the classroom context (Herzog et al., 2012). Essential communication skills evolve as they are modeled by the mentor teacher and practiced by both mentor and teacher candidate (Kee et al., 2010; Russell & Russell, 2011).

Building a Relational Protocol

It is essential to develop specific features of a relationship protocol to maximize the student teacher experience for pre-service teachers and their mentors (Greenberg et al., 2011; Kee et al., 2010; Knight, 2007; Robertson, 2016). Elements of this protocol should be based on

observing, monitoring, and developing the way in which mentors and teacher candidates communicate (Kee et al., 2010; Laneve et al., 2010; Schein, 2011; Schwille, 2008). Student teachers make additional connections between theory and practice when they are involved in a non-evaluative practicum, which makes non-judgmental empathy and confidentiality a hallmark of this protocol (Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015).

First, teachers need a conceptual and common language for discussing their relationships (Carr et al., 2005; Knight, 2007; Schwille, 2008). Since student learning is the desired outcome, the mentor relationship must be a process of shared commitment to improved student learning (Carr et al., 2005). When student learning is at the center of mentor-teacher candidate relationships, a common language develops that effectively sustains the relationship (Carr et al., 2005; Schwille, 2008). This language should include observable indicators that allow mentors and teacher candidates to monitor their conversations about student work, practical classroom practices, and the nature of the developing relationship (Knight, 2007; Laneve et al., 2010). Researchers noted the type of dialogue taking place between mentors and teacher candidates when confronted with different perspectives of the same event, resulting in a need to promote a relational-communicative dimension between mentors and teacher candidates (Laneve et al., 2010). It is necessary, therefore, for both mentors and teacher candidates to participate in professional conversations and professional communities which clearly articulate the thinking, beliefs, and perspectives surrounding teaching (Schwille, 2008; Sharratt, 2016).

Second, the relationship protocol should be based on a developing inquiry approach in both the relationship between a mentor and a teacher candidate, and as a response to classroom experiences (Robertson, 2016; Schein, 2011). Inquiry in an education setting includes positioning both teacher and student as active learners in their setting as co-laborers and co-

learners who assume they must both grow in order to be influential (Sharratt, 2016; Wilhelm, 2007). In the case of pre-service teachers, asking questions is a powerful practice that uncovers meaning from collaborative experiences (Wilhelm, 2007). As a result, understanding can be measured by the types of questions and correspondence seen in the relational dialogue between mentors and teacher candidate (Wilhelm, 2007; Schein, 2011). Mentors must learn to inquire in a non-pejorative way, and use evidence of student learning as a basis for conversation and reflection, rather than become involved in correction or evaluation (Robertson, 2016; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). Specific prompts may also be used to illicit a response for each type of inquiry, and when mentor teachers operate as helpers, they should be careful to avoid questions that assume there is a problem (Schein, 2011). The purpose of inquiry is to attempt full disclosure in order to help, which also includes the context and potential vulnerabilities (Schein, 2011).

Next, mentors and teacher candidates must embark on a journey of continuous assessment of their experiences and expectations during the course of their relationship, setting measurable goals that can be revisited and revised (Knight, 2013; Long et al., 2010). This process requires a mentor teacher to remain engaged through the duration of the entire practicum, engaging in regular contact, collaboration, and sharing growing competencies (McMillan, 2012; Turner et al., 2012). Continuous assessment requires a balance between relational and goal-directed purposes which require the mentor teacher to be both transparent and accessible (Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015).

Research also indicates a need to develop observable indicators of a relationship protocol based on classroom interactions and dialogue processes (Greenberg et al., 2011; Kee et al., 2010; Knight, 2007, 2013). By observing the dialogic navigation system between mentors and teacher

candidates, it is possible to track how they each listen and ask questions (Kee et al., 2010). Creating a document of committed listening and barriers to listening identifies conversation skills needed to produce effective relationships (Kee et al., 2010). Language impacts identity by helping teachers understand who they are and who they might become. It is a powerful means of formulating agency that influences the nature of our relationships (Johnston, 2012; Kee et al., 2010).

Finally, the relationship protocol between mentor teachers and their student teachers should encourage vulnerability (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Rhoads et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2012). Teacher candidates need mentors who practice non-judgmental empathy and who combine the crucial roles of tutor and friend in the relationship (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). A friendly, personal relationship that includes vulnerability encourages openness, making it easier to help student teachers and provide them with emotional support (Izadinia, 2015; Rhoads et al., 2013; Sheridan & Young, 2017). These informal qualities should be complemented with an equal dose of formal mentoring, which provides specific feedback about improving instruction and engaging teacher candidates in more active forms of learning (Hochberg et al., 2015).

Research suggests that this dualistic relationship can be built between mentor and teacher candidate by blending existing, familiar relationship types and expectations (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Additionally, both Knight (2007) and Schwille (2008) note that specific framework indicators predict a successful relationship when based on indicators valued by both mentor and teacher candidate (Knight, 2007; Schwille, 2008). Schwille (2008) recommends looking at forms of mentoring in its unique context, and notes categories as forms of mentoring which include demonstration, debriefing, video analysis, and writing. Schwille also specifies co-teaching, co-

planning and conversations as crucial forms of mentoring (Schwille, 2008). These categories are augmented by research that recommends orienting to the classroom and relationship at the same time in the form of constructivist mentoring (Richter et al., 2013; Sheridan, 2015). This style of collaboration includes turning points where the mentor teacher releases the student teacher to a higher level of independence, while addressing their individual needs and development (Hoffman et al., 2015; Richter et al., 2013; Sheridan, 2015). As part of this framework, it is important to notice how—or if—knowledge transfers from theoretical to practical application, and to ensure knowledge transfer between mentor and teacher candidate (Laneve et al., 2010; Schwille, 2008).

Conclusion

Student teaching is one of the most important learning opportunities for pre-service teachers, moving teaching candidates toward applying theory learned in coursework, and begins the induction process into professional practice (Russell & Russell, 2011; Herzog et al., 2012). Although 97% of teacher candidates found the student teaching experience enjoyable, both mentors and teacher candidates report uncertainty about their roles and relationships (Greenberg et al., 2011). Perceptions about the mentor-teacher candidate relationship and ineffective communication highlight the need for a specific, observable protocol that can be used to measure and guide developing relationships (Kee et al., 2010; Knight, 2007).

Mentors and teacher candidates struggle to identify the same features of a relationship that are necessary and rank them in order of importance. Mentors explain how the confusion could decrease by improved guidelines and communication expectations, yet none exists (Birmingham, 2013; Harris, 2013; Lesham, 2012). Although some research indicates that a mentor teaching class or other forms of professional development are helpful, the literature

shows the absence of a specific protocol or framework to identify necessary, observable aspects of an effective relationship (Council for Accreditation of Teacher Preparation, 2015; The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2013). Mentor teachers and their teacher candidates need to be able to identify familiar aspects of a relationship and leverage what they already know about effective relationships (Keller & Pryce, 2010). They must transfer what they know about communication and relationships and be able to apply it to their new classroom setting (Birmingham, 2013).

There is no context for building the relationship between a mentor and a teacher candidate, no narrative to follow, no genre to define the relationship and give it a voice. Imposing Freytag's Narrative Story Arc onto the events that unfold between a mentor teacher and their teacher candidate helps educators notice how the isolated events may be bound together (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Shree, 2015). Additionally, story provides a common structure to understand the phenomena of relationship that leads to an exchange of ideas (Shree, 2015).

Chapter III

Design & Methodology

Introduction

Pre-service teachers spend up to 16 weeks in a teaching practicum designed to prepare them for the classroom. During this time, teaching candidates work closely with a mentor teacher who is intended to guide, train, and evaluate their classroom experience. Due to this close working relationship, it is important to identify and assess how professional relationships develop, and to identify how the mentor teacher experiences the mentoring relationship (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010; Ambrosetti, 2014; Smith, 2011). As learning needs increase and become more complex, educators must also be able to articulate the teaching process in order to transfer skills to novice teachers (Andreotti et al., 2009; Kahrs & Wells, 2013). Researchers have studied relationships as a way to inform policy and define roles, but have not used data to explore the experience of the relationship or to develop necessary relationship skills (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Polikoff et al., 2015). Studies define how mentors and teacher candidates see their roles separately, but do not trace the development of the relationship, or suggest a relationship protocol (Carr et al., 2005; Harris, 2013; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005).

Narrative inquiry is best suited to determine how the relationship develops between mentors and teacher candidates during teaching practicums and to understand how a mentor teacher experiences the mentoring relationship. It allows the researcher to notice how the elements of the narrative itself shape meaning and understanding of the phenomenon through careful construction (Herman, Phelan, Rabinowitz, Richardson, & Warhol, 2012). Narrative dynamics described through plot provide a lens for data collection, analysis, and interpretation

which accepts multiple ways of knowing and understanding the phenomena (Herman et al., 2012; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

The following research questions were used to guide this inquiry:

1. How do mentor teachers experience the relationship with a teaching candidate?
2. In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story?

The researcher earned a Certificate of Completion “Protecting Human Research Participants” from the National Institutes of Health Office (Appendix A) and obtained HRRC approval from Northwest Nazarene University (Appendix J) to conduct this study.

Research Design

Definition and purpose of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is an interdisciplinary study of lived experiences as told collectively by the researcher and her participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As a research method, narrative inquiry ethnographically considers issues of an ongoing plot by collecting data from participants who have lived a specific experience, and assumes that people understand their experiences by telling their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stanley, 2008). As a methodology carried out in a concrete life space, narrative inquiry prompts the researcher and participants to ask how story shapes experiences of the world and reveals truths about human experiences (Polkinghorne, 2010; Riessman, 2008). As a tool to increase teacher knowledge, narrative inquiry collects stories of lives that will help educators understand problems by understanding the experiences of an individual or a group of individuals (Creswell, 2015; Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005).

Inquiry begins with an interest in a situation or problem of practice that seems troubling, or that should be improved (Xu & Connelly, 2010). It then provides a way to study and think about a phenomenon, uncovering meanings by posing questions that can be answered narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Havermans, L.A., Keegan, A., & Hartog, D.N., 2015). Narrative inquiry frames the problem, offers solutions, and suggests new truths about a phenomenon by entering the story and offering practical insights based on participants' experiences (Creswell, 1989, 2015; Havermans et al., 2015). Narrative is the wise choice for inquiry because it empowers participants and researchers toward improvement through selecting experiences and representing the continuous impact of the story of experience (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Havermans et al., 2015).

Narrative inquiry as reflective sensemaking. Narrative inquiry is intentionally reflective, and begins with reflective prompts that ask mentor teachers to reconsider the stories of their teaching, inviting them to narrate experiences as learners (Lyons, 2009; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). When teachers retell the stories, it opens the door to understanding and encourages them to articulate and address questions in their practice, informing change based on research and reconsideration (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989, 2000; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). This methodology informs others of the lived experiences of teachers, but also illuminates a path to inform change and improvement (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2010). These lived experiences are the beginning and ending point of the excavation of phenomena, and transform experiences into reflective texts (Van Manen, 1990). Rosiek and Atkinson call this a process of changing teachers' secret stories to sacred stories that highlights the tools that inform practice (Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005).

Teachers and readers make meaning through the structure of a story, and narrative inquiry research methodology makes this possible (Bruner, 2002; Lyons, 2009). Rather than creating new knowledge, narrative inquiry contributes meaning to a story that already exists, reforming what is known by retelling an experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987, 2000). When teachers communicate their experiences, the power of narrative also helps teachers make connections between theory and practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Lyons, 2009). According to Bruner (2002), humans make meaning when experiences are organized as a story, and when narrative inquiry is applied to education experiences, teachers can best understand and communicate in terms of the process of narrating a story (Bruner, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005). Narrative inquiry is used as a methodology in this study because it creates a structure for gathering the lived experiences of teachers. Crafting and retelling stories develops and transforms the life story of those who participate, encouraging participants to describe the nuances of their practice which leads to new procedures and future direction (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987, 2000; Clinchy, 2003).

Narrative inquiry as problem solving. Engaging storytellers with issues in a new light is a medium for solving problems through inquiry (Havermans et al., 2015; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). Bruner (2002) explains story as a means for coming to terms with problems we do not understand in our human condition and for grappling with surprises on our learning journeys (Bruner, 2002). Bruner also notes that narrative “is an invitation to problem finding, not a lesson in problem solving” (Bruner, 2002, p. 20); narrative gives us a way to reach a resolution about our own struggles (Bruner, 2002). As such, narrative uses story to describe, critique, and improve the quality of lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2010; Xu & Connelly, 2010). Telling stories is a means to enlist the help of others to improve the collective practice and

mobilize self and others toward change (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008). When groups of educators see themselves in each other's stories, group belonging instigates a need for collective action (Riessman, 2008). Narrative inquiry leads educators to increased action, developing agency in individual problems of practice and opening opportunities for collaborative problem solving (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005; Xu & Connelly, 2010).

Narrative as a shared experience. Chase (2003) indicates that personal narratives, even in their individuality, are inevitably social, and allows participants to reconstruct their experiences in relation to others (Chase, 2003; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987). The resulting impact of a narrative lies in its ability to describe the meaning of lived experiences for individuals, but also convert the experience beyond the individuals and into a shared community of practice (Bruner, 2002; Creswell, 1998, 2015). When individual cases are combined for close analysis, researchers and educators explore individual experiences for discrete and combined purposes, resulting in benefits in the broader community of practice (Clinchy, 2003; Riessman, 2008; Creswell, 2015). Although sometimes criticized for its focus on the individual, narrative inquiry relies on collective understanding since storytelling shares experiences that clarifies our thinking and address misconceptions or biases (Clandinin & Connelly 1989, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This collective sense making empowers educators to create and redefine their worlds through the inquiry experience (Havermans et al., 2015; Clandinin, 2006).

Narrative structure. A narrative inquiry was selected specifically for this study to fully explore the topic through collecting the actions and events of mentor teachers' lived experiences. Narrative inquiry provided a structure to select, organize, and connect a picture of the experience through the universal structure of story (Creswell, 1998; Riessman, 2005). Narrative is a

compelling and persuasive form of methodology that presents ideas about teaching in a rich context that allowed participants and the researcher to construct and reconstruct meaning, and to search for the central and underlying meaning by giving experiences a shape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Creswell, 1998; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). This structure focused on the details of an experience, and how that experience affected participants, but also attempted to include the reader in the broader narrative of the phenomenon, inventing the future from the details of the past (Bruner, 2002; Riessman, 2008).

The narrative inquiry study proposed in this research was designed to address specific aspects of the research questions through careful selection of data collection methods. Table 3 below details the alignment strategies selected to ensure that the chosen methodology unearthed knowledge to answer the research questions. Each method is explored later in this chapter, and reviews how the inquiry was conducted.

Table 3

Data Collection Methods Alignment Chart

Research Question	Data Collection Methods
How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teaching candidate?	Narrative Story Writing Semi-Structured Interview
In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story?	Narrative Story Writing Semi-Structured Interview Freytag's Narrative Story Arc Visual Framework

Connection to theoretical framework. Butler-Kisber (2010) states that narrative inquiry is generalizable to a theory, but not to populations; narrative inquiry benefits from the prior

development of a theory to guide research design and analysis, as well as a strong contextualized process (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Additionally, narrative inquiry assumes that all experience has an underlying structure, and that the theoretical lens is the ideology providing structure to data collection, analysis, and reporting (Creswell, 1998, 2015). When the context is provided through story structure, readers can imagine the experiences of described circumstances, notice gaps, nuances implied by silences, and tensions in the telling (Bruner, 2002; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). Narrative not only provides a methodology, it underpins thinking structures into a framework that guides both theory and practice (Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005).

The theory of narrative, as defined by Newkirk (2104), Bruner (2002) and Bal (1997), provided a constructivist template for building the knowledge and process from this study and generalizing the set of results (Bickman, 1987; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The Narrative Story Arc converted the lived experiences collected during the narrative inquiry into the wide base of understanding “story” as a whole, and invited readers into solving the problems in this research by entering the narrative first through problem finding (Bruner, 2002). The framework of narrative gives the reader a structure for the series of events and outcomes in the data, specializing in “what is in jeopardy” (Bruner, 2002, p.90) as the story of relationship evolves. Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc, specifically, constructed the shape for the phenomenon in this case, and defined the conditions where the phenomena of relationship can be found (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Freytag, 1895).

Participants and Sampling Procedures

This is a narrative inquiry study that used theory-based, criterion sampling to select 38 mentor teachers with a variety of mentoring experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The participants were selected based on those who most likely fit the definitions from the literature

and theoretical framework, and the likelihood that the participants would contribute a piece of understanding to the collective phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants in this study were part of a culture-sharing group who participated in similar professional development experiences, and professional organizations, adopting shared beliefs and vocabulary in their experiences and representing a larger group of mentor teachers working with teaching candidates (Creswell, 2015; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Stake, 1994). The result was a deep contextualized understanding of the mentoring experience, and the opportunity to determine how they experienced the story of their relationship within the same context (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Of the 38 participants, six were male and thirty-one were female. They ranged in age from 27 to 61 years old and represented a sample of the mentor teacher population. The following tables detail participant demographics.

Table 4

Years Teaching

Years Teaching	Percent	Count
3-10	24%	9
11-20	43%	16
20 or more	32%	12

A variety of teaching experience was represented in the population sample, ensuring a balanced perspective of experiences necessary to best focus on the phenomena rather than a

generation, a time period, or a segment of teacher preparation instruction.

Table 5

Grades Taught

Grade Taught	Percent	Count
K-5	35%	13
6-8	27%	10
9-12	37%	14

During the initial survey, data from across grade levels was gathered as a representative sample of the mentor teacher population. The *Grades Taught* table indicates a nearly even split between K-6, 6-8, and 9-12 teachers who participated in the study.

Table 6

Candidates Mentored

Candidates Mentored	Percent	Count
1	24%	9
2-3	27%	10
More than 3	48%	18

Candidates Mentored indicates a variety of experience levels are represented in the data, with roughly half of the mentor teachers mentoring 1-3 teaching candidates and half of the

mentor teachers mentoring more than three teaching candidates.

Table 7

Content Area Specialty

Content Area	Percent	Count
English Language Arts	38%	14
History/Social Studies	5%	2
Mathematics	5%	2
Science	13.5%	5
Special Education	3%	1
Elementary (General)	30%	11
Other	5.5%	2

In regard to *Content Area Specialty*, more than one-third of teachers specialize in English Language Arts, with another third representing elementary classrooms. The other core content areas of science, social studies/history, and science have representation in the study, even though it is a smaller percentage of the sample. Teachers from liberal arts classes such as art, music, and world languages are not represented in the study.

Participants selected for this inquiry study from the Boise State Writing Project and the Idaho Core Coaches Network maximized the ability to describe and explore the phenomena through the research questions as members of overlapping culture sharing groups (Creswell,

2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The Boise State Writing Project is a local chapter of the National Writing Project which is a network of university-based sites that promote writing and learning through professional development, shared resources, and collaborative research (National Writing Project, 2018). The Idaho Core Coaches Network was developed by the Idaho State Department of Education in 2013 to provide support, resources, and mentorship to teachers across four regions in Idaho. Coaches offer professional development to assist teachers in unit planning, strategies, and assessment aligned to the Idaho Content Area Standards (Idaho Core Coaches Network). Participants from both groups for the initial survey were selected based on the literature review and literature regarding narrative inquiry and were also selected based on practical issues of access, ability to integrate and play a role at the site, and depth of access for methodological triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), a researcher should intimately understand the world of their population, including variables relevant to their research. This sample permitted wide access to the lived experiences of mentor teachers, where entry was allowed based on the relationship between the researcher and participants, and existing, trusting relationships (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

After mentor teachers were selected from the sites, the researcher explained the purpose of the research, obtained consent, and answered additional questions regarding the study. Participants were shown how to access Qualtrics for completing the story writing and the researcher shared a general timeline with all participants. Participants were also informed that they may be contacted for an interview after writing their narrative.

Site Selection

The local chapter of the National Writing Project (The Boise State Writing Project) and The Idaho Core Coaches network were selected as the sites for this narrative inquiry due to their ability to best answer the research questions and maintain the consistent culture necessary to bind the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2009). The organizations are known for their professional nature and their willingness to partner with research initiatives; they are also known for strong, highly collaborative teacher membership. The culture of these sites encouraged participants to describe their experiences fully and created a safe space for rapport and the mutual understandings that lead to rich data (Creswell, 2015; Yeh & Inman, 2007). Since the researcher was familiar with the setting, she was granted full access to the site and was welcomed into the narrative process of the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

These sites were also selected due to the access through the researcher's resources and social capital developed in prior partnerships with schools and existing professional networks (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) define access to a site as more than a physical presence, but the ability to build relationships that result in rich data through "delicate interaction rituals" (p. 56). Permission from the leadership of each site at the time of access to the site can be found in Appendices F and G. This research benefitted from immersion in the setting and a more rapid beginning to focused research.

Researcher Position and Reflexivity

The researcher had a vested interest in learning how mentor teachers experienced the story of their relationship with a pre-service teacher in order to best prepare mentor teachers and teacher candidates for entering their professional year. Specifically, it was important to draw a

parallel between the experience of the relationship and the shape of a story in order to orient the process in a common structure. Although the social position of the researcher relative to a participant group might raise objections, merging the phenomena of the story of relationship with this participant group helped situate the data into a coherent whole (Dwyer, 2009; Toma, 2000). This subculture required the researcher to bracket her assumptions and to fully explore her membership identity at the site, including the background that led to this study and the reasons for pursuing this specific research at this specific site (Dwyer, 2009; Kilbourn, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Clandinin and Connelly state that narrative inquiry requires a researcher to begin a study with her own narrative of the experience in mind (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In order to reduce bias, a researcher must note that inquiry becomes autobiographical, and that researchers respond to their own work through the lived experiences of others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2010). Narrative researchers must be aware of their own story and be careful not to shape the story of the participants prematurely based on her own reaction to the work (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2010). For these reasons, the researcher reconstructed her own narrative inquiry history based on the research questions prior to this study to be alert to possible tensions between the study and her own work (Clandinin & Connelly, 2010; Dwyer, 2009; Kilbourn, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The researcher is employed by the College of Education at a large university in the northwest, teaching undergraduate and graduate secondary education coursework and supervising student teachers as a liaison in the field. During her time in the field with mentor teachers and preservice interns, the researcher noticed that a great amount of time was spent encouraging mentors and teacher candidates to build a relationship, including conducting

introductory interviews, facilitating expectations surveys, and playing the “middle man” in communicating opinions, complaints, and logistics. Although these roles fall under the scope of university liaison, the imbalanced and sputtering starts due to creating a working relationship—based on informal observation—impeded the professional, collaborative work intended during the practicum experience. At times, a relationship was so dysfunctional that it required altering a teacher candidate’s student teaching experience, and in several cases, a teacher candidate was removed from the field due to a toxic or unsuccessful relationship. The researcher pursued anecdotal evidence that her experiences were outliers, but noticed instead that unsuccessful relationships were common, partially based on the relationship roulette procedure of assigning mentors, and partially due to a lack of training and tracking roles, which was supported by the literature review in Chapter 2.

On a trip to a new school site, the researcher observed an unusual collaboration and relationship between a mentor and her teacher candidate, as described in the opening narrative of this dissertation. After observing in the classroom, the researcher asked the mentor and teacher candidate what they had been doing in order to build a comfortable, effective relationship. The mentor and teacher candidate looked at each other, and both shrugged. The researcher asked the school principal about the phenomena, wondering if there was an explanation. The principal explained that she only hired teachers who were highly collaborative, and that the culture of the building was created intentionally. As we discussed what this looked like in the classroom, and what this could mean for building capacity between mentors and teacher candidates in teacher preparation, the researcher began to pursue a study with mentor teachers.

Due to access constraints with school districts, the researcher approached the leadership team of two professional education organizations with which she had previous experience.

Working in a familiar site was an asset, since the depth of the study was partly determined by the trustworthiness between participants, and the participants and the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Trustworthiness was partly based on the relationship established with several of the participants, and the collaborative nature of participants who were aware that colleagues within the organizations would be participating in the study. Because these relationships were already valued, recognizing the potential impact of this inquiry required researcher sensitivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

The researcher informally polled teachers in the organization who she was acquainted with from a prior working relationship and determined that partial membership at this site gave her shared language and an experiential base that provided legitimacy in the setting (Adler & Adler, 1987). This acceptance by the participants provided openness and a depth of data that would not be present in the field otherwise (Adler & Adler, 1987; Dwyer, 2007). Bruner (2002) indicates that the magic of a well-wrought story is its interconnectedness between the “knower” and the “known,” so even though role confusion may have impeded the research with the challenge of similarity, being seen as a member of the group under study did not necessarily influence the researcher or the study negatively (Adler & Adler, 1987; Dwyer, 2007; Toma, 2000). Disciplined bracketing, awareness of role in the research, and continuous reflection prevented the researcher from becoming either too removed or too involved. The researcher appreciated the tension in qualitative research that meant she was sometimes “in” and sometimes “out,” but always exquisitely aware of the study and its voices (Dwyer, 2009; Watt, 2007). She kept a personal record during the research process to continually question her own assumptions

and interact with reflections about the process and resulting interpretations, thereby separating her own inquiry space from that of the participants' (Butler-Kisber, 2010).

The researcher was well suited to conduct this research based on her access to the site, trustworthiness with the participants, and her ability to enter and exit the site with the least amount of disruption to the setting. This study gives back to the community at the site by further promoting the teacher leadership goals established by the organization, which created a welcoming, excited mood and willingness to be part of a study seeking to explain a phenomenon significant to the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Tracy, 2010; Wolcott, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical researchers consider how to best protect their participants throughout each phase of research design (Creswell, 2015; Stake, 1994; Tracy, 2010). Entering the world of participants makes qualitative researchers "guests in the private spaces of the world" (Stake, 1994, p. 244). In narrative inquiry, trust is crucial (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participant and researcher rely on each other to create a compelling description of experiences. This process involves mutual and sincere collaboration that requires sensitivity regarding entry and exit into the site (Clandinin & Connelly; Xu, & Connelly, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Specifically, narrative researchers must carefully negotiate transitions, noting that both participants and researcher undergo a change as a result of the collaborative research project (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2010). A specific plan was designed to decrease the risk exposure to this narrative inquiry's participants and ensure that the setting was left unscathed (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher in this study explored how the participating mentor teachers could continue their inquiry and extend the research into future projects to ensure teachers felt included beyond the researcher's exit from the site

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At the conclusion of the survey, teachers were invited to receive a summary of the findings upon the study's conclusion. The design of this study specifically addresses the ethics of each data collection method in the following section.

The Importance of Bracketing

As part of the research process, narrative inquiry researchers must bracket their experiences with the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015; Van Manen, 2016). Bracketing puts aside assumptions or judgments about the phenomena to see it without bias and to help mitigate the potentially negative effects of holding on to preconceptions during the research process (Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Astedt-Kurki, 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). Researchers must look at the phenomenon with an open mind and step outside their own personal frame of reference to describe the phenomenon itself through the participants' point of view (Sorsa et al, 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). When researchers set aside their own descriptions of the experience, including challenges or benefits associated with the phenomena, it opens the way for underlying themes of an experience to emerge without biases attached (Creswell, 1998, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2015; Yuksel & Yileirim, 2015). Bracketing helps the researcher to know *how* they know *what* they know, and uncovers the universal structures that create an experience for people who have *had* the experience (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Moustakas, 1994). Based on mathematical bracketing where operations within the brackets are kept separate from the operations outside of it, phenomenological researchers bracket the assumptions that might create barriers to accessing the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) notes that the bracketing process breaks through the "taken-for-grantedness" (p.215) of the phenomenon under study to get at the meaning and structures of participant experience.

Also called an *epoche* or *phenomenological reduction*, bracketing involves describing only what a researcher sees, and varies the frame of reference and perspectives to point to the truth of meaning in an experience (Moustakas, 1994; Tufford & Newman, 2012; Van Manen, 2016). The ongoing process insists on slow, rigorous, intentional reflection to the details of self-discovery to expose buried emotions and experiences which might taint each stage of the research process (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Tufford & Newman, 2012). During every stage, researchers must carefully address the research questions, respond to their own interview protocol, and explore and gather their experiences with the data so that researcher voices do not mix with the voices of their participants (Moustakas, 1994; Tufford & Newman). Ignoring the bracketing process during any stage of research can result in preconceptions filtering from one stage into another, contaminating the data (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Bracketing requires a new point of view where the researcher considers common understandings in the field and scientific explanations, then sets them aside in order to focus on the details revealed through the study (Yuksel & Yildirin, 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012; Van Manen, 2016). Casting aside conventional wisdom about the topic under study opens researchers and participants to the simple experience and suspends any obstructions to understanding the phenomena through a clear, detailed explanation of the thing itself (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Van Manen, 2016). This process increases the rigor of the project and exposes the essential, underlying meanings of the phenomena with a focus on describing the experiences of the participants rather the interpretations of the researcher (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Bracketing also pushes researchers to know themselves, and by increasing their awareness, helps them make scientifically argued choices based on the participants' point of view (Sorsa et al., 2015; Van Manen, 2016).

Researchers engage in bracketing in a variety of ways. This researcher wrote memos throughout data collection and analysis as a means to examine and reflect on the data as it was gathered (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Tufford and Newman (2012) note that the researcher should have the freedom to express his own understandings while analyzing the experiences of others: “Memoing one’s hunches and suppositions, rather than attempting to stifle them... may free the researcher to engage more extensively with the raw data” (2012, p. 86). Writing memos shows the researcher’s cognitive and observational process, allowing exploration of responses and feelings evoked during this stage of research without adding anything to the data itself (Sousa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Reflexive journaling was also used to maintain a reflective stance and portray the essence of the experience during this research study (Moustakas, 1994; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Bracketing through journaling raises the researcher’s awareness of the topic to a level of consciousness during the entire research process, pointing out details such as the researcher’s personal value system, her place in the power hierarchy of research, or highlighting potential role conflicts which may arise with research participants (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Bracketing is intended to make any hidden meaning in the phenomena visible for examination, bringing any biases nearby the researcher so that she can put them aside (Van Manen, 2016). Bracketing facilitates a deep level of reflection across all stages of the research process and has the potential to enrich the data and interpretation because the researcher has been careful to set aside their previous awareness of the topic under study (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Additionally, bracketing may support the iterative process of research by allowing emerging themes to raise additional questions or contradictions, lead to alternative narratives, or create unexpected perspectives (Tufford & Newman, 2012; Van Manen, 2016). This researcher

practiced a continuous memo process during the data collection and analysis stages to ensure consistent reflection as trends emerged from the data.

Some theorists believe bracketing isn't necessary, and argue that researchers aren't able to completely bracket themselves out of the experience and context of the phenomenon or the participants (Sorsa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Researchers may only be aware of some of their presumptions, and removing the context could distort the data or shrink an essential process (Sorsa et al., 2015; Van Manen, 2016; Wilson, 2014). Instead, some theorists believe researcher experiences should be used to create new understandings through a sense of wonder, becoming "struck with the strangeness of this thing" (Van Manen, 2016, p. 223). Rather than bracketing, researchers might make sense of the phenomenon in relation to their own understandings and world of practice, maintaining a concerned involvement that monitors and explains biases through a constant curiosity (Butler-Kisber, 2012; Sorsa et al., 2015; Van Manen, 2016; Wilson, 2014). This pre-reflective stance was adopted by this researcher, and although the researcher completely bracketed her experiences prior to engaging in the research process and kept memos and reflexive journals, she maintained a sense of curiosity and was aware of the way she was co-constructing meaning with the participants during data collection and analysis (Wilson, 2014; Van Manen, 2016).

Data Collection Methods

Narrative inquiry is noted in social science research as both a theory and a methodology, providing a portal to the phenomena under study and creating a structure to map the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Riessman, 2008). Drawing on these narrative research tools, this narrative inquiry study allowed the researcher to deeply study the lived experiences of a group of teachers by exploring how mentor teachers experience the

relationship with a teaching candidate, specifically by determining how their relationship resembled a story. Comparing the relationship to Freytag's Narrative Story Arc gave the experience structure and a language for explanation that may have otherwise gone unseen or unexpressed (Bal, 1997; Bruner, 2002). The researcher understood what happened in the relationship through the collection of constructs provided for participants to reveal their experiences (Bickman, 1987; Stake, 1994; Tracy, 2010). Rich rigor resulted, and the data adequately answered the research questions through a combination of narrative techniques and the Narrative Story Arc lens (Freytag, 1895; Tracy, 2010).

The design of this research treated narrative inquiry data both individual and collectively and the systematic documentation of procedures created an "account of practice" (Freeman, 2007, p. 26) that increased the standard of quality of this design (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clinchy, 2003; Creswell, 2015). Both the research questions and the methods uncovered the uniqueness of each participant, looked at patterns among participants, and were designed to corroborate and converge into the Narrative Story Arc (Bickman, 1987; Freeman, 2007; Freytag, 1895; Kilbourn, 2006; Stake, 1994). The data collection methods were selected to best describe both the ordinary and the extraordinary to fully represent the environment and the series of events in the setting, as well as allow emergent themes to flourish (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Data were collected, organized, and protected based on chronology, methodology, and participant with a "connoisseur's appetite for the persons, places, and occasions" (Stake, 1994, p. 57; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Table 8 specifies the data management plan for this study. A timeline is provided later in this chapter.

Table 8

Data Management Plan

	Frequency	Time	Equipment	Storage Mode	Private Storage
Narrative Story	1 time	1 hour	Laptop	Qualtrics	Qualtrics
Semi-Structured Interviews	1 per participant	60 minutes	Private conference room or location of participant choice, Digital recorder (2), Copy of interview protocol	Digital recording, Transcript stored in Google Drive folder labeled: "Mentor Interviews"	Audio files stored as MP3s on researcher's pass-protected laptop Transcriptions stored in Google Drive Docs with privacy settings turned on
Visual Framework	1	30 minutes	10 phrases pulled from initial survey and semi-structured interviews Blank digital copy of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc with participants' name for reference	Interactive Google document labeled "Member Checking"	Document in Google Drive Docs with privacy settings turned on

Method 1: Narrative Story Writing

Mentor teachers were asked to explore the beginning, middle, and end of their mentoring experience in the form of a reflective journal entry, structured as a survey (see Appendix C).

Responses were completed using Qualtrics Research Software and hand coded by the researcher.

Journal entries yielded data that was sorted into initial codes and themes, informing how mentor teachers experienced the story of relationship with a teaching candidate through critical self-

reflection, and traced the process to the theoretical framework of the study (Marcelal et al., 2013; Ortlipp, 2008; Smith & Engemann, 2015). In addition to providing rich descriptive detail from the participants' perspective, the reflective journal entries collected in this study suggested prompts for semi-structured interviews which corroborated initial codes and suggested additional themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Smith & Engemann, 2015; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Asking participants to write about their experiences with a preservice teacher requires sensitivity and collaboration since issues may emerge as mentor teachers write the story of their experience which makes them feel uncomfortable or vulnerable (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, the researcher ensured privacy and worked to alleviate discomfort from writing about personal feelings through the following:

- Ensuring the writing was confidential and secure;
- Allowing participants to write the story on their own schedule in a two-week window;
- Allowing participants to write the story on their personal computer, in a space that was comfortable and private;
- Allowing participants access to the researcher during the window to comment, annotate, or collaborate on their story writing.

Table 9 below outlines the plan used for narrative story writing in this study developed through a piloting process conducted prior to the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Table 9

Narrative Story Writing Plan (Original)

Beginning	Middle	End
How did you feel when you first met your teacher candidate?	Describe a few events that occurred in the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate.	Think about the experience or event you described in the Middle. What happened immediately following the highlight or tension? Reflect on what you or your mentor/teacher candidate did or said.
What sort of beginning do you feel you had in your relationship?	What sorts of events did you experience during the relationship? If you feel tension or excitement, describe the event surrounding the tension or excitement.	During the experience of your relationship, how did you resolve conflict?
	What would you say was the biggest highlight or tension of the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate?	How did your relationship end?
What other details would help explain how you experienced the relationship? Is there anything else you want me to know about your experience?		

Three specific suggestions were considered as a result of the pilot. First, participants in the pilot study were not certain if they should select one particular story or teaching candidate to write about, or if their narrative should be a summary of experiences. This researcher opted not to clarify that in the final survey to allow participants in the study to select an impactful relationship or create a summary. Narrative inquiry seeks to clarify experiences, and the sorting process required to retell an experience gives important information about recollection (Bruner, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). Second, participants in the pilot seemed to write vague answers to the grouping of questions. When the prompts were divided into separate questions, data became more rich and detailed. The researcher modified the final survey to separate each of the questions prompts. Last, the researcher wondered if participants in the pilot were not writing as much

because the box for responses was small. The researcher increased the size of the box and made sure the participants knew the box could expand. This resulted in more text, and the researcher adjusted the response box size in Qualtrics to allow for more room in the final survey.

Although the amount of data was still contingent on the participants' written response and its accuracy was based on assuming a true response, written stories collected qualitative data that best expressed the participants' experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2009; Woodcock & Hakeem, 2015). Participants were asked to complete the written story within a two-week window, and the survey was closed in Qualtrics after two weeks. The original and the modified question prompts can be seen below in Table 10.

Table 10

Narrative Story Writing Plan (Modified)

Beginning	Middle	End	
How did you feel when you first met your teacher candidate?	Describe a few events that occurred in the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate.	Think about the experience or event you described in the Middle. What happened immediately following the highlight or tension? Reflect on what you or your mentor/teacher candidate did or said.	What other details would help explain how you experienced the relationship? Is there anything else you want me to know about your experience?
What sort of beginning do you feel you had in your relationship?	What sorts of events did you experience during the relationship?	During the experience of your relationship, how did you resolve conflict?	
	If you feel tension or excitement, describe the event surrounding the tension or excitement.	How did your relationship end?	
	What would you say was the biggest highlight or tension of the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate?		

Method 2: Semi-structured Interviews

Phenomenological interviewing is a well-matched methodology for studying the lived experiences of mentor teachers in this study (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Interviews that support narrative inquiry assume a structure is in place for retelling and sharing experiences, and allows the researcher to reduce patterns to generate

additional categories and concepts (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Riessman, 2008). Semi-structured interviews conducted during this study further described the lived experiences of the participants' world and gave additional meaning to the phenomena under study (Bopp, Wilcox, & Laken, 2009). They were also used to emphasize and explore any gaps in story rendering as applied to Freytag's Narrative Story Arc (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Interviews allowed the researcher to directly ask participants to respond to the research questions and provided a summary and corroboration of data from narrative story writing, constructing additional meaning as participants recalled additional details (Chase, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2009). Specifically, interviews provided a space to "re-story" the written account, and assisted the researcher in generating data for categories and concepts from initial coding (Creswell, 2015; Freytag, 1895; Riessman, 2008).

Although it was challenging to listen to all the voices and steer the questions toward the predetermined line of inquiry, semi-structured interviews also helped the researcher to immediately clarify misconceptions and determine consensus or dissent between information from narrative story writing, or perspectives of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2010; Yin, 2009). The researcher leveraged probes based on initial coding of the Freytag Narrative Story Arc to dig for data not explored in the narrative story writing and employed an informal stance to develop deeper understandings of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher also included member checking protocol, summarizing participants' answers and asking them to agree or clarify with the researcher's understanding. Member checking during semi-structured interviews was coded to ensure accountability.

Mentor teachers were interviewed after obtaining written consent. They were then asked to verbally describe additional details discerned by the researcher from their unique point of view (Bopp et al., 2009; Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). The protocol engaged participants in themes based on Freytag's Narrative Story Arc codes and on additional themes that emerged from journal prompts (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Stake, 1994). The protocol, found in Appendix D, also included questions based on the research questions for this study.

Method 3: Visual Framework

Ideas themselves are a structure, and providing an interactive illustration for participants allows a deeper understanding of their experiences (Bach, 2007; Stake, 1994). Including non-linguistic representations in this study prompted the researcher to look at the connected, subordinated, or additional dimensions that represented a multitude of experiences, and also allowed analysis of emerging categories and patterns (Bagnoli, 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Stake, 1994). The opportunity to explore a visual narrative allowed another layer of meaning to this narrative inquiry and increased the "angle of vision" (p. 282) for both participants and the researcher (Bach, 2007). When participants interacted with a diagram of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, they brought their own needs for form and organization into the experience, which ensured the participants' voice in the research (Bagnoli, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Pillars, 2016; Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). The visual framework represented a concept map, and supplemented writing and interviewing as a way to capture reflective thinking (Butler-Kisber, 2010). See Appendix E for directions used to conduct the visual framework and subsequent focus group prompts.

After writing and participating in interviews, teachers were asked to place a series of events into the shape of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc in order to move beyond a verbal or

written mode of thinking and include an interpretation or understanding that may have otherwise been unnoticed (Bagnoli, 2009). To facilitate this, the researcher selected phrases and descriptions from each mentors' story writing or written transcript that represented one or more of the phases in Freytag's Narrative Story Arc (see Appendix E). The researcher gave the participants a blank digital Arc with descriptive terminology and protocol (see Appendix E) which asked participants to place the events by dragging and dropping them along the shape of the Arc, omitting any events from those provided that didn't seem to fit. These illustrations and stories created a unique member checking procedure that linked the researcher, her findings, the participants, and the theoretical framework together. This interactive process validated the data, and used multiple perceptions and modes of engagement to clarify the meaning gathered in interviews and observations (Bagnoli, 2009; Stake, 1994).

Analytical Methods

Analyzing qualitative data required the researcher to place her "best brains" into the "thick of what is going on" (Stake, 1994, p. 242) in the data. Multiple method data collection complicated the journey toward making meaning, but this rich variety also provided evidence for the inquiry posed in the research questions (Stake, 1994). During data analysis, the researcher distilled information based on the conceptual framework, named essential features of themes in the setting, coded for themes introduced by the theoretical framework, and identified the limits and value of the information gathered through multiple methods (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Freeman, 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Data was analyzed with the assumption that all information was contaminated by human thoughts and action, and that the interpretation of the data was based on the lens of the researcher, the theoretical framework, and the social interactions inherent in the methodology

(Freeman, 2007). As much as possible, the researcher allowed the unit of analysis to be discovered within the context of a story, and used analysis to coax the story, its problems and resolutions, into a rich description of lived experiences (Bruner, 2002; Stake, 1995; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Further, the data was analyzed within the design of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, becoming more focused through initial codes and emerging themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Wolcott, 2008; Yin, 2009). Last, although the data was triangulated with multiple methods and a clear theoretical lens, the researcher understood that human behavior is not static, and that the truth is based on the degree to which the data represents participants' perspectives (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Yin, 2009; Merriam, 1995). Throughout data analysis, the researcher remained open to partial and multiple renderings of the data (Butler-Kisber, 2010).

First, the researcher read through each narrative story writing journal entry to conduct an initial reading, identifying ideas for initial codes or themes (Saldana, 2009). The initial reading also provided analytical leads that increased the notice for patterns in subsequent readings (Saldana, 2009). Data was then read by question prompt in the survey, and the researcher began descriptive coding for emergent themes. This thematic analysis focused on the content of the data to generate a group of concepts that could ultimately be theorized across a collection of individual narratives and isolated the participants' experience (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Riesmann, 2008). The researcher responded to the data with an intuitive eye for patterns and common themes while keeping the individual stories intact, noticing that variant code patterns emerged based on the question prompt from the survey (Chase, 2003; Riessman, 2008, Saldana, 2009). A tabular account summary was developed in an Excel spreadsheet to index the data's contents and

prepare for analysis. In Vivo Codes were included in the tabular summary to ensure a mix of “participant-inspired” codes (Saldana, 2009, p. 75).

The researcher then conducted a structural analysis based on the five identifying markers existing in Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc. Structural analysis referenced the genre of the research and reinforced the thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008). Conducting both a thematic and structural analysis triangulates the data and builds theories that may have been missed in one analysis alone (Riessman, 2008). The researcher also added a category to code connections between emergent themes to notice an overlap of thematic and structural codes. Table 11 below is a sample from the thematic coding process of participant surveys.

Table 11

Thematic Code Sample from Survey

Traits (Positive)	Traits (Negative)	Collaboration	Fear of Judgment
Open to mentoring	Close minded	“We always had give and take.”	“Fear and inadequacies as a hurdle.”
Reflective	Argumentative	“Need to stand on their own.”	“Trying to prove she could do the job better.”
Interested in learning	Shy	“Their success is my success.”	“Unsure what she needed.”
Engaged	Confused	“This relationship is positively reciprocal.”	“Push me to address how I handle conflict.”
Strong content knowledge	Uninterested	“Grew together in a safe place.”	“Brings my lack of knowledge to light.”

Next, the researcher used Freytag’s Narrative Story Arc to determine the existence and frequency of the codes in the narrative story writing and looked for patterns of saturation and omission in these structural themes. These patterns were identified for each individual story and

compared between stories. Patterns and emergent themes determined the need for interviews to pursue additional lines of inquiry and clarify emergent and outlier themes (Saldana, 2009). After interviews were conducted and transcribed, they were coded for both emergent themes and Freytag's Narrative Story Arc structural themes. Table 12 below identifies the structural coding themes, definitions, and codes as used by the researcher.

Table 12

Freytag's Narrative Story Arc Codes

Coding Theme	Definition	In-Text Code
Beginning or Introduction	The opening scene and setting, how the story begins	BEG
Rising Moments or Complications	Series of events that build the action, might include a series of events or conflicts	MID1
Climax or Conflict	The moment of greatest tension or excitement	MID2
Falling Action	Events that happen as a result of the conflict or climax	END1
Resolution or Exodus	Someone solves the problem	END2

(Freytag, 1985; Prince, 1987)

Last, the researcher facilitated the visual framework placement, obtaining digital photos of the frameworks completed by the focus groups. The researcher concluded her analysis by tracing the development of themes across individual narratives and between methodologies. She

also noted how individual participants, and participants as a whole, saw the structure of story in their lived experiences.

Limitations

Limitations are restrictions in a study which may impact the results, creating potential weaknesses in the data or overall research (Creswell, 2015). Limitations are not controlled by the researcher, and may include the following:

- Participants answered honestly and completely
- Answers were impacted by personal bias
- Researcher bias
- Personality conflicts between participants
- Participants dropping from the study

(Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016)

This narrative inquiry study was bound by the membership of participants in two professional education organizations. The participants were selected based on their ability to provide rich, descriptive detail to explore the phenomena of how mentors experience a mentoring relationship (Creswell, 2015; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Yin, 2009). Several limitations impacted the study: A great amount of time was required to read and code narrative stories and transcripts, conducting multiple interviews required to notice patterns in the data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Although it was not challenging to gain access to the setting, the researcher's presence encouraged conversation and collaboration which took time. Next, scheduling interviews and focus groups inconvenienced the participants, and required flexibility and accommodations that may have impacted the mindset of the participants, based on the day's events. Human error and accountability may have impacted methodological

triangulation, since what humans do can often be different from what they say (Stake, 1995). Last, researcher reflexivity provided a depth of information not likely in other methodologies, but may have created researcher bias as trustworthiness was developed during the course of the study (Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The relationship between a mentor teacher and teaching candidate has been primarily evaluative and managerial, with only recent shifts into more collaboration and changing perspective (Finch & Fernandez, 2013; Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Keller & Pryce, 2010). Difficult relationships that develop impact the practicum experience while a positive relationship moves a new teacher into the classroom, allowing the teaching candidate access to learning (Cuenca, 2011; Rhoads, Samkoff, & Weber, 2013; Sheridan, 2015; Turner, Zanker, & Braine, 2012; Woodcock & Hakeen, 2015). Successfully training teachers must also include successfully developing relationships (Ambrosetti, 2014; Sheridan & Young, 2017). In order to maximize the student teaching experience, which in turn impacts student learning in the K-12 classroom, it is important to learn how the relationship develops between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate, beginning with how the mentor experiences the relationship. Current literature does not explain the experience and the process to achieve a professional relationship, detail how the relationship develops, how mentors experience the relationship, or how to intervene when a relationship does not develop (Ali, et al., 2014; Barrera et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Leshem, 2012; Rhoads et al., 2013).

Results from the data in this study address the following research questions:

1. How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teaching candidate?
2. In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story?

Data from this study explores how mentor teachers experience the mentoring relationship, and compares the development of the relationship to a traditional story arc. Mentor teacher experiences are deconstructed by comparing it to a story, and the researcher reconstructs the relationship to better understand its development (Bal, 1997; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Bruner, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Data from initial surveys and semi-structured interviews provide a genre for understanding relationship as a story and uncovers the series of events experienced by mentor teachers, drawing parallels between a narrative story arc and the mentoring experience.

This chapter is organized based on the data collection and analysis process, following the story of the participants as it unfolded:

Step 1: Initial survey

Step 2: Analyzing patterns and trends

Step 3: Descriptive coding for emergent themes

Step 4: Coding for structural themes (Freytag's Narrative Story Arc)

Step 5: Developing a tabular account summary

Step 6: Selecting semi-structured interview participants

Step 7: Analyzing patterns and trends

Step 8: Descriptive coding for emergent themes

Step 9: Coding for structural themes (Freytag's Narrative Story Arc)

Step 10: Developing connections between thematic codes and structural codes

Data collection and analysis concluded with a member checking process which included a visual representation of the data that participants verified by manipulating themes from the data and placed into a visual structure.

Demographics

Thirty-eight certified teachers ranging in age from 27-61 participated in the initial survey. All participants were members or alumni of the Idaho Core Coaches or the Boise State Writing Project. Thirty-two participants were female; six were male. Figure 2 demonstrates the different levels of experience within the participant group.

Figure 2

Years Teaching

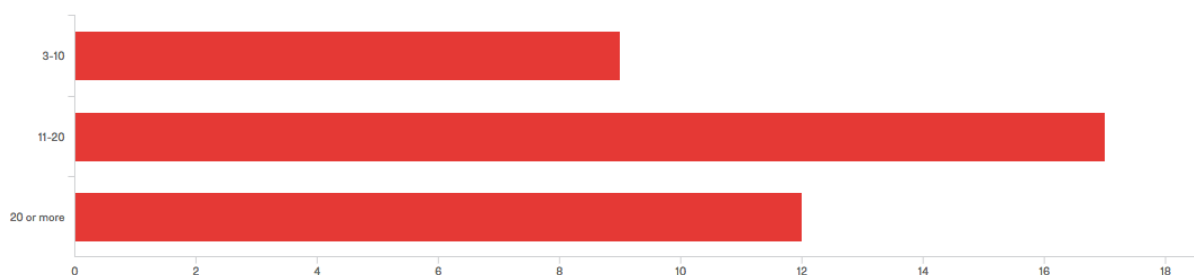


Figure 3

Grade Taught

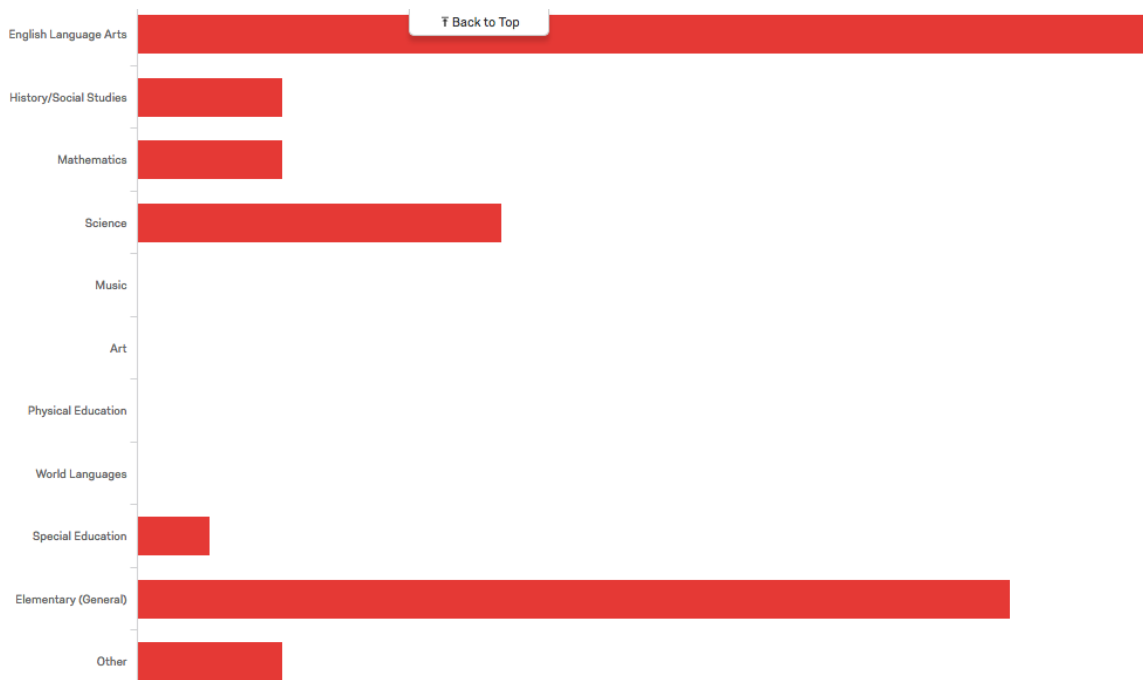


Each core content area was represented in both elementary and secondary teachers due to the make-up of the culture sharing groups providing participants: art, music, physical education, and world languages are not generally represented in the Idaho Core Coaches or the Boise State Writing Project. Although this group of teachers was not intentionally left out of the participant

pool, it was less likely that a participant from these subject areas would emerge. Figure 4 illustrates the variety of subject areas represented in this study.

Figure 4

Content Area Specialty



Data was collected from mentor teachers with diverse levels of experience, as noted in Table 13.

Table 13

Number of Teacher Candidates Mentored

Number of Teacher Candidates Mentored	Number of Participants
1	9
2-3	11
3 or more	18

Prior to conducting semi-structured interviews, surveys were reread to provide the researcher with “analytic leads for further exploration” (Saldana, 2009, p. 81). Participants were

selected from these leads for semi-structured interviews which would expand and clarify emergent and structural codes from the initial survey. Pseudonyms were assigned to interview participants to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

Results from Surveys

Mentor teachers experienced the beginning of their relationship with a teaching candidate as an exciting time of mixed emotions. They reported being both excited and a little apprehensive about the importance of their actions as a mentor for beginning teachers. One teacher noted feeling nervous about the potential that her teaching methods were outdated; others looked forward to the energy that another adult in the classroom could create. Although several teachers admitted to feeling anxious with a “bit of tension,” most mentor teachers reported a strong sense of excitement to help new teachers “learn this crazy craft” of teaching. Overall, the themes of personality traits, collaboration, and uncertainty and discomfort emerged from the initial survey with mentor teachers.

Personality traits. At the beginning of the relationship, mentor teachers experienced their relationship with mentor teachers by noticing the personality of the teaching candidate. Mentor teachers perceived both desirable and undesirable traits and experienced their teaching candidate initially with a great deal of sensitivity. Each participant listed and described traits they perceived when they met their teacher candidate for the first time. Mentor teachers noticed whether or not teaching candidates appeared open to being mentored, wanted to help out in the classroom, or tried new things. Data from the initial survey also showed that mentors noticed when teacher candidates were interested and engaged, or were perceived to have a strong work ethic. Some mentor teachers also pointed out an initial perception of level of commitment. Table

14 shows categorical trends in the data based on perceived traits during initial meetings between mentor teachers and teacher candidates:

Table 14

Perceived Traits of Teacher Candidates

Desirable Traits	Undesirable Traits
Open minded	Closed minded
Driven	Lazy
Interested	Uninterested
Looking to improve	Arrogant

The survey also revealed that mentor teachers experienced the relationship differently if they had met the teacher candidate previous to a candidate's placement in the mentor's class. For example, if mentors and candidates had attended a class or event together, taught in school together, or were introduced by a common acquaintance, mentor teachers experienced the relationship through the lens of a prior meeting. Mentor teachers reported that this meeting influenced the way they perceived the relationship by providing a "context" or an "advocate" for their relationship. This gave credibility to the teaching candidate through the shared relationship of a common colleague. Mentor teachers noted that they saw the relationship as "more of a collaboration" and that there were "no tensions because we met." One mentor teacher indicated that it was easier to develop a relationship and get to know each other if they had mutual contacts or contexts.

Collaborative outcomes. Mentor teachers experienced a variety of collaborative outcomes from their relationship with a teaching candidate. First, mentor teachers noted that

their teaching candidate became a thinking partner on an “equal playing field” who co-teaches and co-plans in their shared classroom. Teachers noted a give-and-take that is “positively reciprocal” and allowed both mentor teacher and teaching candidate to grow together in a safe place during the course of their relationship. Second, many mentor teachers noticed a shared positioning, a relationship that included levels of sharing their ideas and problems, resources, and solutions to queries that arise in the classroom. One mentor teacher noted that “[the candidate’s] success is my success.” Last, mentor teachers reported a collaborative space in the relationship as a place to learn: “I learned as much from her.” Although a few mentor teachers described how their teaching candidates needed to better learn how to stand on their own and not over-rely on the team of veteran teachers, the majority of mentor teachers noted a positive collaboration where they “grew together in a safe space.”

Uncertainty and discomfort. Mentor teachers experienced uncertainty and discomfort as part of their relationship with a teaching candidate. Four specific categories of uncertainties and discomfort emerged from the survey data of mentor teachers: professional challenge, loss of identity, discomfort in their role, and professional inadequacies. Table 15 includes samples responses by mentor teachers for each of these categories.

Table 15

Sample Responses by Mentor Teachers

Professional Challenge	It felt like she was continually trying to one-up me.
	She was trying to prove she could do the job better.
	He didn't think I knew what he was supposed to do.
Loss of Identity	It was hard to give up control.
	I had to let her try.
	I had to let her take over despite that being my identity.
Discomfort	I feel like the bad guy.
	I was unsure what she needed.
	He pushed me to address how I handle conflict.
Professional Insecurities	I felt like I wasn't the best teacher.
	It brought my lack of knowledge to light.
	I feel like my methods are outdated.

In general, mentor teachers experienced a variety of types of discomfort and uncertainty in their relationship with a teaching candidate. They perceived a challenge to their expertise, both directly from comments or interactions with a teaching candidate, but also as internal insecurities that highlighted inadequacies. Mentor teachers saw these insecurities as a hurdle to the relationship and credibility balance. They were unsure of the challenges of being an expert and noted there are “days you feel like you don't know what you are doing.” In addition to feeling inadequate, many mentor teachers wanted to avoid conflict and were challenged to address confrontation when cast as an evaluator in the classroom. Overall, mentor teachers experienced a struggle to be the model that was expected or that the teaching candidate had hoped for.

Results from Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with eight mentor teachers provided depth and description to information from the initial surveys. Interview participants were selected by data in initial surveys that indicated the participant could provide additional details to best answer the research

questions for this study. Thematic codes emerged from coding interviews and coding between interviews and initial surveys and helped develop a sense of conceptual organization (Saldana, 2009). The following four basic themes emerged from semi-structured interviews with mentor teachers:

- Mentor teachers experience a variety of expectations in the relationship.
- Mentor teachers experience desirable and undesirable traits in teaching candidates.
- Mentor teachers experience emotional disequilibrium in their relationships.
- Experiences of mentor teachers impact the relationship with a teaching candidate.

Variety of expectations. Mentor teachers experienced a variety of expectations in their relationship with a teaching candidate. Initially, they experienced the expectation that the relationship would be “great,” and expected their teaching candidate to have a foundation of theory and practice, grounded in a contemporary view of pedagogy. Mentor teachers reported anticipating a “great relationship” and expected to help their teaching candidate through developing a strong relationship. “We’re gonna form this relationship together and I’m gonna help him,” noted one mentor teacher.

Other mentor teachers reported experiencing the relationship as different than they anticipated. One teacher said, “I unfairly assumed it would be a female”; another noted, “I was thrown off/taken aback” by the non-traditional age of the teaching candidate. Yet another mentor teacher was surprised by the need to “cajole” and “mother” her teaching candidate who was hesitant to interact in the classroom. Some mentor teachers anticipated the need to change their teaching candidates’ pedagogy practices or response to classroom behaviors, expressing that they saw their role of mentor as a challenge. These teachers anticipated teaching candidates who were unwilling to change: “He was presented to me as like a project.”

In contrast, a group of mentor teachers expressed clear expectations of “what’s important to us” as they entered a relationship with a teaching candidate, anticipating the need to show candidates how to apply practices in the classroom: “The purpose of the relationship is for the teacher candidate to see application in the classroom.” These mentor teachers expressed a shared expectation of success, but that the teaching candidate wasn’t going to “show up as that person on day one.” These mentor teachers also expected that they will “get through it together” and assumed they would help teaching candidates achieve success in the classroom.

Desirable and undesirable traits. Mentor teachers explained their mentoring experience by describing traits they noticed in their initial meeting with teaching candidates. Based on each interview, mentor teachers experienced both desirable and undesirable traits prior to establishing or developing a relationship with the teaching candidate. Table 16 details how mentor teachers expressed the traits they noticed in teaching candidates.

Table 16

Desirable and Undesirable Traits

Undesirable Traits	Desirable Traits
odd personality, quirky, socially awkward	kind, friendly, caring, passion for kids
arrogant, trying to impress, defiant	willing to share, proactive
not prepared, didn’t know teaching	open to feedback, growth mindset
emotionally removed, scared, hunched	on the ball, competent, dedicated
not interested in listening, not mature	see teaching as serious, has a stake in this
lack of “notice,” not acknowledge mistakes	well trained, assertive, ready

Mentor teachers describe traits they perceived at the onset of their relationship with teaching candidates with specificity, describing desirable traits as the “ability to process 20 open windows” and noticing the difference in their perceptions of a teaching candidate who *appears* competent and one who *wants to appear* competent to teach. Traits such as being “ok with ambiguity” or having the “ability to name practice” impacted mentor teachers as desirable in their relationship experience, while “she didn’t know her stuff,” or appearing unaware of what was going on around them was described in one interview with a tone of disdain.

Perceptions. Mentor teachers experienced tension in the way they perceive themselves as teachers during their relationship with a teaching candidate. They reported wanting to have credit for “knowing” during the relationship, but instead were left feeling uncomfortable professionally, and experienced an erosion of their confidence. They described a feeling much like that of going to the dentist: it’s one more thing to “get through.” These perceptions are best described in detailed descriptions from three interview participants. Pseudonyms are used to retain confidentiality of participants.

Mrs. Hurl. Mrs. Hurl teaches elementary students in a suburban district in the Northwest. From the beginning of the relationship, Mrs. Hurl felt as if her teaching candidate, Todd, didn’t trust her input. Todd began asking questions about his placement, and the expectations for his time in Mrs. Hurl’s classroom. When Mrs. Hurl explained the details of his placement to Todd, he insisted that the information was incorrect, and noted that he would check with his university supervisor to find out. Questions about the placement led to questions about classroom expectations. During one afternoon of preparing for the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Hurl asked Todd to help create packets that the whole grade level would be using on the first day of school. Todd complained, stating that stapling papers wasn’t what he expected to do in the

classroom. Mrs. Hurl said this was a metaphor for everything that happened in their relationship. “I felt like I wasn’t credible,” she said, “and that he doubted everything I said.”

Over time, this feeling intensified, and Mrs. Hurl began to “question some things” about her own teaching practice. The perception that Todd was judging her “left a negative impact in my own feelings,” Mrs. Hurl noted, “and it impacted how I felt about myself, and then felt about my teaching.” Mrs. Hurl felt as if she was failing, began to internalize the questions, and explained that she started thinking about the issues at home, where internalizing things “took up emotional space” in both her personal and professional life. Even after confronting her teaching candidate about her concerns toward the end of the semester, Mrs. Hurl was left feeling confused and disempowered. She ended her description with a sigh: “Sometimes I wonder what this relationship--what the student teacher relationship *is*.”

Mrs. Waters. Mrs. Waters teaches high school English Language Arts in a large urban district in the Northwest. A veteran teacher, she has hosted a variety of teaching candidates, but during the interview, focused on a recent experience that impacted her. Mrs. Waters perceived her relationship with a specific teaching candidate as frustrating, noting specific instances that were “frustrating” or “a disaster.” Table 17 details several frustrations Mrs. Waters described in the interview.

Table 17

Mrs. Waters' Frustrations

Mrs. Waters' Frustrations
“‘Look, I’m tellin’ ya this is what’s gonna happen if you do this.’ And then she did some other thing.”
“She did it while I was gone which was just really defiant.”
“It was kind of a ‘I told you so’ moment with her but then I knew otherwise.”
“When they asked questions, she didn’t know the answers.”

After exploring these frustrations in the interview, Mrs. Waters concluded that teaching candidates have a lack of confidence in their abilities and their degree, noting both that teaching candidates need to be more reflective, but also should be “moved to someone else” if the relationship isn’t working. Mrs. Waters perceived the relationship with her teaching candidate as insignificant: “I always felt like it didn’t matter—like in the end it didn’t matter how I felt about her. We had to get through this experience.”

Mr. Matthews. Mr. Matthews teaches a variety of subjects and grade levels in a suburban school district in the Northwest. His perception of the relationship with a teaching candidate is determined by “how a person interacts” with him during the relationship. He entered his relationship with his teaching candidate believing “I could have a collaborative relationship” and that it would take an effort by both parties to work together. He explained that it’s important to “get to know the humanity of a person.”

Mr. Matthews perceived his relationship with a teaching candidate as a parallel to building relationship with students in his classroom: “I tried to respond like a teacher to a

student,” he said, “You think about all the mileage and all the stuff that does for you as a classroom teacher when you do that with kids.” Mr. Matthew noted that a better relationship “makes things easier when times get hard,” making it necessary to develop a relationship regardless of the teaching candidate’s perceived traits or reputation.

Experiences that impact the relationship. A variety of experiences impacted the relationship between participating mentor teachers and their teaching candidate in this study. These experiences are based on a combination of “moves” made in the classroom. Subthemes in the data suggest the following subcategories: (1) moves of the mentor teacher; (2) moves of the teaching candidate; (3) moves in the environment, including the impact of mentor teacher training and the perception of pleasurable company.

Mentor teacher moves. Semi-structured interviews revealed the need for mentor teachers to build a strong relationship with their teaching candidate. One participant noted that developing a relationship of care and support “beyond the world of education” is critical to the work that teachers do within their school and other relationships. A relationship of care is essential, and teaching candidates must feel they are valued, have something to contribute, and that they are a wise investment as humans in the relationship, not as their role as a teaching candidate. One participant, Ms. Leads, explained that conversations at the beginning of the relationship, instigated by the mentor teacher, built the foundation of the relationship experience: “It’s on you to help develop or start a strong relationship,” she said, noting that there is more “weight” on the mentor teacher simply based on life experiences. Although the relationship should be reciprocal, Ms. Leads explained, the “mentor teacher needs to take the lead, the mentor teacher is supposed to be the leader.” Ms. Leads asserted that a mentor teacher has “taken the role to be the

leader...the coach...the guiding force.” The moves that mentor teachers make begins, guides, and shapes the relationship that develops between mentor teachers and teaching candidates.

Tension with the kids...	...totally impacts relationship.
If there is a disconnect between the teaching candidate and the students...	...it gets personal.

When the skills and knowledge of the teacher candidates impacted students in a perceived negative way, the mentor teacher approached the relationship

Teaching candidate moves. Choices a teaching candidate makes in the classroom impact how a mentor teacher perceives the relationship, both positively and negatively. When teaching candidates expressed interest in a dialogue about teaching, or the “search for what’s right or what’s gonna work,” mentor teachers found a bond in their relationship. When teaching candidates expressed a passion for teaching and for the impact they can have on students, mentor teachers perceived the relationship more positively. Conversely, when the choices of the teaching candidate resulted in the mentor teacher “feeling like a disciplinarian” or “feeling like the relationship doesn’t matter,” the relationship was impacted by these experiences. If there was tension between a candidate and the students, mentor teachers noted that the relationship was also impacted.

Environment moves: pleasurable company. Mentor teachers saw the environment of a teaching candidate’s company as an influencer of their relationship. “It works best when you can enjoy the company of the intern,” one participant in the interviews noted. Mentor teachers experienced the environment as “good” or “compatible” when the teacher candidates are “matched” with the right mentor teachers. They also noted that the environment became “strained” when a candidate “thinks she knows more than the teacher in the room.” Mentor teachers described the environment of “need” in the relationship: (1) “there is a *need* to know the

person;” (2) “we *need* to build a relationship prior;” (3) “we *need* formal relationship building;” (4) “I *need* to get to know them in the beginning.” Moves in the environment of the classroom impacted the experience a mentor teacher has with a teaching candidate.

Environmental moves: Mentor teacher training. Mentor teachers experienced the relationship with a teaching candidate differently after the opportunity for coaching experiences in mentoring. Prior to coaching, mentor teachers expressed that they “shift out of best practice when the relationship is rough,” but that “exposure” to coaching improved their relationship experience. Book studies or participation in a coaching team changed the way the mentor teacher addressed the relationship by helping them “differentiate” the experience for teaching candidates, collaborated with other mentors, or provided a safer space to build a relationship. Mentor teachers in this study expressed the need for mentor teachers to have training and feedback on their mentoring abilities, and indicated that training improves the environment of their relationship. The mentoring relationship is a dynamic event, according to participants surveyed, and changes based on their teaching candidate’s action or inaction in the classroom, the choices they make as mentors, and the environment established by these moves.

Connections Between Surveys and Interviews

Second cycle coding drew connections between initial surveys and semi-structured interviews, reanalyzing the data from emergent and structural themes (Saldana, 2009). This process knit categories together, intentionally overlapping data from both methodologies. Pattern coding in this process collapsed the data that was similarly coded, while focused coding of the categories based on their themes helps explore how the categories are related to each other (Saldana, 2009). Patterns emerged between survey and interview data to create a type of metacode of the data, making a more meaningful unit of analysis to explore (Saldana, 2009).

Strong connections in the data were noted between perceived teacher candidate traits and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship. This data was clustered to note the relationship between the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Additionally, a pattern developed between the perceptions of a teacher candidate's skills and knowledge and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship. For this analysis, responses by the same participant were analyzed together. In some instances, the participant mentioned both the perceived trait or the perceived skill connected to their response to the relationship in the same phrase or sentence. In other cases, the mentor teacher connected the two, but the connection may have occurred in different segments of the survey or interview. Each are noted in the findings in separate tables, or by the use of ellipses to denote the data was gathered from a single phrase or breath.

Traits and Response to the Relationship

Mentor teachers responded in their relationship to a teaching candidate based on perceived traits noticed at the beginning of the relationship. Table 18 shows a sample of the data that demonstrates connections between perceived traits and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship. Information in this table represents data collected during semi-structured interviews, but are not necessarily stated within the same breath or sentence.

Table 18

Perceived Traits and Response to Relationship: Same Interview

Perceived Trait	Trait Connection to Response to Relationship
He carried a demeanor of knowing everything.	I could tell right away what kind of semester it was going to be.
She was outgoing and friendly and eager.	I felt immediately comfortable. I was excited.
Arrogance and a lack of humility.	I tend to back off from people like that.
Energy, work ethic, intrinsically motivated.	This was a person I wasn't going to have to babysit.
Teaching takes the traits of commitment, dedication, and knowledge.	If they are not committed to students, the classroom, and the work, then it is a struggle to work with them.
Open to feedback, to questions, to doing something different than they're used to.	It impacts the relationship you have with them.

Table 19 shows a sample of the data that demonstrates connections between perceived traits and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship that was expressed in the same breath or sentence from surveys or during semi-structured interviews.

Table 19

Perceived Traits and Response to Relationship: Same Breath or Sentence

Perceived Trait	Trait Connection to Response to Relationship
When I had a driven, dedicated, knowledgeable intern who was willing to learn...	...our relationship was great.
Challenging interns who were hard to communicate with or weren't committed to the work...	...made our relationship difficult.
She was assertive in sharing ideas and taking responsibility for tasks...	...It made me feel more like planning with a colleague than mentoring.
You have to be able to interact with people before you can actually apply pedagogy methods...	...to be able to teach them.
If the intern cannot dedicate the time needed to make the classroom experience valuable...	...this makes for a challenging time.
When an intern comes in thinking he knows more than the teacher in the room or is unwilling to learn...	...the relationship becomes strained.
I could sense her readiness, her assertive, proactive characteristics...	...that changed our relationship...cool, we are going to be collaborating and building cool stuff together.

Data in both tables demonstrate how mentor teachers reflect on the connection between the traits perceived in a teaching candidate's personality and the impact noticed or predicted in their relationship.

Ability and response to the relationship. Mentor teachers experienced a change in their relationship with a teaching candidate based on their perceived abilities in the classroom. Data from surveys and semi-structured interviews demonstrated a connection between the teacher candidate's abilities in pedagogy or management and a response to their relationship. When the ability of the teacher candidates impacted student learning or behavior, the mentor teacher approached the relationship differently, even noting the need to move out of "best practice" with

the candidate in their frustration. Based on the data collected, mentor teachers felt tension in the relationship if a teacher candidate needed more support or thought they had achieved mastery in the classroom. Table 20 outlines data collected from surveys and semi-structured interviews between perceived ability in the classroom and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship. Statements are from the same sentence or breath, as indicated by ellipses.

Table 20

Perceived Ability and Response to Relationship

Perceived Ability	Ability Connection to Response to Relationship
He needed more support...	...this made the relationship very difficult.
He thought he had mastered most of the skills...	...this did not help our relationship.
His struggle with the behavior of many students...	...[was] the thing that defined our relationship the most.
If the intern isn't knowledgeable about the content and the practice of teaching...	...it is difficult to work with them.

When the skills and knowledge of the teacher candidates impacted students in a perceived negative way, the mentor teacher approached the relationship differently. This resulted in frustration, a desire to quit the mentoring experience, and defeat expressed as "I don't know what else to do."

Data from most participants show a connection between the teaching candidate's perceived traits or abilities and their willingness to engage in a positive relationship, however, two participants reported on the importance of maintaining a relationship despite their perceptions. One participant expressed the idea that in the relationship with a teacher candidate "the feelings about that person don't really matter," noting that the focus should remain on the shared students in the classroom, not the relationship being developed between the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate. Conversely, another mentor teacher drew a parallel between

the need to build a relationship with a teacher candidate and the “mileage you get with kids” when teachers spend time building a relationship: “You’re not gonna get out of your students what they’re capable of until you build that relationship.”

Results for Research Question #1

In this study, Research Question #1 asked the following: How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teacher candidate? This section relives the participant’s story, maintaining the integrity of each individual retelling to better determine what the participant is trying to say (Reissman, 2008). The content of individual stories used to address the research question is the exclusive focus of this section, as the researcher notes the value of each narrative’s ability to hold meaning, rather than examining partial renderings (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Riessman, 2008). Data showed that participants experienced the relationship with a teaching candidate in three distinct ways: (1) through collaboration; (2) with a desire to help, and; (3) with a concern for students. In addition to exploring these themes in answer to Research Question #1, this section also explores a microanalysis of three participants’ stories to draw a clear parallel between specific narratives and the research question (Riessman, 2008).

Experience relationship through collaboration. Collaboration changed the relationship between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate to the status of a colleague. Data from semi-structured interviews highlight how the presence or absence of collaboration between the mentor teacher and teaching candidate impacted the experience of their relationship. This theme emerged across several participants’ narratives. Mr. Matthews notes that “at times I felt more like I was collaborating with a colleague as much as I was mentoring an apprentice teacher.” Mr. Matthews was impacted by collaboration in his stance toward the relationship, and he felt he had “more of a stake in this” due to a feeling of collaboration. He also noted that when mentor

teachers and teaching candidates are “in it together,” they are both more willing to take risks and “invest in them and dig in” to both the relationship and classroom processes. Participants also noted that they experienced collaboration when they agreed on what was important in the classroom together with their teaching candidate. When the collaborative focus is on student learning, “how we get them there together” became central to the relationship.

Mr. Ramirez expressed the need to have a collaborative relationship and have “more, more collaboration up front.” He experienced a level of collaborative excitement when his teaching candidate was open to feedback and questions, and felt a bond develop when they collaborated through passion for their students. Conversely, he also noted that when a relationship moved away from being collaborative due to stressors in the classroom, it created a break in the ability to remain working together. “You get more direct because it’s not working,” he noted, resulting in a shift from being collaborative to “telling.” One mentor teacher also saw the relationship extend beyond the classroom to include other teachers in the building as they worked collaboratively to “bring up these student teachers.”

Experience relationship through a desire to help. Mentor teachers reported excitement and being positioned to help their mentee teachers and often expressed being willing to “do anything I could” to serve their needs. Mrs. Natters expressed this theme through describing the importance of *need*: “I need to be of service to somebody or to serve others, and I think that’s part of...a teacher...those innate characteristics.” She noted that “their ability to teach is not the biggest priority” during the first semester as a teacher candidate, and that it was acceptable if they need “a little bit more help.” Mrs. Natters believed that no matter how much help teacher candidates need, “you end up with the same result” in the end, and that it was her job to “help them learn how to be a teacher.”

Even when the relationship was difficult, mentor teachers wanted to find a way to be needed. Mrs. Hurl expressed frustration when her teaching candidate appeared to not need her. She expected to be needed, and expressed bitterness and sadness at not being needed: “I’m supposed to be the expert—whatever.” After a meeting to try to improve the relationship with a teacher candidate, Mrs. Hurl persisted in her desire to help, noting “I felt like he could learn.” Another mentor teacher recalled that his teaching candidate was presented to him “as a project” and he was eager to help discover ways to help him succeed: “I’m gonna help him....I was like ‘Oh, I can totally change that,’ which you can’t. You can help people change themselves, but you can’t change anyone.” The mentor teacher noted that it does not matter how much he wanted to help; the relationship did not always allow for a chance.

Although most mentor teachers experienced their relationship through a specific effort to help a teaching candidate, one participant was specific about her desire to *not* want to take the time with someone “still in your space, requiring your time, attention, and help.” Teaching candidates who “cannot plan a unit, don’t understand...don’t have any strategies to use with students” require a lot of work, she expressed, and this “asks a lot of the mentor” during their time in the classroom. In this mentor teacher’s follow up survey, she mentioned the word “work” eight separate times, including the difficulty of “working with them,” “a lot of work,” “work with,” “work best,” and “difficult to work.” An opposition was noted here in the difference between “help” and “work.” Rather than noting that teacher candidates required a lot of “help,” this mentor teacher referred to them as a lot of “work.”

Experience relationship through a concern for students. Regardless of the type of relationship that developed between a mentor teacher and teacher candidate, mentor teachers experienced the relationship through their concern for their students. Mentor teachers felt

empathy for their students when a teacher candidate was struggling to develop appropriate pedagogy or manage the classroom. Mrs. Waters noted that she “keep trying different stuff” with a struggling candidate when the candidate arrived unprepared because “my kids are the ones that are suffering in the process.” Mr. Ramirez empathized with students who came to him in one instance and remarked “this sucks” in regard to a teaching candidate’s inability to manage the classroom. “You do become the mother,” he said, “when they’re suffering it’s very personal to you because you care about your kids, but you also want to help.” His concern for the students made him feel like he was “at a loss” and forced to shift the way he was relating to the mentor teacher “because it’s not working.”

Mrs. Hurl experienced her relationship with a teacher candidate through a concern for student scores on state mandated assessments, here called the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT): “I still am responsible for those ISAT scores” which she always had “in the back of my mind.” She also recalled a specific lesson that was “just way over their heads,” which concerned her since the content was not a developmental match for her students. She expressed coaching her teaching candidate through their relationship to facilitate engaging strategies such as inquiry, but noted that he “would teach and not be aware of what was going on with the students...were they engaged and getting what he was talking about.” Mrs. Hurl noted her concern for her students’ lack of learning and “worried about the impact that kind of teacher had on them.”

Individual case synopsis. Data from individual surveys was culled in a connecting process, then ordered and condensed into narrative synopses that best represent each participants’ story as it relates to Research Question #1: How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teaching candidate? (Butler-Kisber, 2010). A case synopsis provides concrete examples that help the readers get a quick sense of the narrative while presenting the

“essential constituents” of a transcript (Huberman & Miles, 2002, p. 279). Shortening the narrative blends the general findings with the participants’ own language, allowing the researcher to stay in touch with the data and its representation of the story (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The paragraphs below detail three brief narrative accounts constructed by the researcher, with verbatim phrases from the interview indicated in bold.

Story 1: Ms. Leads. Ms. Leads experienced the relationship with a teaching candidate as an **overlap between a personal and professional relationship** where it is important to **get to know them outside of the world of teaching**. She expressed the importance of **the humanity of the person** and establishing a **relationship of care and support**. This **deeper relationship** then becomes **authentic**, where both teachers **bring something to the table** in a **mutual relationship** that is also **reciprocal**. Ms. Leads experienced relationships with teaching candidates where **they have something to contribute**, but they **also knew what to expect**. She insists that **if we can all put the students first**, decisions and collaboration was easier. Mr. Leads understands that a mentor must **consistently live that out, modeling** a positive relationship and **walking the walk and the talk as you go through the relationship**. There is **probably more weight** on mentor teachers from Ms. Leads’ perspective, and experienced **relationship in which both people are invested and both people are contributing**. She was **never frustrated** in her relationship with a teaching candidate, and continued to carry **high expectations** which allowed candidates to **self-actualize, problem solve**, and experienced the **ebb and flow** that is common in **all of your relationships**.

Story 2: Mrs. Hurl. Mrs. Hurl’s experiences with a teaching candidate began with **expectations that it would be really great** and that they would **be collaborators** in education. Mrs. Hurl expected a close **one-on-one** relationship and also **unfairly assumed** that her teaching

candidate **would be a female**. When she met her teaching candidate she was **really thrown off about it** and was **taken aback** by her perception that he was **socially awkward** and **just weird**. Mrs. Hurl experienced surprise in the relationship when he **didn't want to change what the kids can handle** and failed to **notice what's going on** with his students. This lack of notice and attitude that **he had it all figured out** made her wonder **what this relationship** is all about. **Weird self-doubt** plagued Mrs. Hurl, and she **worried about her kids and the impact that kind of teacher had on them**. She experienced a **negative impact**, where emotions **took up negative space** and **impacted** how she **felt about teaching**. A **disposition** change toward the end of the experience slightly improved the relationship, but Mrs. Hurl was left with **frustration** and feeling like **“What am I doing wrong?”** She will **never have a student teacher again!**

Story 3: Mrs. Waters. Mrs. Waters experienced difficulty in her relationship with a teaching candidate where she was **constantly trying to pull her out** and spent **all this time almost mothering** her to encourage participation with students. Mrs. Waters tried to tell her teaching candidate **here's probably what's gonna be the result if you do this**. When the teaching candidate moved forward with the **complete disaster**, Mrs. Waters experienced her as **really defiant**, but that **she would never admit** the plan didn't work. The teaching candidate **should have** listened, and Mrs. Waters thereafter noted that the **relationship didn't matter**, and that they **had to get through the experience regardless** and not **phone it in the rest of the time**. Mrs. Waters worked to **wean her out** of teaching additional material the **kids are the ones that are suffering in the process** that did not align to expectations. Mrs. Waters' relationship was saturated with times where the teaching candidate **didn't know how to apply** their university learning, but remains conflicted that teaching candidates **are not gonna get it or be prepared** until they have **someone who can articulate that**, namely **Idaho Core** and

Writing Project mentor teachers or **truly exceptional** teachers who **have stuff figured out on their own for whatever reason**. Mrs. Waters figures that type of mentor would be **a pretty rare exception**.

Results for Research Question #2

Research Question #2 in this study asked: In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story? Freytag's Narrative Story Arc was used to provide structural data collection and analysis to answer the question. In a narrative inquiry study, a structural analysis of the data strengthens the thematic analysis, triangulating the themes by aligning both content and form (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Riessman, 2008). Focusing on the discrete aspects of the Arc's form adds interpretive insight to the data, and supports theoretical framework (Riessman, 2008). Magnitude coding was used to identify codes based on Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, coding data by the presence of the codes developed from the Arc (Saldana, 2009). Table 21 indicates the codes used to analyze data to answer Research Question #2.

Table 21

Freytag Narrative Story Arc Codes

Code	Description
BEG	Opening Scene; how it began
MID1	Series of events
MID2	Climax, tension
END1	Falling action; event as result
END2	Resolution; solve problem

How it began. Mentor teachers experienced the opening scenes of their relationship with a teaching candidate with excitement and anticipation. Some teachers wished that the relationship had started differently, in person, or with clear expectations, but others experienced

a purposeful beginning where they perceived a professional approach to education and tried to find interests and beliefs in common with their teaching candidate. Additional mentor teachers realized their expectations were not being met and became apprehensive at the beginning of their relationship, wondering if they were too inexperienced to serve as mentors. Overall, mentor teachers described a scene of excitement, fueled by an interest in learning, and drawn forward by a need to become comfortable with each other.

Series of events. The story continued in the minds of mentor teachers as a series of events that unfolded in five basic subcategories: Companionship, Learning, Conversations and Exchanges, Events Leading to Erosion, and Service. Table 22 below includes sample descriptions from each category, and data is included from both surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Table 22

Series of Events in the Middle of the Relationship

Companionship	Learning	Conversations & Exchanges	Events Leading to Erosion	Service
We interacted nearly every day	Interact with kids in positive ways	Built trust with the exchange of information and ideas	Students had whiplash because of the contrast of styles	Make copies
We laughed a lot	We role played	Share ideas and problems together	Mostly I just feel like it is added work	Build a bulletin board
We talked often	We had an a-ha moment when we were talking about struggling students	Listening and continued connection	Things he did or didn't do began to erode relationship and trust	She comforted me
She would accompany me to RTI meetings	Discussed the standards	Exchange curriculum ideas	Many hours working on lesson plans together.	We shared resources
We planned a project together	Discussed the importance of being involved	Sharing that story and having that conversation	[Students] rebelled on him	We made videos

Mentor teachers perceived the series of events in their relationship as a story in several categories. Patterns emerged that defined the rising action in the story in terms of small conflicts or steps in building the relationship.

Climax and tension. Mentor teachers perceived the relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story through the middle of their experience, which has also been coded here as the climax or tension. Five subcategories emerged as part of the middle of the mentor teacher's relationship experience, including the need to step in, the impact of change, student behavior, a lack of feedback uptake, and the struggle to communicate. These subthemes in the

middle of the relationship are described with samples from both surveys and semi-structured interviews in Table 23 below.

Table 23

Climax and Tension in the Middle of the Relationship

Stepping In	Change	Student Behavior	Lack of Feedback Uptake	Struggle to Communicate
I had to intervene and solve issues	When I would try to prompt him to consider different methods	He had mishandled a situation in class with some students by being sarcastic	Questioned why I taught lessons the way I did or suggested changes to lessons	I struggled with how to give her advice on certain topics
I had to stop intersecting at “teachable” moments	She was persistent in trying to implement change to the curriculum	His struggle with the behavior of many of the students	Inability to see that he needed improvement	There was evaluation imbalance and he was surprised
I had to contact his teacher/ supervisor to report unexplained absences and unplanned lessons	When I suggested that a difference in style may combat some of the discipline issues	She struggled to manage the class	She was constantly ignoring feedback	He taught a lesson that was completely lecture based

Patterns emerged across the MID2 category that can be summarized through the lens of controlling the events in the classroom or the mentor teacher experiencing change that was unexpected. According to the event retelling, mentor teachers experienced conflict when expectations were violated, explained here as “mishandled,” “intervene,” “ignoring,” “imbalance,” and “persistence” found in all five subcategories of data.

Falling action. Mentor teachers experienced the result of conflict as falling action or the fall after the tension or excitement in the relationship. As patterns emerged in the survey and semi-structured interview data in this segment of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, pronouns in the data were used to create categories. Mentor teachers referred to "we," indicating Relationship, "I," indicating the action Instigated by the Mentor Teacher, and "he" or "she," indicating the action Instigated by the Teaching Candidate. This use of pronouns not only helped define the subcategories, but orients the readers toward who "fell" during the falling action, or who responded to the falling event. An additional category, Environment, describes data that imply the teaching environment instigated the falling action in the story of relationship between the mentor teacher and teaching candidate. Falling action data can be found in Table 24. Pronouns are indicated in bold so that the reader may see how the use of pronouns assisted in coding for these themes.

Table 24

Falling Action Instigation

Environment Instigates Falling Action	Mentor Teacher Instigates Falling Action	Teaching Candidate Instigates Falling Action	Relationship in the Falling Action
[We did] a quick, new arrangement	I reassured her.	He would be confused and frustrated	We had great conversation
Actually it just needed a little adjustment, not an entirely new system	I would accept her suggestions with something along the lines of “what an interesting idea”	She was receptive and tried to improve	We had to sit down to evaluate what had happened
No actual tension developed because it was his last day	I could see her frustration so I told her to take a walk or go for a drive	He said the students needed to change their behavior and what he did wouldn’t matter	We consider opportunities for growth
[We] decided to start a whole new system for management	The university supervisor and I both told her that she could not be making that decision	He just kind of gave up trying and resigned himself to not caring	We reflected on the outcomes of the trial in different classes
	I would have to leave the room or sit with a specific student	Wanted to know what he could do to improve	We try to problem solve how to handle the situation
	At times I gave up	She politely asked me to let her try without interruption	We had to get through this experience
	I made sure to give lots of procedural feedback	She was very reflective	
	I celebrated those expert teaching moves and described the effect I saw on the students	She felt hurt and bad	

Mentor teachers described the falling action as a result of the conflict or tension in their relationship with a teaching candidate, but also indicated through the use of emerging pronouns

that someone or something was responsible for the result of the action, primarily the mentor teacher, the teaching candidate, the teaching environment, or the relationship itself.

After conflict or tension, some mentor teachers noted that the result was a change in the Environment as a result of the tension or conflict. The Environment was then rearranged, or a new system was instigated.

Some mentor teachers responded to conflict or tension by reassuring their teaching candidate, as indicated by data coded through Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. Mentor teachers asked candidates to reflect as a response, encouraging them, giving them space to problem solve, or asking them to remove themselves from the teaching environment entirely. Sometimes they asked for another person to give feedback or ask for patience to make an adjustment. One mentor teacher even gave up and let her teaching candidate operate unbridled.

In contrast, some mentor teachers perceived the teaching candidate's response to tension or climax in the relationship more emotionally, with confusion or frustration and anger. Mentor teachers also perceived their teaching candidate giving up after conflict or feeling hurt. Mentors were both reflective and leaned in to the falling action as a result of conflict and tension in the story of their relationship. Mentor teachers saw falling action in terms of their relationship, indicated by "we" in the data. Conflict was resolved by sitting down to evaluate a situation together, talking about the issue or event, and reflecting on the outcomes.

Resolution. Mentor teachers described three different types of endings to their relationship with a teaching candidate in the initial survey. Forty-seven percent of participants named a specific end to the relationship; thirty-three percent indicate there was not an end to the relationship, and nineteen percent were not definitive about an ending, or saw it as "awkward" or "neutral." Participants noting there was no ending to their relationship told a story of staying in

touch with their teaching candidate, most of whom are now employed in the district or in the same building. Some mentor teachers still collaborate with their teaching candidate. Participants who experienced an end to their relationship reported feeling they are colleagues with the prior teaching candidate, reflect with positive feelings, and sometimes collaborate with them or use them as a substitute teacher in their classroom.

Member Checking

At the conclusion of semi-structured interviews, the researcher conducted a member checking process to allow the participants an opportunity to verify or clarify the story they retold in initial surveys or semi-structured interviews. The researcher randomly selected five interview participants and excerpted ten phrases from each of their data from initial surveys and semi-structured interviews. The participants were then given a visual representation of a story arc with designated text boxes for the stages of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. Participants were asked to copy and paste the phrases where they believe those stages occurred in their experience of relationship with a teaching candidate. They were also invited to write any additional clarifying information on the template to expand or further explain their experience.

Analysis of the member checking process indicated that mentor teachers selected the same or similar phrases to express how they experienced the relationship with a mentor teacher as the researcher. Table 25 below shows the alignment between Ms. Leads' placement of phrases on the Story Arc and the phrases the researcher selected to narrate the Individual Case Synopsis. Her responses can also be seen in Figure 5.

Table 25

Ms. Leads Member Checking Alignment

Narrative Story Arc	Individual Case Synopsis (Researcher)	Member Checking Placement (Participant)
Characters are Introduced		When we met for the first time, my interns typically came to the classroom, and we just sat down and had a conversation.
Event 1	If we can all put the students first	We developed a common understanding that our students were the first priority.
Event 2	Bring something to the table. They all have something to contribute	Often we would then co-teach the lesson.
Event 3	Walking the walk	You consistently live out what you believe...walk the talk as you go through the relationship.
Climax	Both people are invested and both people are contributing	We developed both a professional and personal relationship that was reciprocal, both learning and investing in one another.
Falling Action	Never frustrated Self actualize Ebb and flow	Our relationship grew us as individuals and as a team, so we could do our best for our students.
Resolution		We still keep in contact with each other to this day.

Figure 5

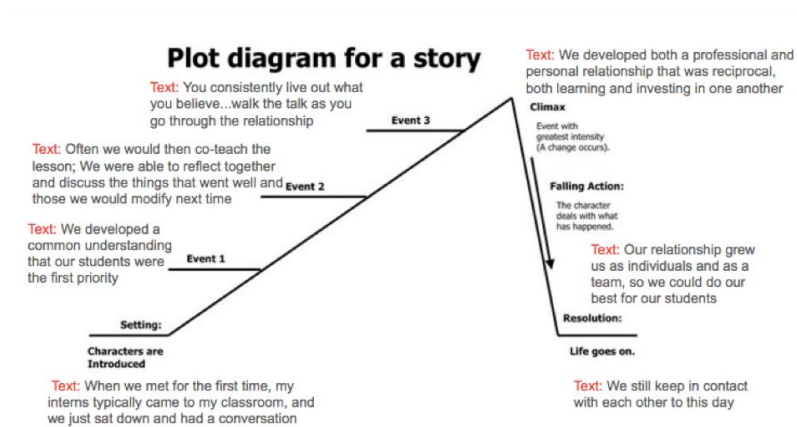
Member Checking Example 1: Ms. Leads

Table 26 below shows additional alignment between Mrs. Water's member checking process and the researcher's use of data from initial surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Table 26

Mrs. Waters Member Checking Alignment

Narrative Story Arc	Individual Case Synopsis (Researcher)	Member Checking Placement (Participant)
Characters are Introduced	Constantly trying to pull her out	Her physical appearance was hunched and kind of closed off.
Event 1	Complete Disaster Didn't know how to apply	She didn't know how to know stuff. She didn't believe me.
Event 2	Really defiant	Trust was tenuous with her anyway; There's those constant things that happen that trip you up.
Climax	Don't phone it in	Don't short change these kids 'cause you can't decide what you wanna do with your life.
Falling Action	Had to get through the experience regardless	We had to get through the experience. I don't know what else to do.
Resolution	Relationship didn't matter	In the end it didn't matter how I felt about her.

The member checking process confirmed that data collection and analysis during this study represented the themes and the story structure that participants intended. The complete member checking directions and complete processes can be seen in Appendices L-P.

Conclusion

At the end of several interviews, the researcher asked participants to imagine their relationship with their teaching candidate as a metaphor: “If your relationship were a story, what kind of story would it be?” Mrs. Hurl said it would be historical fiction, since she would have had a better idea about the trajectory of the relationship if she had based it on the past history she had about the candidate. Ms. Leads indicated that her relationship would be realistic fiction, because teaching candidates seem to grow into the person they will become during their professional year. Mrs. Gold was certain her relationship would be an installation of the tween novel, *The Babysitter’s Club*, since the relationship was a bit chaotic, she never knew what she was going to get, and it is important to figure it out along the way.

The goal of this study was to understand how mentor teachers experienced their relationship with a teaching candidate, and how the lens of a story might best frame their experiences. Rather than viewing the teaching candidate through the eyes of the common teacher preparation evaluation system such as the Danielson Framework for Teaching, mentor teachers felt strongly about the importance of knowing the story of their teaching candidate (Danielson, 2007). Mr. Matthews asserted that mentor teachers need to know the teaching story of their candidates; they must ask to hear their story at the beginning of their relationship and discover how their teaching stories intersect: “Story and trust help when things are hard,” he concluded, “we need to share stories.”

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

The development of a professional relationship between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate is altered and impacted by how fears and expectations are communicated in the relationship (Harris, 2013; Russell & Russell, 2001). When the professional relationship between a mentor teacher and teacher candidate is disrupted, the skills and knowledge a teaching candidate needs during their professional year is challenged (Ambrosetti, 2014). Developing a professional, working relationship is necessary for successful student teaching, and the barriers to this relationship impact a teaching candidate's access to teaching experiences (Barrera, Braley, & Slate; Hoffman et al., 2015; O'Dea & Peralta, 2011). Previous literature indicates the types of relationships that develop between mentor teachers and teaching candidates, but until now, there has been no clear understanding of how mentor teachers experience the relationship, or how to build a protocol for developing the necessary relationships where both parties prosper (Ali et al., 2014; Hudson & Hudson, 2013; Lesham, 2012; Long et al., 2010; McMillan, 2012; Rhoads et al., 2013).

Narrative inquiry was selected as the best method for this study to determine how the relationship develops between mentors and teaching candidates by allowing the researcher to notice the elements of narrative through deconstructing and reconstructing story (Herman et al., 2012). Narrative inquiry allowed the researcher both the structure and flexibility to collect data that prompted participants to reshape how their mentoring experiences shaped their teaching world and teaching identity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Polkinghorne, 2010; Riessman, 2008). Through a theory-based, criterion sampling

process, Boise State Writing Project coordinators and Idaho Core Coaches collaborated with the researcher to select mentor teachers with a variety of experiences, and who would be most likely to contribute to a valid, rich inquiry (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Thirty-eight teachers participated in the initial survey and eight teachers participated in follow-up semi-structured interviews. Because participants were members of the same culture-sharing groups, their shared beliefs and vocabulary resulted in a deep contextualized understanding of the mentoring experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

This study was guided by two questions in a quest to explore the ways mentor teachers experience the development of their relationship with teaching candidates:

1. How does a mentor teacher experience the relationship with a teaching candidate?
2. In what ways does a mentor teacher perceive the mentoring relationship with a teaching candidate in terms of a story?

Participants were asked to retell their mentoring experience in the framework of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. Data was analyzed through emergent codes and codes determined by Freytag's Narrative Story Arc (Freytag, 1895). Semi-structured interviews were then scheduled with mentor teachers based on the information provided in the initial survey. The researcher selected participants who indicated a depth of knowledge regarding the topic and the willingness to re-experience their mentoring story to provide rigor and detail to their initial survey (Bopp et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for participants to orally narrate their written account, adding details, additional meaning, and connections between initial themes (Chase, 2003; Creswell, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2009). Data was first analyzed through emergent codes and codes determined by Freytag's Narrative Story Arc; the data was then recoded to explore themes in the combined data and demonstrate

connections between codes. The data collection process was concluded with an interactive, illustrative member checking process which allowed the researcher to corroborate findings with participants and to add a visual representation of the data (Bach, 2007; Stake, 1994). Participants were given ten phrases from their initial survey or semi-structured interview transcript and were asked to place the events on a blank template of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc to represent their understanding of the event. This process linked the researcher, her findings, the participants, and the theoretical framework together, validating the data and visualizing meaning (Bagnoli, 2009; Stake 1994).

The study explored the lived experiences of mentor teachers by deconstructing the experience of their relationship with a teaching candidate, comparing it to a story, and then reconstructing it, drawing parallels between themes and structures to help better understand the phenomenon (Ali, 1997; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Bruner, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Results from initial surveys indicate that mentor teachers experience a variety of emotions before, during, and after their mentoring experience. Emotions ranging from excitement, apprehension, uncertainty, and fear characterize initial interactions with teacher candidates. During initial interviews, mentor teachers noticed a teaching candidate's personality traits, ability to collaborate, and feelings of uncertainty and discomfort. Interviews added depth to the data through four additional themes that further explained how mentor teachers experience their relationship. Mentor teachers experience a variety of expectations in the relationship, notice both desirable and undesirable traits, experience emotional disequilibrium, and reflect on how previous experiences impact the development of their relationship.

Pattern coding between initial surveys and semi-structured interviews collapsed the data and allowed for further analysis. This included connections between perceived teacher candidate

traits and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship, perceived teacher candidate abilities in the classroom, and the mentor teacher's response to the relationship. Findings also indicate that mentor teachers experience the relationship through collaboration, a desire to help, and through a concern for their students in the classroom.

Analyzing data based on the theoretical framework--Freytag's Narrative Story Arc-- suggests that mentor teachers experience their relationship with a teaching candidate as a story, riding the rise and fall indicated by a common plot line. Although the events and tensions between mentor teachers were described differently, all participants experienced a need to step in to the teaching candidate's experience, the need for change, responding based on student behavior, responding based on feedback, and a struggle to communicate. Mentor teachers responded to the climax of the story of their relationship by "falling out" as a result of the conflict or tension in the relationship, instigated by either the mentor teacher, the teaching candidate, or the environmental context of the classroom. Nearly half the participants name a specific end to their relationship, while the other half indicate that the relationship is ongoing, or that it ended without resolution in an uncomfortable or unfinished manner.

This chapter includes a summary of the results, including a discussion of the connections between this study and the literature, conclusions drawn from connections in the data, implications for professional practice, limitations to the study, recommendations for further research, and final thoughts.

Discussion of the Results

Studying the lived experiences of mentor teachers as they relate to their mentoring relationships both confirmed and added to the literature on this topic. This discussion will focus on how the study contributes to the following categories: access to learning, mentor teacher

expectations, the impact and perception of feedback and knowledge transfer, and a framework for professionalism.

Access to learning. One of the significant roles of a mentor teacher is to provide teaching candidates access to learning through co-teaching and co-constructing knowledge in the classroom (Cuenca, 2011; Lesham, 2012; Richter et al., 2012; Robertson, 2016). According to the literature, this practicum experience enacts legitimacy for teaching, and increases sense making and problem solving (CAEP, 2015; Cuenca, 2011). Barriers to relationships due to different expectations can also create a barrier to a teaching candidate acquiring access to this important classroom practice. This study demonstrates how a teaching candidate acquires access to the classroom through the relationship with a mentor teacher, which is dependent on a mentor teacher's perceived traits and abilities. Data shows that mentor teachers either leaned in to their relationship or stepped back in their relationship based on the perceived traits and abilities noticed in the initial meetings with their teaching candidate. Both desirable and undesirable traits impact how a mentor teacher experienced the relationship, and in some cases, teaching candidates were trusted in the classroom or removed from teaching a lesson based on the mentor teacher's response.

Mentor Teacher Expectations

Mentor teachers have specific, yet varying, expectations of their teaching candidate's affects and abilities (Harris, 2013). The absence of guidelines creates a barrier to establishing relationships and can lead to confusion and frustration (Barrera, 2008). The perceived role that a mentor teacher will play is itself a barrier to the relationship because the values and perceptions of a mentor teacher's duties and obligations guide how the relationship develops (Lesham, 2012; Russell & Russell, 2011). This study revealed the impact of additional perceptions, primarily the

expected personality traits of teaching candidates and their abilities in the classroom with lesson planning, lesson facilitation, and classroom management. Analyzing emergent themes within the theoretical framework of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc revealed the significance of how the relationship begins between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate, and how the expectations in the beginning of the relationship sets the stage for disappointment later in the story of relationship. In the beginning of the relationship, mentor teachers expect a "great" relationship that will be mutually beneficial. Mentors expect to be helpful to their candidate, and expect their help to be accepted eagerly. When their expectations are not met, they express a range of emotions, including disappointment, sadness, frustration, withdrawal, and anger. The way in which a mentor teacher *expects to perceive* a teaching candidate impacts how they experience the remainder of their relationship as well as how they actually experience it.

Impact and Perception of Feedback and Knowledge Transfer

According to the literature, mentor teachers and teaching candidates see the role of feedback as important, and put a significant amount of weight on the detailed feedback they give teaching candidates (Korver & Tillema, 2014; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005; Marie, 2016).

Research shows that opening discussions about teaching strategies and student learning creates an effective framework for additional feedback and conversation, prompting knowledge transfer from theory to practice and from mentor to candidate (Knight, 2007; Laneve et al., 2010; Payant & Murphy, 2012; Schwille, 2008). This study confirms the importance of feedback in the relationship, but also explains the effect of taking up or ignoring feedback on the experience of the relationship. In both the initial survey and the semi-structured interviews, mentor teachers described how a teaching candidate's ability to respond to feedback affected the story of their relationship. Specifically, if a teaching candidate challenged the feedback or ignored it, mentor

teachers felt professionally and personally challenged, and understood the response to feedback as intentionally defiant or undermining the mentor's efforts to help. Of the mentor teachers interviewed, half reported that a teaching candidate's refusal to take up feedback left them feeling insecure and vulnerable, and the mentor teacher withdrew from the relationship. Based on the data from this study, mentor teachers invest deeply in feedback leading to transfer, and expect teaching candidates to follow their recommendations. Mentor teachers indicate that they experience a positive relationship to the degree that their teaching candidates agrees with their perspectives and suggestions.

A Framework for Professionalism

In order to maximize the student teaching experience, it is essential to develop specific features of a relationship protocol between mentor teachers and teaching candidates (Greenberg et al, 2011; Kee et al., 2010; Knight, 2007; Robertson, 2016). Teachers need a conceptual and common language for discussing their relationships that allows for informal qualities of empathy and transparency, yet a structure for professionalism (Carr et al., 2005; Izadinia, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Knight, 2007; Schwille, 2008). The theoretical framework in this study provides a common language based on Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. Leveraging a common story plot line creates a universal reference and an accessible metaphor to build the protocol for both collaborative and constructive relationships. Using the language of the story arc encourages mentor teachers to orient themselves in the story of the relationship and understand that the relationship is a finite experience that contains a beginning, middle, and end. If mentor teachers can conceptualize the relationship as a story, discomfort and uncertainty in the experience might decrease.

Additionally, mentor teachers expect teaching candidates to exhibit professionalism, but the variety of roles and experiences they anticipate create inconsistencies. Results of this study suggest a specific framework for communicating professional traits to mentor teachers prior to their mentoring experience:

1. List, define, and explore desirable teaching candidate traits, as indicated by this study.
2. Determine mentor teacher expectations prior to the initial meeting with a teaching candidate.
3. Provide information regarding teacher candidate's traits and abilities in reference to mentor teacher expectations.
4. Collaboratively explore the story arc, and discuss how each stage might be conceptualized in the development of the relationship.

Conclusion

Recent literature highlights the need for a specific, observable protocol that can be used to guide how the relationship develops in a student teaching context (Kee et al., 2010; Knight, 2012). This study provides a framework for identifying a common structure to understand the phenomena of relationship through Freytag's Narrative Story Arc, and suggests guidelines for communicating expectations. The findings in this study answer the call in the literature for naming familiar aspects of the relationship and leverage what is already known about effective relationships (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Data highlights the importance of relationship, but also reveals how the relationship develops or is barred from development based on traits and abilities perceived in the beginning of the relationship and within events that grow to the climax of the story. Access to teaching is necessary for success in a practicum experience, and mentor teachers note that their relationship and the way they interact with the teaching candidate is impacted by

these perceptions. Studying the lived experience of mentor teachers provides a narrative through the genre of story, and gives voice to experiences that impact student learning through this relationship.

Implications for Professional Practice

The findings from this study can be generalized based on several factors, including its “coherence and illuminating description of and perspective” (Huberman & Miles, 2002, p. 174) on the phenomenon of relationships between mentor teachers and teaching candidates. Thick description through restoried accounts, along with concrete detail and description in the data, analysis, and member checking provided results that resonate with mentor teachers through overlapping stories (Stake, 1978; Tracy, 2010). The context of this research provided meaningful claims through a variety of methodologies and analysis strategies which helped make better sense of relationships and suggest how education preparation programs (EPPs) might improve their practice through a new understanding of the phenomenon (Tracy, 2010). Additionally, based on the specificity of the process detailed, this research can be easily replicated to understand the same phenomenon in a similar setting, namely EPPs at other universities (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Stake, 1978).

Significant potential implications exist for professional practice in Educator Preparation Programs (EPP), mentor training, and collaborative relationships with partner schools during the professional year. Specifically, this study informs how to mitigate disruptive emotions, steps to communicate expectations, the importance of attending to the beginning of the relationship between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate, and suggests a framework for communicating based on common language.

In this study, some mentor teachers experienced the relationship with a teaching candidate with emotional disequilibrium or upset as noted by professional challenge, loss of identity, discomfort, or professional insecurities. An Educator Preparation Program eager to retain high quality mentor teachers will take steps based on this research to mitigate emotions, responses, or mindsets that might create a barrier to a relationship and impact student learning. This work could be accomplished by following a three-step process that begins before the relationship starts, includes the beginning of the relationship, and continues during the rising action events of the relationship.

First, EPPs can consider preparing mentor teachers for the ways in which the relationship may unfold differently than what they expect. Based on data from this study, mentor teachers enter the mentoring relationship with a variety of expectations based on anticipating a positive, mutual, strong relationship. Some assume they will co-teach; others anticipate the level of work or help teaching candidates will need, and a few expect success, even if they are not sure how they will experience the relationship. Education Preparation Programs might consider a process to allow a mentor teacher to voice their expectations and provide a means to communicate with the mentor teacher about the traits and skills of the teaching candidate who will be placed in their care. This study suggests that the relationship which develops is dependent, in part, on making the teacher candidate's traits and abilities visible to the mentor teacher at the beginning of the relationship to decrease the gap between expectations and reality. Programs can compile a list of expected traits and abilities that a teaching candidate might exhibit, and share where each teaching candidate might fall along the continuum. In this way, the gap between what is expected and what is noticed might decrease, resulting in decreased surprise or anxiety at the beginning of the relationship.

Next, EPPs might pay special attention to the beginning of the relationship between a mentor teacher and a teaching candidate. Findings from this study demonstrate the significance of the beginning of the relationship, and how perceived traits in the beginning stage had a lasting impact on the mentor teacher. If mentor teachers are noticing desirable and undesirable traits that impact the relationship during the very first meeting, programs could take special steps to prepare teaching candidates for these meetings to ensure that desirable traits like kindness, dedication, readiness, a proactive stance, and openness to feedback are visible to the mentor teacher during their first encounter. Likewise, mentor teachers should understand that any new situation is stressful, and teaching candidates might be nervous, distracted, or unable to respond to the appropriate social cues at a first meeting. This study demonstrates that the beginning matters to the rest of the story of relationship; the implications for professional practice then recommend creating a space for the beginning of the relationship to promote success.

Finally, Educator Preparation Programs that respond to the findings in this study will frame the events, rising action, and potentially the climax of the story into the predictive shape of Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. Orienting mentor teachers and teaching candidates to this structure offers an explanation for framing experiences in a common language (Stake, 1994; Tracy, 2010). Mentor teachers who expressed frustration with unexpected moves in the classroom can use narrative to make sense of the events, knowing they are common to the mentoring experience. In this study, mentor teachers experienced the most distress in the events of the relationship when the teaching candidate acted differently in the classroom than they expected, made a choice different than what was recommended, or felt tension and disconnect between what the mentor teacher wanted and what the teaching candidate ultimately said or did.

Placing the events of the relationship in the shape of a story gives conflict a significant place in the relationship, and validates the dynamic nature of teaching, learning, and mentoring.

Mentor teachers see themselves either in the same story or in a separate story than their teaching candidates, and this impacts their interactions with a teaching candidate. When mentors see themselves as part of “we” in the relationship, they respond to events in the relationship with a growth mindset that includes “opportunities for growth,” “reflecting on outcomes,” “problem solving,” and “evaluating what happened.” In this situation, the falling action is the responsibility of both the mentor and the candidate. On the other hand, when mentor teachers see themselves and their teaching candidate separately, as indicated by the use of pronouns “I,” and “he/she” in the data, they note the falling action as a result of conflict instigated by separate parties.

Although the connections between this data and mindset are the beyond the scope of this study, EPPs might consider the mindset of mentor teachers as it relates to their willingness to engage in dynamic, collaborative relationships.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Several limitations to the study may have impacted the data, results, or interpretations. Participants in this study were selected from a small culture-sharing group of teachers who belonged to either the Idaho Core Coaches Network or were alumni of the local chapter of the National Writing Project. Although it was a benefit to the contextualized nature of the study, participants may not have represented all viewpoints necessary to adequately answer the research questions. Another limitation to the study is that the researcher was the only analyst for the data. Although triangulation was achieved through multiple methods and rigorous member checking, it is possible that inter-rater reliability would have improved the validity of the study. Last, the researcher had familiarity with some of the participants. Consistent bracketing was employed

before and during the study, but a residual of bias may have remained which could have impacted data collection or analysis.

Delimitations include limits or boundaries that the researcher intentionally omits or selects for the study which are within the researcher's control (Fyrczak & Bruce, 2016; Newman, Ridenour, Weise, & McNeil, 1997; Simon, 2011). Parameters in this study were purposefully controlled, including criteria of participants for the study, the organization involved, and theoretical perspectives. First, the researcher purposefully selected a group of participants who were most likely to richly contribute to the research questions by their prior interest in mentoring in a variety of settings. Next, participants were involved in two professional organizations—The National Writing Project and Idaho Core Coaches Network. Because access to participants was denied through other avenues, the researcher chose a different population in order to gain access to criterion-based participants. Last, the theoretical framework for this study was selected as both a framing theory and a structure for a priori coding (Saldana, 2009). Delimitations deliberately confine the study to more carefully address the research questions and provide rich, descriptive data which might be generalized within the same populations (Simon, 2011).

Recommendations for Further Research

Multiple opportunities for follow-up studies emerged from examining how mentor teachers experience their relationship with a teaching candidate. Based on the literature supporting this study, the data collected, and the methodology explored, the following studies would further inform Educator Preparation Programs and qualitative researchers regarding the impact of relationships on mentors and candidates, and opportunities for visual, interactive research methods:

1. Repeat the study with teacher candidates. Analysis could then compare the perspective of both mentor teacher and teaching candidate, adding to the literature for both participants and providing an opportunity to explore patterns between participants in each study and shape a relationship protocol that takes both perspectives into account.
2. This research suggests that there is a connection between the way mentor teachers orient to teaching candidates based on their mindset, including their responses to events in the relationship and the way they use language to talk about the relationship. Further research would include a mindset survey to better understand the motivation behind mentor teacher responses in the story of their relationship.
3. Qualitative analysis includes member checking processes. The methodology used in this study experimented with a visual representation of the theoretical framework which became an interactive tool for member checking. Participants in the study were encouraged to write, speak, and visualize their experience in a mentoring relationship. Further research would develop a theory for using this member checking tool and pilot its use in other settings.

Final Thoughts

Mentor teachers and teaching candidates have an opportunity to come alongside each other during this finite arc where they journey together in the same story. What teaching candidates learn and how much they develop is controlled in the arc of the story, but the end date doesn't control the ending any more than the expectations of the mentor teacher role controls the relationship. All participants enter the cycle of the story and experience the beginning, middle, and end of the relationship as they mentor teaching candidates. Educator Preparation Programs

can use the relationship to give teaching candidates better access to learning by communicating expectations and traits necessary to build a successful relationship, as well as improve the mentoring experience by helping mentor teachers become aware of their expectations, mitigating emotional disequilibrium, and communicating collaborative outcomes clearly.

During the interview with Mr. Matthews, the conversation turned to the importance of sharing our teaching stories. He recommended that the best way to begin a relationship is “just having a sit down conversation with your mentor teacher about their teaching story.” He indicated that two people’s lives are “intersecting in a profound way” during the student teaching experience, and that opening a conversation about shared teaching experiences might be the best first step. “How did you get here?” he notes would be a good opener; “What is your teaching story?”

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Appendix A

NIH Certificate



Appendix B

Qualitative Informed Consent: Mentor

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Serena Hicks, PhD, in the Department of Graduate Education at Northwest Nazarene University is conducting a research study related to how the mentor teacher experience the mentoring relationship. The study will explore the mentoring relationship experience and gather data regarding specific aspects of the relationship. We appreciate your involvement in helping us investigate how to better serve and meet the needs of Northwest Nazarene University students.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a healthy volunteer, over the age of 18.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, volunteering to participate in the study.
2. You will complete 1 digital journal entries based on prompt given by the researcher. This journal entry will take approximately 1 hour to complete.
3. You will answer a series of interview questions about the experience of your relationship with your professional year candidate in a semi-structure interview. This discussion will be audio taped and the interview is expected to last 30-60 minutes.
4. You will participate in a focus group discussion about how you experienced the mentoring relationship with your professional year candidate. This discussion will be audio taped and is expected to last approximately 45 minutes.
5. You will be asked to identify and place events in the relationship with your mentor teacher on a graphic that represents a traditional story arc. This will take place during the focus group interview. No additional time or preparation is necessary.
6. You will be asked to reply to an email at the conclusion of the study asking you to confirm the data that was gathered during the research process.

These procedures will be completed at a location mutually decided upon by the participant and principal investigator and will take a total time of 3-4 hours.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. The journal entry or interview questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.

2. For this research project, the researcher will ask to interview you. Every effort will be made to schedule at your convenience, at a place that is most comfortable for you.
3. Confidentiality: Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes, audio tapes, and digital journals will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Department and the key to the cabinet will be kept in a separate location. Digital files will be stored on a passcode protected computer. In compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).
4. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help teacher preparation programs better prepare mentor teachers and interns to build a healthy, professional relationship.

E. PAYMENTS

There are no payments for participating in this study.

F. QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigator.

Should you feel distressed due to participation in this, you should contact your own health care provider.

G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a student at Northwest Nazarene University.

I give my consent to participate in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I give my consent for the interview and discussion to be audio taped in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

I give my consent for direct quotes to be used in this study:

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

**THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE
HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN
RESEARCH.**

Appendix C

Protocol for Digital Narrative Story Writing Journal Entry

[Information below was distributed to participants via Qualtrics Research Software]

Purpose: The purpose of this narrative story writing journal entry is to describe your mentoring experience with a student teaching candidate. If you have mentored more than one candidate, please consider *one* experience to write about here. Before you write, think about the *beginning, middle, and end* of your experience. Retell the experience as best you remember.

As an option, you can use the questions in the table below as prompts. Although it isn't necessary, it may be helpful.

Retelling the experience is intended to take you between 30-60 minutes. If you would like to add additional details or descriptions, please take as long as you need.

Beginning	Middle	End
<p>How did you feel when you first met your teacher candidate?</p> <p>What sort of beginning do you feel you had in your relationship?</p>	<p>Describe a few events that occurred in the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate.</p> <p>What sorts of events did you experience during the relationship? If you feel tension or excitement, describe the event surrounding the tension or excitement.</p> <p>What would you say was the biggest highlight or tension of the relationship between you and your mentor/teacher candidate?</p>	<p>Think about the experience or event you described in the Middle. What happened immediately following the highlight or tension? Reflect on what you or your mentor/teacher candidate did or said.</p> <p>During the experience of your relationship, how did you resolve conflict?</p> <p>How did your relationship end?</p>
<p>What other details would help explain how you experienced the relationship? Is there anything else you want me to know about your experience?</p>		

Appendix D

Protocol for Semi-structured Interview

Stated purpose to participants: The purpose of this interview is to ask follow-up questions from the narrative story writing reflective journal that you wrote. I may be asking you about some of the elements that you wrote about. I may ask you for more details or additional descriptions. I may ask you about something that I anticipated you would write about that you didn't. I will also give you a chance to add anything else to the retelling that you may recall as we talk. I will be recording our conversation [consent completed in Qualtrics gave permission for this interview].

Possible questions:

1. Tell me more about the first day that you met your teacher candidate.
2. What type of experience were you anticipating?
3. Your story mentioned a day that you had a disagreement. Can you tell me more about that?
4. I notice that you don't mention any disagreements in your story. Can you tell me more about that?
5. The end of your story seemed abrupt. Can you tell me more about how the experience of your relationship ended?

Appendix E

Protocol for Visual Framework

Stated purpose to participants: The purpose of this activity is to ask you to place events from the narrative story writing reflective journal that you wrote or your interview into a Narrative Story Arc. I have selected several events in your own writing or speaking. Using the descriptions below and your own knowledge of the phases of a story, place the events where you believe they occurred on Freytag's Narrative Story Arc. There is no right or wrong answer; there is just your interpretation. It's ok to leave events out if they don't seem to fit. [Note: Participants will have a poster-sized graphic identical to the graphic below.]

Descriptions

Introduction: The opening scene and setting; how the story begins

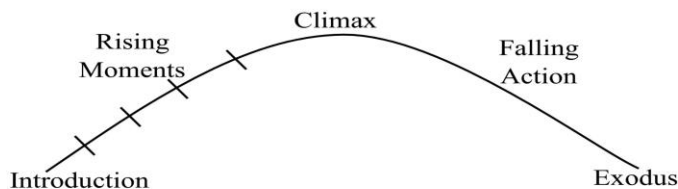
Rising Moments: Series of events that build the action, might include a series of events or conflicts

Climax: The moment of greatest tension or excitement

Falling Action: Events that happen as a result of the conflict or climax

Exodus: Someone solves the problem; how the story ends

Freytag's Narrative Story Arc



Appendix F

National Writing Project Site Permission



Department of English

1910 University Drive Boise, Idaho 83725-1525

phone 208-426-1246

fax 208-426-4373

<http://www.boisestate.edu/english>

January 9, 2017

Northwest Nazarene University
 Attention: HRRC Committee
 Helstrom Business Center 1 st Floor
 623 S. University Boulevard
 Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Serena Hicks

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Boise State Writing Project director of this region's National Writing Project has reviewed the proposed research dissertation plan of Serena Hicks.

The director understands that the purpose of the study is better understand how the relationship between a mentor teacher and a mentee develops in order to better prepare both for field experience practice. This study will explore how mentor teachers experience the mentoring relationship and will ask participating mentors to consider their relationship in the context of a story, and complete a survey based on their experiences.

The director understands that participating mentors will be sent a survey tool developed in Qualtrics embedded with participant consent. Mentor teachers will be asked to click "YES" if they consent to the survey. If they click "NO," they will immediately be exited from the survey. The survey will remain open for two weeks.

The director understands that HRRC approval will be obtained prior to conducting research, and that all information will be kept confidential in Qualtrics on a password protected computer.

Serena Hicks has my permission to conduct her research with participants of the Boise State Writing Project site of the National Writing Project. The authorization dates for this research are June 2017-April 2018.

If I can provide you with further information or support, I would be most happy to do so. Please contact me at 208-433-9919 or on-line at jwilhelm@boisestate.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Jeffrey D. Wilhelm
 Professor of English Education
 Director, Boise State Writing Project

Appendix G

Idaho Core Coaches Site Permission

November 1, 2016

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st Floor
623 S. University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Serena Hicks

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the leadership team of the State Department of Education Idaho Core Coaches Network has reviewed the proposed research dissertation plan.

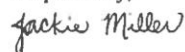
The leadership team understands that the purpose of the study is better understand how the relationship between a mentor teacher and a mentee develops in order to better prepare both for field experience practice. This study will develop a tool which explores how the relationship between a mentor teacher and a mentee develops in the classroom. The tool will ask participating mentors to consider their relationship in the context of a story, and complete a survey based on their experiences.

The leadership team understands that participating mentors will be sent a survey tool developed in Qualtrics embedded with participant consent. Mentor teachers will be asked to click "YES" if they consent to the survey. If they click "NO," they will immediately be exited from the survey. The survey will remain open for two weeks.

The leadership team understands that HRRC approval will be obtained prior to conducting research, and that all information will be kept confidential in Qualtrics on a password protected computer.

Serena Hicks has permission to conduct her research with participants of the Idaho Core Coaches Network teachers. The authorization dates for this research are June 2017-April 2018.

Respectfully,



April Niemela
Jackie Miller
Diann Roberts
Scott Cook
Idaho Core Coach Leadership Team



12/21/16

Appendix H

Recruiting Letter

Greetings, Teachers:

I am a secondary English Language Arts teacher, Boise State Writing Project Alum, and an Idaho Core Coach. I am currently teaching in the College of Education at Boise State University and am a PhD candidate in Educational Leadership at Northwest Nazarene University.

As part of my PhD program, I am studying how mentor teachers experience their relationship with a teaching candidate (student teacher). I am also interested in the ways mentor teachers perceive their relationship in terms of a story. The story framework will allow me to explore mentor teachers' lived experiences and look deeply into the sense-making process of this significant relationship.

You have been selected as a potential participant based on your mentoring experiences and the likelihood that you would participate in the study. If you agree to be part of the study, you would participate, at your leisure during the summer of 2017, the following activities:

1. Retell the story of your relationship with a teaching candidate (student teacher) in written format. Expect to spend 30-60 minutes on this activity.
2. Participate in a semi-structured interview with the researcher, either in person or via Skype. Expect to spend 30-60 minutes on this activity.
3. Participate in a visual framework activity where you will interact with elements of your story on a story arc. Expect to spend 15-30 minutes on this activity.

I am excited for the ways this study will help reveal mentor teachers' experiences! I appreciate you considering participating in this study which aims to improve the student teaching and mentoring experience by paying close attention to details of the relationship, and how the relationship is perceived as a story.

Serena Hicks
Northwest Nazarene University

Appendix I

Qualtrics Script and Consent

Greetings, Teachers! Please review the information below regarding granting consent for the first part of this study. If you are in agreement, please type your digital signature and click AGREE and SUBMIT. You will then be asked to retell the story of your experiences as a mentor teacher.

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Serena Hicks, Ph.D., in the Department of Graduate Education at Northwest Nazarene University, is conducting a research study related to how the mentor teacher experience the mentoring relationship. The study will explore the mentoring relationship experience and gather data regarding specific aspects of the relationship.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a healthy volunteer, over the age of 18, whose experiences are likely to answer the research questions.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur during:

7. You will be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form, volunteering to participate in this segment of the study.
8. You will complete 1 digital journal entry based on a narrative writing prompt given by the researcher. This journal entry should take between 30-60 minutes.
9. After completing this segment of the study, you may be contacted to participate in a semi-structured interview.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

5. The journal entry may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
6. Confidentiality: Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes, audio tapes, and digital journals will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Department and the key to the cabinet will be kept in a separate location. Digital files will be stored on a passcode protected computer. In compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).

7. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help teacher preparation programs better prepare mentor teachers and interns to build a healthy, professional relationship.

E. PAYMENTS

There are no payments for participating in this study.

F. QUESTIONS

If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the investigator.

Should you feel distressed due to participation in this, you should contact your own health care provider.

G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a student at Northwest Nazarene University.

I give my consent to participate in this study.

[DIGITAL SIGNATURE]

[AGREE]

[SUBMIT]

Appendix J

Northwest Nazarene University HRRC Approval

Fully approved by Northwest Nazarene University HRRC Committee on March 17, 2017

Approval Protocol # 6032017

Appendix K

Qualtrics Survey Questions

The Story of Relationship

Q19 The purpose of this study is to explore the mentoring relationship experience and gather data regarding specific aspects of your relationship with a teaching candidate (intern/student teacher). You are being asked to participate because of your mentoring experience and your experience with either the Idaho Core Coaches network or the Boise State Writing Project. If you are part of both groups, you may see this survey twice. Please disregard a duplicate survey. Results from this study are confidential and will be held on a password protected laptop. The results will be used to guide preparation of mentor teachers and teaching candidates. Results will also be used to help mentor teachers and teaching candidates develop more effective relationships. If you agree to be a part of this study, you will be asked general demographic information, and then will be asked to complete a series of short questions about your mentoring experience. The survey will take 30-60 minutes to complete. You will not be compensated for your participation, and you are not required to participate. Your participation is voluntary, and highly appreciated. The researcher has been approved by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research (Certificate #1371084) and this study has been fully approved by the Human Research Review Committee at Northwest Nazarene University (Approval Protocol # 6032017). You are welcome to contact me at any time regarding questions or concerns: Serena Hicks. Thank you in advance for your participation. Please click the appropriate link below.

Q20 Click to write the question text

- I AGREE to participate in this study. (1)
- I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this study. (2)

Condition: I DO NOT AGREE to participa... Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

Q2 Please enter your First and Last Name:

Q3 What is your best Summer Contact Email?

Q4 What is your best Summer Contact Phone Number?

Q5 What is your age?

Q6 How do you identify?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

Q7 How many years have you been teaching?

- 3-10 (4)
- 11-20 (5)
- 20 or more (6)

Q8 What grade level have you mostly taught?

- K-5 (1)
- 6-8 (2)
- 9-12 (3)

Q9 What is your Content Area Specialty?

- English Language Arts (1)
- History/Social Studies (2)
- Mathematics (3)
- Science (4)
- Music (5)
- Art (6)
- Physical Education (7)
- World Languages (8)
- Special Education (9)
- Elementary (General) (10)
- Other (11) _____

Q11 How many Teacher Candidates (interns/student teachers) have you mentored?

- 1 (1)
- 2-3 (2)
- More than 3 (3)

Q12 Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview? This could be a phone, Skype, or in-person interview scheduled at your convenience. It would last between 30-60 minutes.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q13 How did you feel when you first met your teacher candidate? What sort of beginning do you feel you had in your relationship?

Q14 Describe a few events that occurred in the relationship between you and the teacher candidate.

Q15 If you felt tension, excitement, or stress in any one of the previous events, please describe. What would you say was the biggest highlight or tension of the relationship between you and your teacher candidate?

Q16 Think about the experience or event you described as the biggest highlight or tension. What happened immediately after? Reflect on what you or your teacher candidate did or said.

Q17 During the experience of your relationship, how did you resolve conflict?

Q18 How did your relationship end?

Q19 What other details would help explain how you experienced the relationship? Is there anything else you want me to know about your experience?

Appendix L

Member Checking Process

Thank you for helping me check alignment in my data as I write the results of my study!

Please complete the process below and “share” back to me or send in an email.

Directions:

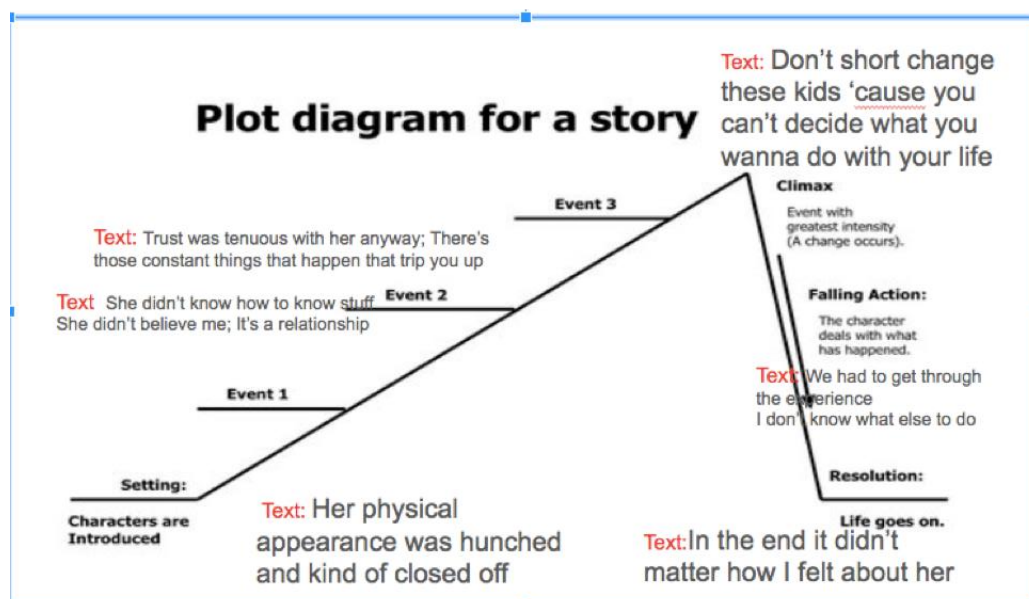
1. Read the statements in Slide 3. These are statements pulled from the transcription of your interview or initial survey.
2. Copy and paste them into Slide 3 where they seem to belong in the story of how you experienced the relationship with a teaching candidate.
3. There is no right or wrong answer. This process is to ensure that I am retelling your story the way you intend. You do not need to use all the text or fill all the boxes.
4. Feel free to add any additional comments or a slide with other thoughts you may have about this process or the story of how you experienced the relationship with a mentor teacher.

Appendix M

Mrs. Waters Member Check Process

Optional Statements to Cut and Paste Into Plot Diagram

1. Her physical appearance was hunched and kind of closed off
2. She didn't know how to know stuff
3. She didn't believe me
4. In the end it didn't matter how I felt about her
5. We had to get through the experience
6. I don't know what else to do
7. It's a relationship
8. There's those constant things that happen that trip you up
9. Trust was tenuous with her anyway
10. Don't short change these kids 'cause you can't decide what you wanna do with your life

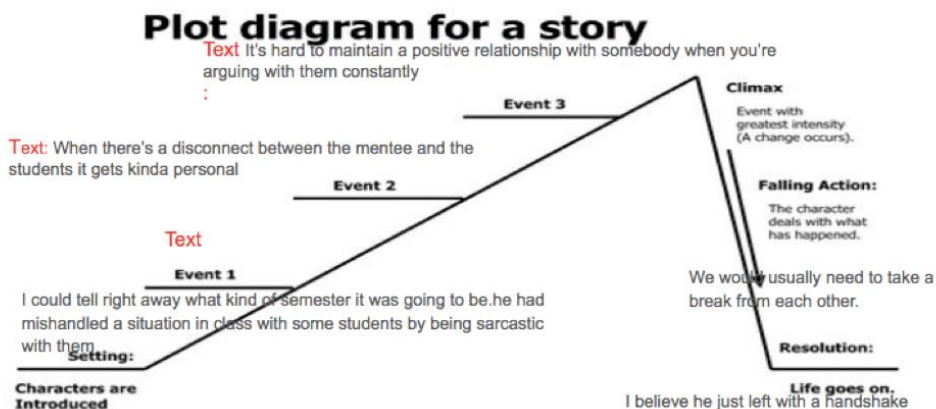


Appendix N

Mr. Ramirez Member Check

Optional Statements to Cut and Paste Into Plot Diagram

1. I would learn just as much from interactions and conversations
2. He had a hard time
3. When there's a disconnect between the mentee and the students it gets kinda personal
4. It's hard to maintain a positive relationship with somebody when you're arguing with them constantly
5. They need to be passionate
6. It's really hard when somebody's stuck in one way...and they don't budge
7. They love the search for what's right and what's gonna work
8. I could tell right away what kind of semester it was going to be. he had mishandled a situation in class with some students by being sarcastic with them
9. We would usually need to take a break from each other.
10. I believe he just left with a handshake

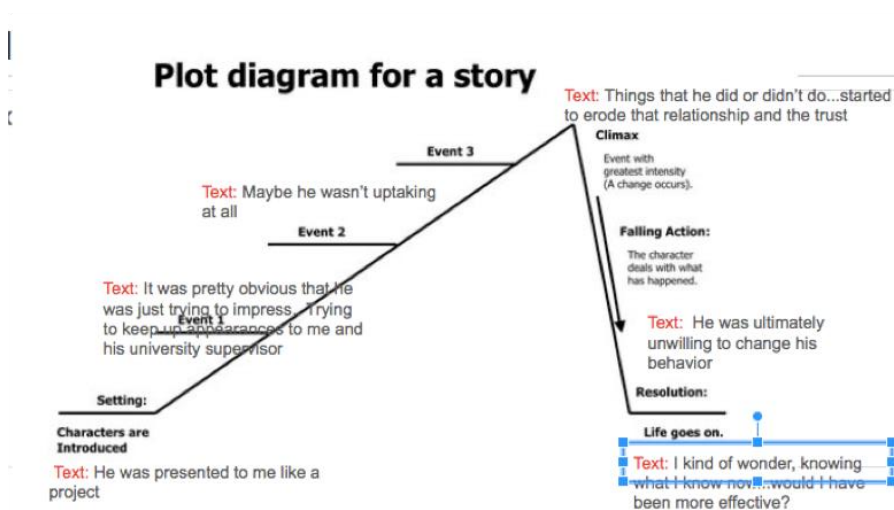


Appendix O

Mr. Matthews Member Check

Optional Statements to Cut and Paste Into Plot Diagram

1. Hey, I'm here to facilitate
2. The more you know about someone...the more you're willing to invest in them
3. ~~It was pretty obvious that he was just trying to impress~~
4. ~~Maybe he didn't uptake~~
5. ~~He was presented to me like a project~~
6. ~~Things that he did or didn't do...started to erode that relationship and the trust~~
7. It depends on the person's willingness to change their behaviors
8. ~~I kind of wonder, knowing what I know now...would I have been more effective?~~
9. You're not gonna connect with everyone the same way
10. He was ultimately unwilling to change



Appendix P

Member Check Ms. Leads

Optional Statements to Cut and Paste Into Plot Diagram

1. When we met for the first time, my interns typically came to my classroom
2. Often we would then co-teach the lesson
3. We developed both a professional and personal relationship
4. We were able to reflect together and discuss the things that went well and those we would modify next time
5. We had a common understanding that our students were the first priority
6. We keep in contact with each other
7. Not a lot of alone time
8. You consistently live out what you believe...walk the talk as you go through the relationship
9. A reciprocal relationship
10. It takes time, but there were times that I wished that they came in with more knowledge and understanding

