

Preservice teacher perceptions of intensive field experiences
and classroom teacher mentoring: A case study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examined the experiences of three preservice teachers who enrolled in a teacher preparation program that was conceived and implemented through a collaborative effort between a college, a K-12 school, and a regional education agency. Specifically, this study uncovered the perceptions of the preservice teachers as they were mentored by a classroom teacher throughout the program's three-year extensive field experiences, and the perceptions of mentoring by the classroom teacher. The findings point to the strong benefits of extended and extensive field experiences in K-12 classrooms for preservice teachers. The extended field experiences provided a multi-tiered framework that allowed for peer mentoring and contextualized classroom experiences that contributed to an improved sense of self-efficacy as preservice teachers participated in hands-on teaching. The preservice teachers reported benefits of learning about teaching as well as learning to teach individual, small group, and large groups of elementary grade students. In addition, they reported the benefits of learning how to manage the classroom and communicate with students, teachers, and parents. Experiences such as these allowed the preservice teachers to gain more knowledge about the practice of teaching as well as their own development and understanding of these practices.

The classroom teacher played a significant role as a mentor in the developing professionalism of these three preservice teachers. The teacher served in the capacity as a mentor, advisor, role model, coach, and colleague. By developing personal and professional relationships with each, she was able to scaffold her mentoring to provide individual attention for each of their needs and teaching abilities. The findings indicate that the mentor teacher was influential in helping the preservice teachers improve their teaching skills, their knowledge about students, and their self-efficacy.

Data from the preservice teachers and mentor teacher suggest avenues for rethinking teacher education reform. The multi-tiered levels of the Academy program coupled with the extensive and intensive field experiences provided a continuous and authentic K-12 context for these preservice teachers. The benefits they describe from this context can be explained within a social constructivist framework.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

What comes first, good schools or good teacher education programs? The answer is that both must come together. There are not now the thousands of good schools needed for the internships of tens of thousands of future teachers. The long-term solution – unfortunately, there is no quick one – is to renew the two together. There must be a continuous process of educational renewal in which colleges and universities, the traditional producers of teachers, join schools, the recipients of the products, as equal partners in the simultaneous renewal of school and the education of educators.

Goodlad (1994, p. 2)

What “makes” a good teacher? Some believe that anybody can be a teacher because fact teaching is merely a process of “telling students what they need to know”. Some believe that good teachers are born with the gift for educating (Pashiardis, 2003). “Making” a good teacher has traditionally meant that colleges should continue to do what they’ve done for many years and good teachers will be the result. In the past few years, however, policy makers, communities, and even teachers are re-examining the traditions, beliefs, and past practices realizing that the profession requires a diverse, almost ineffable combination of skill, talent, and competency to produce a “good” teacher. Reform initiatives have challenged teacher education to improve their programs and produce good or quality teachers; to find ways to collaborate and address the concerns of education (Essex, 2001). Furthermore, latest national attention is aimed at preparing quality teachers for teaching today’s students as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Teacher education reform efforts provide a few promising frameworks used to improve the preparation of teachers. Grossman’s (1994) theory believed that new models of teacher preparation can narrow the gulf between the worlds of the school and the university. Professional development schools emerged to provide authentic K-12 classroom experiences for students as well as strengthen what was learned in college classrooms (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000). Yet other reform initiatives focused on variations of partnerships with K-12 schools to strengthen teacher education (Badiali, Bernard, Flora, Randy, Johnson, Iris, & Shiveley, 2000; Thompson & Schmidt, & Davis, 2003; Yopp, Guillaume, & Yopp, 1998). Although many reform initiatives have reported favorable findings (Parent, Sydney,

Osguthorpe, Russell, Williams, & David, 2001; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000), not all models or frameworks prove to be viable solutions that positively impact teacher preparation programs, particularly for undergraduate teacher education programs. Instead, teacher education programs at universities and colleges continue to seek innovations or restructuring solutions to improve teacher preparation.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the topics that frame and undergirds this study. The primary topics of teacher quality, challenges for teacher preparation to prepare quality teachers, and teacher education renewal and reform will be introduced.

Need for Quality Teachers

According to Goodlad (1994), we will not have good schools without a continuous supply of quality teachers. Our government defines a quality teacher as one who “knows what to teach, how to teach, and has command of the subject matter being taught” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, ¶ 2). Preparing quality teachers for our schools has become a renewed national emphasis since the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). According to Hoff (2004), “States are paying more attention to teacher quality as they carry out the federal mandates” (p. 24). It appears teacher quality is critical to successful schooling experiences for today’s children.

Quality teachers are difficult to find and are not equally available in all schools (Harris & Ray, 2003). Schools that are unable to acquire or maintain quality teachers may experience threatening consequences that can impact their future. If low-performing schools do not make annual progress toward improving student achievement, they may lose funding, experience requirements to intervene with tutoring or extended learning opportunities, or be required to hire other more highly qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Clearly, the need for preparing quality teachers is evident, yet defining what this means is difficult. Some believe a quality teacher is someone who is certified in his/her teaching subject area, while others define a quality teacher as someone who possesses solid expertise in his/her subject area and is a strong communicator (Feldman, 1988; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). A quality teacher has the ability to adapt and change to meet student needs (Hassett, 2000) or regularly demonstrates quality teaching skills (Feldman, 1988).

Now, more than ever, quality teachers are needed to maximize student achievement in K-12 classrooms. The responsibility for preparing quality teachers primarily rests in the hands of higher education (*The Secretary's Second Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, U.S. Department of Education, 2003). It is critical that institutions of higher education examine the existing challenges in an effort to improve their programs that prepare new teachers.

Challenges for Teacher Education to Prepare Quality Teachers

Given the need for quality teachers in K-12 schools, teacher education is faced with multiple challenges in addressing how to prepare teachers. Preparing teachers for the rigors of teaching in our present school systems is a challenging task for every institution (Mason, 1997). In fact, teacher preparation programs are undergoing scrutiny in terms of preparing quality teachers who can handle multiple student and classroom demands such as classroom management, motivation of students, and dealing with the individual differences among students (Stansbury, 2000). Teacher preparation is challenged to keep up with the constant demands experienced in K-12 schools, placing pressure to reform and improve the skills and abilities of new teachers (Temes, 2002). As a result, teacher preparation programs are doubly challenged to improve the quality of their students' educational experiences while simultaneously retaining and nurturing new teachers (Wasley, 1991).

For the most part, the process and decisions for improving teacher preparation programs are left up to the institutions themselves. Teacher preparation programs are challenged to determine effective course pedagogy, content, and outcomes that allow for quality preparation (Rothenberg, McDermott, & Gormley, 1993). Equally challenging is the process of finding a balance between field experiences and coursework (Leppard, 2002; Taylor & Sobel, 2003). Field experiences in teacher preparation are considered to be an integral part of teacher preparation (Greenwood, 1999). Field experiences are instituted to expose preservice teachers to the world of practice and create a bridge to course work (Russell, 1988). Institutions that prepare teachers consider several factors when determining placements for field experiences. For example, each teacher preparation institution typically determines the purpose of their field experiences, the number or longevity of the field experiences and the location (Lawson, 1990). These factors are unique to each institution that

prepare teachers and are often determined by the level of participation from the K-12 school districts near the college or university (Mason, 1989).

Typically, field experiences are a fundamental component in teacher preparation programs and require quality mentoring experiences provided by K-12 classroom teachers (Dexter & Riedel, 2003; Whitfield, 1995; Yopp, Guillaume, & Yopp, 1998). The interpretation and subsequent articulation to achieve a quality program that includes a balance of field experiences has left some institutions of higher education in need of strengthening their teacher preparation programs—experiencing redesigning (Broad, 2000) or reconceptualizing their teaching pedagogy that represents teaching in today’s schools (Gallagher, Malone, Cleghorne, & Helms, 1997; Hargreaves, 1993). Most teacher education programs continue to struggle with locating K-12 schools that closely align with their programs’ classroom experiences and needs.

In response to these challenges, many institutions of higher education are focused on improving teacher preparation. What was once considered a traditional approach to preparing teachers is now under debate (Education Commission of the States, 2004). The process and preparation of quality teachers now includes approaches beyond the traditional course-driven model and challenges teacher education programs to restructure or redesign, while emphasizing the foundation of teaching pedagogy. Restructuring and redesigning requires a conscious look at the latest reform and renewal initiatives (Cobb, 1999; Duffy, 1994). Many of these reform efforts are aimed at improving teacher preparation by developing partnerships with K-12 schools, thereby providing a bridge between theory and practice.

Teacher Education Renewal and Reform

Reform movements in teacher education aim to provide new models of teacher preparation to train and educate teachers who possess the skills to teach a diverse population of youth (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Given the nation’s focus on student achievement, coupled with the need for quality teachers, this places pressure on colleges and universities to focus on improving teacher preparation by forming collaborative partnerships with K-12 schools (Essex, 2001). Redesigned partnership models between teacher education and K-12 schools began as restructuring efforts in response to the need to connect college course theory with practice (Grossman, 1994). Many schools of education have since initiated some

variation of partnering with K-12 schools to provide opportunities for field experiences (Dexter & Riedel, 2003; Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002; Yopp et al., 1998).

Professional development schools (PDS) were established as a predominant university and K-12 partnership model introduced almost twenty years ago and included some form of field experiences (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000; Leonard, Lovelace-Taylor, Sanford-Deshields, & Spearman, 2004). This reform model was the result of a series of meetings between seventeen deans from colleges of education at university research institutions who were determined to improve teacher preparation through K-12 partnerships (Holmes Group, 1986). Professional development schools in their most basic form are collaborative partnerships between a university and a school. These partnerships are developed in a variety of forms, but all have a common focus on supportive inquiry and the professional development of the involved participants (Stallings & Kowalski, 1991). The typical model of a professional development school provides students with extensive applied teaching experience while being mentored by K-12 teachers (Colburn, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Kochan, 1998; Petrie, 1995). Many professional development schools (PDS) models include an additional year (5th year) beyond a bachelor's degree and are considered solutions to improve teacher preparation (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000). In addition to the PDS concept, other reform models have since materialized that concentrate on improving teacher preparation.

Laboratory and portal schools emerged as other reform models that provided extensive field experience for teacher education students (Bush, 1975). Laboratory schools were established on university campuses to provide teacher education students with immediate access to observe or practice teach with school children (Hendrie, 2003). Similar to the laboratory school concept, portal schools were developed as off-campus community and school sites to train teacher education students as well as the school teaching staff (Hendrie, 2003). Both concepts were similar in approach to the professional development school model, but tended to involve a stronger focus toward research rather than post-graduate teacher preparation.

Models of university-K-12 school partnerships, especially PDS, have proven somewhat successful in terms of preparing new teachers at the post-graduate level and

formed at a few hundred universities (Abdal-Haqq, 1991). Some of the beneficial outcomes of professional development schools include, but are not limited to the following, extensive K-12 classroom experience for preservice teachers (Stahler, 1996), camaraderie and support from K-12 mentor teachers (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000), and improved teaching skills as a result of close mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers (Duling, 2003).

Even amidst the popular discourse, professional development schools, laboratory schools, and portal schools were not viable solutions for many colleges and universities attempting to improve teacher education (Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992). PDS school models often require a great deal of time, resources, and commitment from both partners (Daniels, 1999). Furthermore, professional development schools have not been completely successful in their mission of becoming prototypes of best teacher practices and school restructuring, due to factors such as insufficient efforts or challenged partnerships (Hallinan & Vladimir, 2001).

Still, other college and universities seek reform innovations or initiatives in an attempt to improve their teacher preparation programs (Baer & Russomano, 1996). The process of restructuring or reforming traditional teacher preparation programs has led to the focus on improving upon the practical and purposeful field teaching experiences with K-12 schools (Huling, 1998). The notion of immersing preservice students in field experiences to provide for the development of teaching competency, while simultaneously receiving intense mentoring from K-12 teachers, offers promising solutions for improving teacher preparation.

One of the more promising reform initiatives is to develop collaborative partnerships with K-12 schools (Colburn, 1993). These partnerships allow for long-term field experiences and mentoring from classroom teachers that lead to a greater understanding of teaching pedagogy (Whitney et al., 2002). Moreover, long-term and effective mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers allows for the development of the teaching practices needed to teach in today's schools (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Yopp et al., 1998).

Preservice students report the benefits of mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers as one of the most influential aspects of their teacher preparation experiences (Duling, 2003; Huling, 1998; Taylor & Sobel, 2003). K-12 field experiences are beneficial for students in teacher preparation as they begin to form ideas about teaching; however, these early

experiences do not ensure development of teaching skills or internalization of teaching methodology (Baer & Russomano, 1996). Some field experiences tend to be implemented in a sporadic manner, implemented when schedules allow and viewed by teachers as a courtesy rather than as a critical aspect of teacher preparation (Goddard, 2004). At times, teacher education students lack the ability to draw relevance or meaning to the field experiences in the K-12 classroom, resulting in less than productive outcomes in terms of improving themselves as teachers (Baer & Russomano, 1996). The concept of providing teacher education students with long-term, purposeful, and course-aligned field experiences is a positive step toward improving teacher preparation. However, additional research is needed to determine the impact such reform models might have on preparing quality teachers for K-12 classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

Faced with growing pressures to improve the overall quality of teachers and teaching, teacher preparation programs seek ways to improve how they prepare new teachers. Traditionally, teacher education programs have worked to improve collaborations with K-12 schools. Reform models such as professional development schools have met with limited success. Teacher educators need to implement and study new models for successful collaborations between teacher education institutions and K-12 schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine a model of teacher preparation that formed through collaboration among a college, a K-12 school, and a regional education agency. Specifically, this study will examine and describe how the mentoring process between three students and their K-12 classroom teacher impacted the teacher education preparation of these students. The following questions guide this study:

1. What are the perceptions of the preservice teachers about the field experiences in the Academy's program?
2. What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced their teacher preparation?

Significance of the Study

The study of the Academy described an approach to teacher preparation that examined the process and dynamics involved in a collaborative partnership formed between a college, a K-12 school, and a regional education agency with the purpose of improving teacher preparation. Using an interpretive philosophical framework, the phenomena of the Academy's program was examined to understand the meaning of the experiences of the participants. The realities and meanings of the participants were organized using social constructivist assumptions about teaching and learning.

The study's focus will contribute to the need to understand the value of mentoring relationships between inservice and preservice teachers, and will provide useful insights into the dynamics of collaboration, the value of authentic classroom teaching experiences, and the process of teacher preparation.

Limitations of the Study

The research focus was a single case study of collaboration and mentoring between one K-12 classroom mentor teacher and three Academy students. The study was conducted during the third and final academic year (2003-2004) of a three-year progressive cycle of the Academy.

The role of this researcher was co-creator and college faculty representative of the Academy's program (see Appendix A). Personal bias was taken into consideration as a potential limitation. As found in Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Yin (1994), researchers conducting qualitative studies find it difficult to eliminate bias. This researcher attempted to eliminate personal opinion or bias related to this study. Memberchecking was used to confirm the meaning of the narrative data by participants. Two peer reviewers examined the researcher's data analysis for accuracy of interpretations related to identified themes.

The Academy was a pilot program at the study college and was not yet fully integrated into the study college's teacher preparation program. Only 41 preservice teachers participated in the Academy's program out of the 240 preservice teachers enrolled at the study college. This researcher selected one group of participants that included three preservice teachers with their mentor classroom teacher. The selection of this group may affect the findings of this study.

Summary

Many colleges and universities that prepare teachers are challenged to reform or renew their programs in response to the demands for higher academic standards and quality teachers. Reform initiatives require colleges and universities to critically examine how they prepare students as teachers. The traditional teacher preparation sequence consisting of stand-alone courses, general field experiences, and a culminating semester of student teaching, while effective in the past, this sequence may not be sufficient for preparing tomorrow's teachers.

In response to school reform challenges, some colleges and universities formed professional development schools or laboratory schools. Professional development schools formed as post-graduate programs for new teachers to experience a year-long practice teaching opportunity in K-12 schools. Similarly, laboratory schools formed as solutions for students to gain practice teaching experiences on university campus sites. However, school reform models that seek to improve teacher preparation do not provide a "one-size-fits-all" solution for colleges and universities at the undergraduate level. This study examines one reform initiative that places emphasis on extended K-12 field experiences and a multi-year mentoring model between college students and a classroom teacher.

Definition of Terms

The Academy – A triadic partnership program between the study college, study school, and regional education agency aimed at preparing teachers.

Academy student – (preservice teacher or student in teacher preparation)
Undergraduate college student in teacher preparation who participated in the Academy.

K-12 classroom mentor teacher – (in-service teacher) The K-12 school teacher who participated as a mentor and host to the Academy students.

The Academy Coordinator -The teacher educator who administers the work of the Academy, assists with training and guiding Academy students and K-12 teachers, and works closely with the college faculty representatives involved in the program.

Study school - The K-12 school district that participated in this study and includes the elementary, middle school, and high school where the Academy is implemented, where the

teachers in this study teach, and where specific instructional training provided by the regional education agency is held for the Academy's students.

Study college - The study college, a private liberal arts institution located in the same city as the study school, that participated and facilitated the Academy program.

Consultants - The regional education agency consultants who participated in the Academy program and provided specialized training and technical assistance to the Academy students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected literature pertinent to the study of teacher education renewal and reform with emphasis on field experiences and mentoring by K-12 teachers. First, a brief history of preparing teachers at our nation's colleges and universities was described, particularly relevant during the past twenty years of reform initiatives and new models of innovation for producing quality teachers. Next, a review of the literature that shaped and formed reform initiatives in teacher preparation was described followed by past and present challenges for improving teacher preparation. Finally, the topic of partnerships between colleges and K-12 schools, based on contextualized field experiences in K-12 schools with mentor teachers for the purpose of improving teacher preparation, was reviewed.

Background

The crafting of a “good” teacher has a long-standing history in colleges and universities across our country, and because of government requirements such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the preparation of teachers is even more critical. The conception of the *teacher* is associated with Horace Mann, the first secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education (Cremin, 1957; Lagemann, 1993). In 1845, teachers were defined as “good” when they had control over their classroom and were able to disseminate information required of the instructional content area (Lagemann, 1993; Warren, 1989). A good teacher for any age group usually meant a white, Protestant woman, who possessed the temperament to deal with children and a willingness to work for low wages. The preparation of teachers did not include skills in measuring students' successes or achievements, but rather to instill the importance of memory work by conducting class recitations (Broad, 2000; Green & Mitchell, 1998). A “good” teacher was measured by her custodial skills of maintaining classroom order and discipline (Grumet, 1988).

After the industrial revolution in America in the late 1800s, schooling became an important element for people as they desired an education for upward mobility in society and the workplace (Ravitch, 2001). Education's role was to Americanize immigrants through the training of teachers at *normal* schools. At the turn of the century, education became

integrated into the American culture, but teachers were young in age, scarce in numbers, and earned very little (Dewey, 1965). The definition of a “good teacher” migrated from a style of teaching, where teachers operated as custodial classroom disciplinarians, to a teaching style of merely disseminating information. During this same time period, teachers began to complete education degrees at colleges and universities, but their fundamental role in the classroom remained unchanged (Lagemann, 1993).

By the 1930s, most teachers were earning a bachelor’s degree and defined as “practitioners” rather than professionals (Sedlak, 1989). Teaching during this era followed the theory and approach of transmitting information to students. Teachers were expected to put into practice, the subject matter conceptualized by someone else. Lagemann (1993) describes the transmission process between professors and college students as “. . . the devices and formulas discovered by the professors of education would be translated into practice by classroom teachers and other school personnel” (p. 2). University schools of education replicated this approach by having professors conduct research, develop principles for teaching specific curriculum, and disseminate their research to their undergraduate students. In other words, students who graduated from teacher preparation programs were expected to transfer the principles and research formed by the professor to the K-12 teaching classroom (Tom, 1997). Subsequently, as graduates from schools of education entered the teaching profession, they continued to teach in the way they were taught (Lagemann, 1993; Sedlak & Schlossman, 1986).

During the past several decades, the preparation of teachers was often structured to offer several semesters of discrete, stand-alone courses in educational psychology, history, philosophy, technology, teaching methods, and other general content areas such as liberal arts (Moore, 2000). Preparatory college courses, a source of foundational knowledge in higher education, lack realistic and authentic experiences that allow for relevance between theories and practice (Whitney et al, 2002). Current initiatives framed by our government and schools focus on efforts to improve teacher preparation and challenge institutions of higher education to produce quality teachers who are able to bridge theory with practice.

The Need for Quality Teachers

Quality teachers are a key component to the future of schooling as well as student achievement (Crane, 2002; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Since the reauthorization of Title II of the Higher Education Act in 1998, a greater emphasis is placed on improving and changing the quality of teachers nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In fact, quality teachers are a main emphasis for schools and education, in general, since the signing of the NCLB legislation that states, “. . . all students [K-12] will have access to highly qualified teachers” (*The Secretary’s Third Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 3). The national quest for securing quality teachers has instigated new programs, grants, and requirements for K-12 schools and generated the need for training more teachers for K-12 classrooms (*Secretary’s Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, 2004).

Quality teachers are needed in a continuous supply to meet federal expectations; however, quality teachers are not equally available for all schools (Harris & Ray, 2003; White & O’Neal, 2002). Two oppositional situations impact the availability and acquisition of quality teachers. First, student enrollment will reach an all time high in the next several years requiring more teachers in K-12 schools and, at the same time, the projected demand for teachers may surpass the projected growth in the supply of teachers (Justice, Greiner, & Anderson, 2003). To compound the situation further, the second situation relates to the glaring statistics which show that among graduating teachers, twenty-two percent leave in their first three years in the classroom and nearly thirty percent leave by the fifth year (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Henke & Zahn, 2001). The reasons for new teachers leaving the profession are unclear. Some studies report that new teachers leave after one year in the classroom, due to failure to receive professional support (Texas Center for Educational Research, 1999). Other studies have shown that when preservice teachers lack the foundational “rootings” to understand the depth and breadth of teaching, they are dismayed when faced with the realities of teaching and find it difficult to handle the situations and demands in a K-12 classroom (Brighton, 1999; Paine, 1989). Additionally, preservice teachers harbor preconceptions about teaching, based on their prior experiences as students. Often these beliefs tend to be altruistic where *becoming a teacher* [italics added] is idolized

and glamorized by preservice teachers who experienced positive outcomes of schooling as a child. However, when faced with the realities and complexities of teaching, some new teachers find they are not prepared.

The need for quality teachers is evident, yet defining and determining the meaning of “quality” is difficult. Teachers, who are prepared, are described as teachers who are not only “good” but are “quality” (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004). Moreover, Darling-Hammond (2000) believes the definition of a quality teacher is directly correlated to schools that are able to demonstrate gains in student achievement. Additionally, Feldman (1988) synthesized thirty-one studies that identified specific characteristics of quality teaching. The primary characteristics described in Feldman’s (1988) report as well as the recent *U.S. Secretary’s Annual Report on Teacher Quality* (2003) indicate the need for teachers to possess a firm knowledge-base of their teaching subject matter and content. While there is some support for this assumption, other studies report that teachers’ scores on subject matter tests did not demonstrate a consistent relationship between subject matter knowledge and teacher performance (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Still, other studies report that the findings may be “. . . mixed because, subject matter knowledge is a positive influence up to some level of basic competence in the subject but is less important thereafter” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, ¶ 9).

Other variables found to be indicative of teacher competence leading to quality teaching include “measures of academic ability, years of education, years of teaching experience, measures of subject matter and teaching knowledge, and teaching behaviors in the classroom” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, ¶ 5). Strong verbal abilities were found to be related to quality teaching and student achievement (Ehrenburg & Brewer, 1995) and demonstrated by the ability to convey ideas in a clear and convincing manner (Murnane, 1985). Additionally, the skills of communicating knowledge and expertise to students, as well as the ability to adapt and change to meet student needs (Hassett, 2000) and providing skilled assistance to learners (Ronkowski, 1993), were also characteristics commonly reported.

Qualities and characteristics of a good teacher that tend to be important from the perspective of K-12 students, but not specifically measurable or required in the teacher

quality literature, are discussed as important attributes. When teachers develop positive relationships with their students, there is a direct benefit of the social and academic adjustment of K-12 students at school (Wentzel, 2002). Additionally, those who aspire to the philosophy that teaching is more of an art, describe a quality teacher as one who possesses specific dispositional characteristics and personality traits (Plain, 2000; Sizer, 2003; Traina, 1999).

K-12 school students report their perspectives on what makes a good or quality teacher in the K-12 classroom; “. . . a quality teacher is able to connect themselves to their students, their students to each other, and to the subject being studied” (Palmer, 1999, p. 27). Furthermore, K-12 students believe good teachers remember details about their own personal life and know how it can affect their daily activities (Palmer, 1999). Students were surveyed to determine their perspectives of what constitutes a good teacher (Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004). The results of the survey indicated that K-12 school students believe personality traits to be critically important. Good teachers possess positive interpersonal skills such as calling students by name, greeting people in the school, and showing they enjoy being with students. Specific to classroom interactions--school students believe a good teacher is one who can motivate them to learn, is not afraid to tell the unvarnished truth about students' work, and listens with interest. Finally, good teachers never give up on their students and show they care by making frequent positive contact (Hassett, 2000; Learning Curves, 2002).

Clearly, preparing quality teachers to teach in today's schools requires a deep understanding and emphasis on the demands placed on teachers as well as the requirements set forth by the U.S. government. The characteristics and competencies deemed necessary for quality teaching define expectations for today's quality teachers. The need for quality teachers is a significant force driving reform initiatives in higher education as they strive to improve teacher preparation and address the challenges in doing so.

Challenges for Teacher Education to Prepare Quality Teachers

Given the need for quality teachers, institutions of higher education are challenged to design a preparation program that prepares quality teachers. The U.S. Secretary's Report asks a perplexing question regarding the complexity of defining a quality teacher, “How would

you know a high-quality teacher if you saw one?” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 2). The steps taken to prepare a quality teacher are a critical process, and have a positive correlation to successful classroom teaching outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Topping & Sanders, 1999).

According to the U.S. government, a quality teacher is someone who possesses state certification and a solid content knowledge of the subjects s/he will teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Some definitions describe quality teachers in terms of performance or a standards-based approach (Chesler, Romeo, Gillin, & Berger, 2002; Schacter & Thum, 2004), while others define quality teachers by their successful completion of college courses and expectations (Justice et al., 2003). Not only is it difficult to define a high-quality teacher by the successful completion of college courses or state certifications, but equally difficult is developing a teacher preparation program that meets any one definition. While past approaches used to prepare teachers have been acceptable in a general sense, colleges are challenged to develop a conceptual framework as a guiding mechanism for infusing past practices with more current reform initiatives in teacher preparation that meet the demands for teaching in K-12 classrooms (Wigle & White, 1998).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) supports standards-based reform initiatives in teacher preparation (NCATE, 2000). The standards require colleges and universities to use “. . . performance-based evidence to demonstrate that teacher candidates are gaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to have a positive impact on K-12 student learning” (NCATE, 2000, p. 2).

The new standards-based teacher education reform initiative has the potential to change teacher preparation; however, data-driven studies on performance or standards-based teacher education programs are sparse (Otis-Wilborn & Winn, 2000). It appears there is a need for research on standards-based teacher education to determine the outcomes for preservice students. In the meantime, colleges and universities are rethinking and reshaping their courses and overall approaches of preparation. The difficult task is to determine the process, sequence, and model of teacher preparation that is most effective to prepare a quality teacher. Despite the challenges, colleges and universities have found that field experiences in K-12

schools are a critical component to preparing preservice teachers (Huling, 1998; Liu, 2001; NCATE, 2000).

Challenges to Establish Effective Field Experiences

Most teacher education programs are challenged to provide effective and purposeful field experiences for preservice teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Yopp, Guillaume, & Yopp, 1998). Field experiences provide a real-life application to the complexities of teaching as well as experience with handling the demands placed on teachers (Dexter & Riedel, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Forgione, 1999; Green & Mitchell, 1998; Maxson & Schwartz, 2001). Although several national reports have been the driving force for colleges and universities to re-examine their entire teacher preparation programs, institutions have been urged to look specifically at how and why field experiences are important in the preparation of teachers (The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1997). As a result, colleges and universities have intentionally changed or reformed their field experiences to reflect the goals and objectives of their teacher preparation programs. According to Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996), "The linking of a theoretical, research-based foundation with practical clinical experience [field experience] is central to university-based teacher education" (p. 41).

Determining how and why field experiences are important in teacher preparation compels teacher educators to examine the historical timeline to better understand the intent of placing preservice teachers in K-12 classrooms. The purposes and goals of field experience in teacher preparation programs date back to John Dewey (1904). Dewey believed in learner-centered instruction where new teachers could gain experience by observing, experimenting, and communicating with school students (Vitis, 1998). If schools were going to relate to the development of children in their natural context, teacher preparation programs needed to include field experiences as a part of their program (Haubrich, 1968).

Prior to the 1980s, colleges and universities prepared teachers with a sequence of coursework followed by one semester of student teaching. The culminating student teaching experience was the most prevalent field experience for students in teacher preparation programs (Huling, 1998). Additional field experiences were sometimes offered earlier in the

program, but were limited to observations in K-12 classrooms, laboratory schools, or watch-and-tell classrooms, much like the two-way window observation rooms at some universities in the 1970s (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Huling, 1998).

A synthesis of recent literature depicts a myriad of field experience philosophies, models, and purposes in an attempt to determine why field experiences are important to teacher preparation (Goddard, 2004; Huling, 1998; Maxie, 2001; Raffeld, & Salinas, 1998; Ramey, 2002; Soares & Soares, 1998). Many field experiences now begin early in the undergraduate program, even as early as the sophomore year (Huling, 1998). Early field experiences intend to provide students with a method for bridging coursework with practical application. However, in practice, some of these early experiences are often fragmented and lack coherence, if they are not clearly stated or connected to the overall teacher education program goals (Knowles & Cole, 1996; Bullough, Young, Erickson, Birrell, Clark, Egan, Berrie, Hales, & Smith, 2002). Therefore, some teacher preparation programs include a substantial number of hours in early field experiences focused on the mechanical aspects of teaching such as aiding K-12 classroom teachers, grading papers, helping individual K-12 students, or making bulletin boards to orient preservice teachers to the K-12 classrooms (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Later field experiences tend to focus more on instructional practices, classroom management, and the realities of teaching (Wilson et al., 2001). While elementary teacher preparation majors usually participate in several field experiences throughout their teacher preparation program, less field experiences are provided for secondary majors (Huling, 1998).

In the last two decades, as a result of educational reform efforts, colleges and universities that prepare teachers are challenged to include more field experiences focused on improving teacher preparation and provide more authentic experiences so preservice teachers can “. . . cope with the increasing complexity and challenges of K-12 school classrooms” (Huling, 1998, p. 2). Clearly, teacher education programs are challenged to continually provide *meaningful* [italics added] and effective field experiences for their undergraduate students (Beath & Bowman, 1999; Goddard, 2004; Huling, 1998; Reyes, 2003). Determining how, where, and what is meaningful depends on several factors. Colleges and schools of education do not always have control over where their students will participate in a field

experience. Finding multiple school sites where school administrators and teachers are willing and able to allow preservice teachers into their K-12 classrooms is a growing challenge (Wilson et al., 2001).

Locating quality field placements for preservice teachers and identifying K-12 schools that share similar educational goals with a teacher education program can be problematic (Wilson et al., 2001). Moreover, the placements needed for field experiences are sometimes selected haphazardly, according to the number of placements needed for preservice teachers, jeopardizing quality for quantity. Some large public universities must place hundreds of preservice teachers in K-12 schools, creating a tension between maintaining the standards and quality of placements (Goddard, 2004; Wilson et al., 2001). Often, quality K-12 classroom sites and quality teachers opt out of participating or providing classroom field experiences because of other more pressing school needs or initiatives. Furthermore, not all K-12 classroom placements can provide a rich and quality experience for students in college teacher preparation programs, placing college instructors in a difficult situation for placement decisions (Cole & Knowles, 1993). Securing quality field experiences for preservice students sometimes results in situations of observing rather than interacting or teaching in the K-12 classroom. A quality field experience placement should provide preservice students with opportunities to do more than simply observe; it is critical that the experience allow time to become familiar with the setting, the teacher, and the students (Huling, 1998).

Merely having preservice teachers observe in K-12 classrooms does not result in the type of “. . . substantive learning needed to become a successful teacher” (Huling, 1998, p. 2). Observation-laden field experiences, without a direct correlation to college course content with K-12 teachers, do not often allow for proper synthesis of teaching methods used or the opportunity to connect K-12 practice with course content and theory. The inability to transfer teaching skills from observation is analogous to a medical learning model where medical students observe a surgical procedure with the intention of gaining a broad understanding of the process (Grady, 1993). When preservice teachers have the opportunity to engage in discussion and reflective practice with experienced teachers, it impacts their acquisition of professional knowledge (Wilson et al., 2001).

In summary, teacher preparation programs are challenged to provide quality field experiences that focus on similar goals and theories encountered in college coursework. Moreover, colleges and universities, that seek to provide more field experiences for their preservice teachers, must examine how to accomplish this task without compromising expected outcomes and purposes. It appears there is a need to develop strong partnerships with K-12 schools with the intent to develop meaningful and rich field experiences for preservice students.

The Challenge to Provide K-12 Teacher Mentoring Experiences

Preparing to be a teacher is a challenging process (Ganser, 1999; Shulman, 1987) and K-12 mentor classroom teachers can be crucial to the overall development of preservice students in teacher preparation. Research on the topic of classroom teachers mentoring undergraduate preservice teachers is sparse (Williams & Alawiye, 2001) yet this level of mentoring can reduce the “reality shock” of teaching, and result in beneficial outcomes for preservice teachers (Marso & Pigge, 1987). Therefore, mentoring, a formal relationship between a veteran master teacher and a new teacher has been proposed as a vehicle for solving these concerns and situations.

Mentoring of new teachers impacts the current attrition statistics that report more than 30% of new teachers leave the profession in the first three years (Little, 1990). To combat these statistics and aide in the preparation of new teachers, partnerships between K-12 schools and universities have formed to provide mentoring for new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Professional development school models were formed as post-graduate partnerships and found that when classroom teachers provided mentoring for an entire year, novice teachers developed more stable skills and competencies in teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2000). However, colleges and universities that do not provide a post-graduate professional development school, are challenged to provide K-12 mentor teachers who can support and mentor preservice teachers beyond the typical student teaching session (Andes, 1995). Understanding the role and impact K-12 mentor teachers can have on the preparation of preservice teachers during their undergraduate program requires studying the mentoring of preservice teachers, student teachers, and new teachers.

Classroom mentor teachers are instrumental in mentoring new and preservice teachers to understand the demands and complexities of teaching in today's classrooms (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000) as well as socializing them to new professional norms (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Preservice and new teachers report their frustration and lack of preparation with handling classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, working with parents, organizing class work, working with insufficient materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students (Veenman, 1984). These types of concerns were basically considered necessary to the developmental learning for preservice as well as new teachers and decreased with time and practice (Joliff, 1998).

Preservice teachers face a host of responsibilities while learning to teach in a K-12 classroom—lesson planning, benchmarks and standards requirements, behavior management, reports, duties, drug and weapon checks, and dozens of other nonteaching responsibilities (Purkey, 1995). When K-12 classroom teachers work and mentor preservice teachers, they can influence the development of teaching when they provide positive support, clear direction, clear and honest communication, modeling, and effective mentoring (Slick & Burrett, 1995). Moreover, mentor teachers have been found to be highly influential in the development of the new teachers' self-esteem and confidence by developing positive relationships (Trubowitz, 2004).

Colleges and universities clearly recognize the influence that K-12 mentor teachers can have on the development, competence, and understanding of teaching. The K-12 classroom teacher, as mentor and role model, is a part of transforming teaching, “. . . into a true learning profession” (Hargreaves & Fullen, 2000, p. 57) and often viewed by college students as the most valuable component of their student teaching (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Typically, the student teaching semester is the concentrated time for preservice teachers to engage in mentoring relationships with teachers. Findings from research conducted in professional development schools, where various forms of mentoring have occurred, provide insight to the types of experiences and activities that contribute to effective mentoring for preservice teachers (Ross, 2002). Besides the research of professional development schools, few comprehensive studies have been conducted to examine the

context, experiences, and consequences of mentoring (Little, 1990). More research is needed to determine how to develop mentoring programs at the preservice level, what mentoring at the preservice level should involve, and what specific experiences yield beneficial outcomes.

In summary, institutions that prepare teachers are challenged to prepare quality teachers for today's schools. This presents a challenging situation for teacher education programs, as they must establish effective field experience sites that might include mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers. The next section will provide an overview of teacher education reform initiatives and research findings from these efforts.

Teacher Education Renewal and Reform

Since a *Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, a plethora of reform initiatives have surfaced to improve teacher preparation (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Some reform initiatives have been effective, while others tend to fade out of existence (Futrell, Holmes, Christie, & Cushman, 1995). It is difficult for most reform initiatives to survive the tidal wave of public criticism, scrutiny, or lack commitment (Horsley, Loucks-Horsley, Phlegar, & Perez-Selles, 1990). Many reform initiatives succumb to poor planning, ineffective implementation efforts, and lack of sustainability (Horsley, et al, 1990). It seems that during the past twenty years, educators in general have experienced several unsuccessful reform initiatives, leaving them with a sense of hopelessness for future reform efforts (DuFour, 2004). However, the NCLB requirements have changed the landscape of education reform and the manner in which education, in general, elects to direct its efforts; the mandates are a "potent blend of new requirements, incentives and resources, and pose significant challenges for states" (Education Commission of the States, ¶ 1, 2004).

Reform and renewal require investigation of current teacher preparation practices and analysis in determining new approaches that improve teaching. Rethinking how to prepare teachers requires the ". . . unlearning of old practices as well as the learning of new, highly sophisticated strategies for enabling all students to learn at their maximum potential" (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Learning new teaching strategies and approaches will require reform and renewal for colleges and universities to change or restructure their practices and programs. If educational reform and renewal intend to impact and influence

teachers and teacher preparation, the people who train and educate teachers must change as well.

According to Goodlad (1999), teacher preparation will require a multidimensional ethos of cooperation, communication, and innovation between our government, local schools, and institutions of higher education. The most successful reform and improvement efforts are those that allow for the institutionalization of change (Horsley et al., 1990), as well as priority initiatives for colleges and universities who prepare teachers. Moreover, reform literature suggests a “grand initiative of mission” (Goodlad, 2002, p. 219), where colleges must make teacher education a priority in terms of the framework, strategies, and funding mechanism. Teacher education renewal will require nearly a decade of reform to put conditions in place, implement strategies, and fund the reform initiatives (Goodlad, 2002). In addition, teacher education renewal will require restructuring of systems and programs to promote professional development for students enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Besides these realistic and logistical factors of reform, various philosophies of teacher education exist.

Several different philosophies frame the goals and purposes of teacher education and ultimately impact the manner in which colleges and universities respond to reform and renewal (Goodlad, 1999). Specifically, two philosophies tend to surface in education and schooling more frequently. Goodlad (1999) refers to these philosophies as “streams of thought” (p. 2). One stream of thought centers on progressive views of teaching and teacher preparation. Progressive views that originate from this perspective, believe that teacher preparation skills can be measured in terms of knowledge possessed and teaching performance demonstrated (Bradley, 1997; Goodlad, 1999; Schacter & Thum, 2004). Since the publication of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) model standards for teacher preparation, some teacher education programs have structured or redesigned their programs to focus on students’ knowledge and performance (INTASC, 1992). These standards represent a common core of “. . . teaching knowledge and skills which will help all students acquire 21st century knowledge and skill” (INTASC, 1992, p. 3). Some argue that standards and performance-based teacher preparation reforms have removed the “art” of teaching and eroded the opportunity to prepare teachers from a personal

and passionate perspective (Beyer, 1992). Still, others believe that performance-based accountability will frame the approach and manner in which we prepare teachers, and requires a strategy for investing in the knowledge and skills of teachers and those who prepare them (Elmore, 2002).

Goodlad's second "stream of thought" comes from a more traditional point of view where teaching is considered more of an art. A teacher develops his/her art of teaching over time as a result of interactions and experiences that contribute to the "goodness" of a teacher (Goodlad, 2003). Additionally, this philosophy of teaching focuses on learning about the personal and social development of children (Jacobs, 2001), engaging students in the many domains of human experience (Goodlad, 1998), and understanding that teaching in schools is much like a person's own traditional experience (Goodlad, 1999). The art of teaching is often explained by using words or phrases that describe teachers' personalities, demeanors, characteristics, or traits.

These two philosophies of teaching do provide a lens by which some institutions of higher education work to reform teacher preparation. At the same time, institutions of higher education face a host of other reform initiatives that aim to improve teacher preparation, resulting in difficult decisions about restructuring and reform. Equally important in teacher preparation restructuring and reform is the impact from K-12 reform initiatives and mandates from the U.S. government. In the process of determining the most effective reform structures to improve teacher preparation, it is important to assess current and past teacher education reform models.

Teacher Education Reform Models

Determining a general sequence and process for preparing teachers, who possess the particular competencies and characteristics, challenges each institution to determine a direction or model of reform (Driscoll, 1998; Goodlad, 1998). In particular, teacher preparation program models must include pedagogical preparation and attention to subject matter as well as improving alternative routes for experiential K-12 classroom learning (Rutledge et al., 2003; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Improving the experiential K-12 classroom learning opportunities for preservice teachers involves an examination of past reform models.

There are several reform models specific to teacher education discussed in the literature. These models include laboratory schools, professional development schools, and hybrid models that have emerged because of special needs specific to colleges and universities. One teacher education renewal effort that appeared in the 1980s was the establishment of laboratory schools on university campuses for teacher preparation.

Laboratory Schools

The concept of laboratory schools dates back to John Dewey who founded the first school associated with the University of Chicago, as a “living laboratory for his progressive educational theories” (Viadero, 2003). The laboratory school was a departure from the educational norms of that time period. Children in the lab school were challenged to think independently and investigate the world around them. In the same philosophy, the curriculum was built around the interests of the children. Professors from the university worked collaboratively with teachers to plan progressive curricula. The partnership and research experiences were “. . . unimagined and untried cooperation between scientists at the forefront of discovery in their disciplines and teachers at the forefront of pedagogical innovation in their classrooms” (Lagemann, 1992, p. 202).

Dewey’s progressive theories have paved an educational road to teacher preparation reform movements of today. However, the time between Dewey’s era and today included many other philosophies and reform movements. For example, the years of 1900-1950 espoused the philosophy of school organization from the top-down (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Tyack, 1990). Schools reform meant consolidation, increased school size, and diversified curriculum (Tyack, 1990). In the late 1950s and 1960s, schools focused on social differences, human rights, and social justice. The 1980s experienced a return to top-down reform initiatives, uniform state mandates and the “back to basics” movement (Tyack, 1990). In fact, each wave of reform intended to solve the problems brought about as a result of previous reform movements (Tyack, 1990).

During the late 1960s to the mid 1980s, Dewey’s model for laboratory schools emerged as popular school reform initiatives (Dodl, 1969; Lutonsky, 1971). Various models of laboratory schools were located and developed on campuses, and even operated with university funds (Aldridge, 1981; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Most laboratory schools exist

to provide on-site, relevant teaching experiences for teacher preparation students as well as a benefit for employees and faculty children (Hendrie, 2002; Madsen, 2003). However, laboratory schools began to decline in numbers, and received criticism and scarce support for sustainability (Colburn, 1993).

Laboratory schools do continue to exist today, but they are steadily dwindling in number (Viadero, 2003). Nystrand (1991) believes this decline is partially due to the increased number of schools needed by teacher education programs. Further, Colburn (1993) states that laboratory schools declined because they were “. . . atypical of public schools and too expensive for universities to run” (p. 13). Laboratory schools were scrutinized for their student enrollment and atypical curriculum. For example, the K-12 student body at a laboratory school did not reflect the diversity found in K-12 schools and the enrollments of most laboratory schools include a majority of faculty children. Moreover, class sizes were generally lower than typical public school classrooms, teachers usually had advanced degrees beyond a bachelor’s degree, and students may each have an individual education plan.

Laboratory schools are undergoing changes to defy the criticism that they house an atypical student population. Many laboratory schools have since “cultivated student enrollment that more closely mirrors their community” (Viadero, 2003, p. 3). For example, “Florida laboratory schools on state university campuses are legally required to reflect the overall demographics of the state” (Viadero, 2003, p. 26).

Since the changes in laboratory school models, some continue to serve as institutions of educational innovation; whereas, others operate more like teaching hospitals where college students can see best practices modeled firsthand (Viadero, 2003; Zehr, 2003). Some laboratory schools focus exclusively on special education or other academic goals such as science, math, or art. Still others, such as the laboratory school at Columbia University Laboratory School in New York or Price Lab at the University of Northern Iowa, are essentially private schools associated with their colleges of education and provide first-hand teaching experience for preservice and graduate students (University of Northern Iowa, 1991).

In summary, laboratory schools typically exist on university and college campuses, may offer schooling for faculty’s children, and are expensive to operate. While laboratory

schools did help some institutions improve their teacher preparation programs, the concept did not grasp the interest of most colleges and universities. As a result, colleges and universities turned their attention to forming other types of professional partnerships.

Professional Development Schools

Another reform movement in teacher preparation is associated with the Professional Development School (PDS) concept derived from The Holmes Group, a consortium of nearly one-hundred American research universities that initially formed during the 1980s (Griffin, 1991; Howey, 1996, 1996; Kochan, 1998; Lunenburg, 1998; Mayes, 1998). This consortium of universities focused its attention on improving teacher preparation programs as a step toward improving schooling overall (Holmes Group, 1986). At the same time, reports from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) called for reform in teacher preparation by suggesting that K-12 schools be used as clinics for teacher preparation programs. The Carnegie Forum proponents, together with the Holmes Group, committed themselves to establishing PDS that would bring teachers, administrators, and university faculty together and then form partnerships to improve teaching and learning for school and university students.

Various models of professional development schools and partnerships formed across the United States during this reform movement (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1996). Professional Development Schools exist in various formats, with specific goals and unique structures. Professional Development Schools were typically designed as fifth year post-graduate programs (Levine, 2002; Teitel, 1999; Whitney et al., 2002). Upon graduating with a teaching degree, students would continue into a fifth year at a professional development school with the purpose of practicing their newly found teaching skills in K-12 school classrooms. According to the Holmes Group (1990) and Levine (1988, 1992), PDS have four main goals:

- to maximize student learning;
- to support professional teaching practice;
- to enhance the professional education of preservice and K-12 classroom teachers; and
- to encourage research and inquiry related to educational practice.

In addition, professional development schools provide experiences and opportunities for teachers and administrators to impact their own professional development through the following:

- mutual deliberation on problems with student learning, and their possible solutions,
- shared teaching in the university and schools,
- collaborative research on the problems regarding educational practice, and
- cooperative supervision of prospective teachers and administrators.

A professional development school intends to redefine teaching and learning for all members of a school community, while providing a framework to foster a relationship between K-12 school settings and preservice students. Additionally, the relationship requires school and university faculty to assume new roles and engage in new experiences to support the development of the involved participants (Stallings & Kowalski, 1991). According to Darling-Hammond (1994), a PDS provides a new model in teacher education where teacher educators together with novice and veteran teachers, work together in new roles as mentors and expert practitioners. The emphasis for novice teachers is practice teaching under the guidance of K-12 classroom teachers.

The teaching environment and general educational philosophy of the PDS model is an inquiry-based action research framework, where student teachers can explore how they and the K-12 students learn and interact (Smith, 1999). Furthermore, the classroom environment is an ideal setting for student teachers to learn how they can apply this information to improve K-12 students' learning and how to develop instructional approaches (Smith, 1999). Others view the PDS environment as a collaborative, supportive, and high performing teaching experience for student teachers to learn about, observe, and practice the rigor and complexities of teaching K-12 students (Howey, 1999). The opportunity to observe a classroom teacher model effective instructional strategies and classroom management techniques helps student teachers understand and internalize the intricacies of teaching (Whitney et al., 2002). When students in PDS complete student teaching in the same school where they participate, they are able to “. . .experience simultaneous renewal” (Goodlad, 1994, p. 2). The K-12 classroom teacher as well as the PDS student can observe learning,

take more risks, participate fully, and reflect on teaching, allowing for a process of renewal together (Goodlad, 1994).

Studies and research of professional development models indicate some positive results and outcomes for students in teacher preparation programs. Stahler (1996) analyzed education student responses after participating in professional development schools and found they greatly valued the applied experiences in the K-12 classroom. One of the most significant results centers on the formation of the supportive teaching environments that were established for education students in PDS settings (Kochan, 1998; Maxson & Schwartz, 2001; Parent, Osguthorpe, & Williams, 2001; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000).

Classroom teachers were critical to the successful implementation because they were the primary role models and mentors for university students throughout the professional development school program. It was found that student teachers benefit from working with K-12 classroom teachers, who are dedicated to the success of the program and model best teaching practices (Badiali et al., 2000; Whitney et al., 2002). “Emotional support,” as well as collaboration on issues of “classroom management and teaching,” were significant in terms of the impact K-12 classroom teachers had on university students (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000).

In addition, student teachers specifically noted collegueship and support from their classroom teachers as two significant outcomes from participating and interacting in a professional development school (Sandholtz, 2000). Student’s found more opportunities to interact with K-12 classroom teachers, fellow student teachers, and school students due to the long-term nature of the PDS experience. As a result of increased opportunities for interaction, education students and classroom teachers reported a sense of camaraderie while teaching and working in the K-12 classrooms together (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000).

Additional findings indicate that student teachers communicate and reflect about their teaching with K-12 classroom teachers and continue building knowledge through exchanging ideas, while participating in a professional development school (Sid Richardson Foundation, 1993). Students build on their knowledge of teaching, learn and accomplish more by working together (Birrell, Ostlund, Egan, Young, Cook, DeWitt, & Tibbitts, 1998), and form a long-

term collaborative relationship with K-12 teachers that contributed to an increased sense of personal self-efficacy (Saarni, 2000).

Finally, reflective practice emerged as another positive finding and was seen as an end result of the close relationship formed with the K-12 classroom teacher (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000). The process of reflective practice enabled PDS students and K-12 classroom teachers to improve their teaching as a result of discussion and reflection on what went well, what didn't go so well, and what to do differently next time (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992).

In sum, PDS students believed they were more prepared to teach than their peers, felt a stronger sense of self-efficacy, and were more optimistic about their abilities to teach (Badiali et al., 2000; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000). Moreover, PDS students were better able to connect theory with practice, were challenged to think critically and learn in collaborative K-12 environments, and were comfortable to take risks, while being mentored by a K-12 classroom teacher (Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992; Whitney et al., 2002). Although these findings document the positive benefits of professional development schools (Badiali et al., 2000; Goodlad, 1994; Parent et al., 2001; Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000; Whitney et al., 2002), there are still challenges associated with such a model.

The professional development school model requires a strong commitment from all partners to succeed (Daniels, 1999; Parent et al., 2001). A strong commitment involves building trust, forming collaborative partnerships, communicating goals, and committing institutional resources. Oftentimes, commitments such as this necessitate a trade-off in terms of program requirements at the college or university (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000). Determining the priorities of a teacher preparation program can result in the need to determine which experiences in a teacher preparation program are the most beneficial. The college or university may find that by eliminating some of their courses from the traditional sequence provides opportunities for the PDS student to experience a full year in the PDS school (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000).

The intensity and frequency of communication tasks that develop and sustain PDS partnerships is also challenging (Baldiali, 2000; Day, 1995). Developing cooperation, pedagogy, leadership, and disciplined inquiry, and supporting student learning require a new

kind of collaboration and communication network between the participants (Levine, 1992; Lieberman & Miller, 1990).

The element of time appears to be a significant challenge for professional development schools and their participants (Bondy, 2002; Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, & Stokes, 1997). Providing and sustaining quality experiences for students in professional development schools takes time for faculty, K-12 teachers and administrators to plan and implement. Possible new configurations of teaching schedules, tasks, and responsibilities can provide a fundamental change in the way teachers do things and allow more time for new role relationships (Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster & Cobb, 1995). While professional development schools are models and processes that result in positive outcomes for teacher preparation, they are not ideal structures for some colleges. Therefore, colleges and universities seek other options for improving teacher preparation such as hybrid models, partnerships with K-12 schools, and alternatives for extended field experiences.

Hybrid Models, K-12 Partnerships, and Extended Field Experiences

New hybrids, based on previous reform models, have emerged at colleges and universities that provide additional field experience opportunities for preservice teachers. These models or hybrids have evolved from the basic premise of the professional school model to provide a mechanism for improving teacher preparation (Baer, 1996; Huling, 1998; Maxie, 2001). Partnerships and collaborations with local school districts can provide many of the same benefits of a PDS model, such as extensive field experiences for students in teacher preparation (Baer & Russomano, 1996). Some colleges and universities discovered that by developing these types of collaborations with school systems, it allowed for early field experiences at the undergraduate level. For example, The Technology Collaboratives for Simultaneous Renewal in Teacher Education (TechCo) project at Iowa State University is an example of a university–K-6 partnership that could be categorized as a hybrid model for improving teacher preparation (Thompson, Schmidt, & Davis, 2003). The TechCo model is a collaborative approach to preparing undergraduate teacher education students, particularly in the area of instructional technology, where university faculty and classroom teachers work together to improve teacher preparation. TechCo aims to “. . . help teachers and faculty members define and implement technology applications that will expand and enhance the

curriculum in teacher education and in K-12 schools” (Thompson et al, 2003, p. 73). Students and university faculty in their undergraduate teacher preparation program participated in extensive experiences with K-6 classroom teachers with expectations for both to “...share expertise and resources to simultaneously renew together in their integration of technology in learning and teaching” (p. 75).

Another model for improving teacher preparation involves various combinations and models of field experiences. Some field experiences involve long-term partnerships with K-12 schools, while others are aligned with specific college courses. For example, when college teaching methods courses align with practical K-12 classroom experiences, preservice students experience “hands-on” practical application of the theory and approach (Elmore & Burney, 1999). The notion of allowing preservice teachers to participate in K-12 classroom teaching experiences through K-12 partnerships is beneficial in terms of understanding *how* to teach (Elmore & Burney, 1999).

An example of a contextualized hands-on experience is when preservice teachers are involved in experiencing science teaching methods with K-12 students. In this case, if preservice students are going to become science teachers, they are *doing* science, not just memorizing it. For example, when preservice teachers learn about the science concepts of the Bernoulli principle to better understand wind, pressure, and force, they would apply what they have learned by constructing large balloons filled with air, exerting a constant flow of pressure. Upon introducing another flow of air, the students are able to see pressure inside of the balloon decrease and actually deflate the balloon. The *doing* of science principles and concepts in K-12 classrooms and the ability to examine the effect of forced air on the structure, provide preservice teachers and K-12 students with the opportunity to observe the Bernoulli principle in action. Additionally, if students are in math preparation courses, they are actually *doing* problem-solving (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Whitney et al., 2002).

Another field experience approach that can be defined as a K-12 partnership model is aimed at improving observational skills and creating connections to the ideas learned in college courses. This model involves early field experiences at the sophomore undergraduate level. For example, sophomore level preservice students at Rider University participate in extensive field experiences, while simultaneously taking two courses in teacher education

(Baer & Russomano, 1996). A cornerstone of this model is the established field site placements in several of the nearby K-12 school districts. Participating teachers are carefully chosen from the partnership schools and provide models of good practice as well as mentoring students during the “Sophomore Experience” (Baer & Russomano, 1996, p. 434). The sophomore students are not only observing K-12 teaching, but are involved in teaching small groups of students or one-on-one. The partnerships involved in this field experience model report that the field site teachers have discovered new ways to induct the sophomore students into teaching; sophomore students have learned more about their college courses by the assistance provided from field site teachers, who relate what is happening in their classroom to articles students have read (Baer & Russomano, 1996). Furthermore, preservice teachers report they are better able to relate the ideas learned in their college courses to real classroom experiences.

Factors about sophomore level field experiences that impact outcomes are found in the literature. First, to expect the internalization of best practice teaching skills by merely observing during sophomore-level field experiences can be an overzealous expectation (Baer & Russomano, 1996; van Landingham, Groves, & Washington, 2001). Because sophomore level students are inexperienced observers, they are unfamiliar with the routines of the classrooms they visit and unable to benefit from discussing what they have observed with the K-12 classroom teacher (Baer & Russomano, 1996). Instead, rather than continuing with limiting observational experiences, some teacher preparation programs have incorporated intensive field experiences, in which students spend several hours in the same classroom. According to Baer and Russomano (1996), “Almost all teacher education programs today include at least one, and often two, semester-long field experiences that involve observing, interacting, and teaching practice lessons in K-12 classrooms” (p. 432). Huling (1998) supports field experiences, but suggests, “. . . careful guidance and mediation to help preservice students focus on critical aspects of classroom teaching and interactions to interpret what they are seeing is necessary” (p. 2). In addition, providing opportunities to discuss and reflect with the K-12 classroom teacher is an ideal situation for the undergraduate student in teacher preparation, but not always possible (Leppard, 2003).

Finally, other hybrid models involve a wide range of individual approaches and outcomes in teacher preparation. Some of these programs, that have been found to be productive, involve a process of scaffolding the learning experiences for preservice teachers over time, rather than just a series of non-related field experiences in K-12 classrooms (Baer & Russomano, 1996). Other studies emphasize the practical application of what students learn in their undergraduate teacher preparation courses through intentional, goal-focused, long-term K-12 field experiences and relationships with teachers in K-12 classrooms. Lawrence, Dubetz, and Digby (2002) discuss the importance of high quality K-12 field experiences as those that promote aspiring principles of learning for all students, extends the knowledge base of teaching and learning, demonstrates a collaborative effort between college faculty and K-12 school practitioners, and promotes professional growth of all educators.

The quality of field experiences includes experiences and interactions with the K-12 classroom teacher. The role of the classroom teacher, including mentoring for preservice teachers, presents promising options for preparation programs that involve extended experiences in K-12 classrooms.

Mentoring from K-12 Classroom Teachers

Mentoring in education is defined as a formalized relationship between a beginning teacher and another more “seasoned” or master teacher, who provides support and assistance in learning how to teach (Education Commission of the States, 2004). In addition, “A mentor has knowledge and experience in an area and shares it with the person being mentored” (McBrien & Brandt, 1997, p. 64). Mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers is an integral process in the preparation of new teachers, and will require a commitment from higher education and K-12 schools to succeed (Williams & Alawiye, 2001). However, few studies have been conducted on mentoring from K-12 teachers with college-level preservice teachers. Feiman-Nemser (2000) found that before 1990, the literature on mentoring consisted mainly of definitions and general discussions. Therefore, “Researchers did not conceptualize mentors work in relation to novices’ learning or study the practice of mentoring directly” (Feiman-Nemser, 2000, p. 2). Since then, studies are beginning to focus on the insights of mentoring to learn about mentoring practices as well as conditions that

enable new teachers and mentors to work together. Before examining mentoring practices, it is important to understand the early underpinnings.

The practice of mentoring teachers in public schools began in the 1980s as a broad movement aimed at improving education and reforming teaching and teacher education, particularly focused at helping new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2000). Research indicates that when mentoring new teachers to develop in their profession, their growth and development occurred in stages and extended beyond several years (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). The first stage of growth and development for new teachers was characterized as moving from an initial period of survival and discovery, through a time of experimentation and consolidation. Eventually, teachers progressed to a point of mastery teaching and were more stabilized in their skills and competence of teaching. Once a teacher reached the competent stage, they were grounded in the profession of teaching and were more likely to become mentors themselves. To assist mentees with progressing through these stages, mentors may use a variety of approaches and roles.

Mentors may play a variety of roles while working with their mentee; however, one of the most important roles is to help the new teacher progress in the development and skill of teaching (Huling-Austin, 1992). Huling (1998) provides several suggestions on how mentor teachers can support and guide a new teacher as they progress in learning how to teach—providing clear expectations about what constitutes quality teaching, demonstrating and discussing teacher assessment procedures and measures appropriate to student development, and providing a variety of teaching experiences. New teachers benefit from support with learning how to instruct and navigate through multiple tasks associated with teaching (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). In addition to instruction-related support, mentor teachers are better able to provide psychological support to new teachers as they learn to handle an array of new responsibilities.

Mentor teachers can have a significant influence on the psychological status of a mentee by meeting their immediate personal and emotional needs (Tellez, 1992). New teachers are expected to handle a full teaching schedule as well as adjust to school routines, meet district policies and procedures, become familiar with new teaching curriculum, and establish a personal style for managing a classroom. These expectations can cause stress and

a sense of isolation for new teachers, justifying the need for a mentor, who can provide moral support and suggestions for balancing the demands of students, the school, and parents (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). As a result of providing emotional support, relationships form between mentors and mentees.

When two teachers are actively involved with the learning process and sharing ideas about teaching, the mentoring experience can become more personal, contributing to the formation of a positive relationship. Several studies refer to the relationship between a mentor and mentee as deepening over time as does the level of collaboration and mutual respect (Watkins & Wamback, 1999). Similarly, Clemson (1988) found that a mentoring pair forms a developmental, multidimensional relationship, where the mentee must feel comfortable confiding in and making mistakes in front of the mentor. When a mentees feel like their mentor believes in them, provides assistance when necessary, and supports their efforts, the relationship flourishes. The relationship formed provides an atmosphere where the mentee can take risks without fear of failure (Clark, 2001). While the mentor role is the most critical in forming the mentor-mentee relationship, they are not the only member of the pair taking action.

While receiving support and assistance from a mentor, the mentee is expected to put forth an effort in becoming self-reliant (Kay, 1990). Self-reliance is a process of becoming independent as a professional, while demonstrating the ability to draw on the knowledge and experiences from the mentoring relationship through an enabling process (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). Additionally, the critical elements that the mentee should contribute to the relationship include: (1) a willingness to be mentored (2) a desire to learn, and (3) a demeanor that suggests receptivity to being directed and advised (Levine, Hebert, & Wright, 2003; Wright, 2003). When mentees engage in mutual participation that involves open dialogue and a process for contributing to each others' wants and needs, the mentoring relationship strengthens.

Given the potential benefits of mentoring, the concept has been extended to the preservice teacher education level (Feiman-Nemser, 2000). Reform initiatives proposed by the Holmes Group (1990) call for preservice teachers to “. . . work closely with experienced teachers in internship sites and restructured school settings such as professional development

schools” (Feiman-Nemser, 2000, p. 1). Experienced teachers mentor college students in teacher education, “. . . helping them learn new pedagogies and socializing them to new professional norms” (Feiman-Nemser, 2000, p. 1). Professional development models have typically provided some type of mentoring experience for preservice teachers (Sandholz, 2000). These mentoring experiences are collaborative relationships and create cultures of sharing that help preservice teachers during a year-long professional development experience. The helping approach of the mentoring experience contributes to forming relationships between K-12 classroom teachers and preservice teachers (MacArthur, Pilato, Kercher, Peterson, Malouf, & Jamison, 1995). Preservice teachers reported that spending a full year in a K-12 classroom was significant in terms of forming a relationship with their classroom teacher (Sandholtz, 2000), as well as sustaining it beyond college.

Other mentoring initiatives involving K-12 teachers and preservice teachers have reported promising outcomes for preservice teachers. For example, Cochran-Smith (1991) studied student teachers and K-12 classroom teachers who were involved in a reform-oriented teacher preparation program. Cochran-Smith found that weekly meetings and conversations were valuable experiences that formed early structures for mentoring. The preservice teachers were exposed to contextualized problems experienced in K-12 schools during the meetings and conversations with K-12 teachers, which allowed for early understandings of school reform. In addition, successful mentoring between preservice teachers and K-12 teachers usually depends on the school-university experience partnership already formed.

Another mentoring model at the preservice and post-graduate level involves early and continuous interaction between preservice teachers, college faculty, and school teachers at the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). Preservice teachers seeking teaching degrees in math or science receive mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers (Odell, 2000). Unique to this program, undergraduate and post-graduate students are paired with a primary mentor teacher in the K-12 school and spend a full year completing courses, while engaged in practice teaching. The overall goals of this mentoring program are to support and teach preservice teachers to 1) implement state-of-the-art practices in science and math, 2) link preservice experiences with renewal experiences, and 3) strengthen and increase

collaborative efforts between the education institutions. In this program, the role of the mentor teacher was influential in the preparation of new teachers.

Various aspects of mentoring provided by K-12 classroom teachers are pivotal in the overall development of preparing teachers. Ideally, models of teacher preparation at the undergraduate level should provide students with contextual, goal-related, and intensive practical teaching experiences with K-12 teachers and then provide opportunities for follow-up reflection and discussion between both. Programs such as this should align with the theoretical underpinnings of college goals and teacher preparation courses throughout the undergraduate program (Knowles & Cole, 1996). Establishing collaborative mentoring partnerships with K-12 classroom teachers is one solution that promises continuous renewal for both the college student and K-12 classroom teacher. Increased preparation and practical teaching experiences in K-12 classrooms combined with K-12 classroom teacher mentoring partnerships, serve to benefit the teacher preparation program as a whole. Ambitious goals such as these take time to develop and require a vision of teacher preparation, a strong sense of commitment between the college and K-12 school, involvement and commitment from individuals who are able to allocate resources, and a desire to form and sustain a partnership.

Summary

Promising reform initiatives like professional development schools, extended K-12 field experiences, and performance-based teacher competency programs have been implemented to improve teacher preparation (INTASC, 1992; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000; Thompson et al., 2003). Many of these are framed by collaborative and site-based management approaches. Using such approaches, colleges and universities across the United States have attempted to alter the character and quality of preservice teacher preparation (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003).

Professional Development Schools and laboratory schools continue today; some continue to flourish, while others have evolved into new models of K-12 school-college partnerships. Similar to the transformation efforts of laboratory schools, colleges and universities of teacher education seek creative and meaningful opportunities to partner with K-12 public schools (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Gimbert & Nolan, 2003).

Various other reform models, such as hybrids or extended field experiences, exist for the purposes of providing realistic and optimum experiences for undergraduate students in teacher preparation. Partnerships, extended field experiences that provide meaningful mentoring, collaborative relationships with K-12 schools, reformed laboratory schools, and multifarious models attempt to create educational change and are aimed at improving existing teacher preparation programs. The structure and process of the various models and reform attempts tend to be structured and defined differently by each institution or partnership. All models, however, share one common element – the importance for teacher preparation students to experience practical and authentic teaching [field] experiences in K-12 classrooms (Dexter & Riedel, 2003; Green & Mitchell, 1998; Leppard, 2003; Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992; Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000; Whitney et al., 2002). Moreover, K-12 field experiences should align with clearly stated program goals between the college teacher preparation program and K-12 schools (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001), as well as allow for observation of classroom teaching and students (Jacobs, 2001; Stahler, 1996). However, field experiences that are not directly aligned with course pedagogy, lack relevance to the context of the course, or are limited in terms of theoretical underpinnings, do not contribute to the overall improvement of teacher preparation (Whitney et al., 2002; Wilson et al., 2001).

There is still a need for development and research of new teacher preparation models in undergraduate teacher education. The next chapter will describe the case study methodology used to examine a hybrid model of teacher preparation that involves extended field experiences and mentoring from a K-12 classroom teacher.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the qualitative research methods used to examine the mentoring experience between one K-12 classroom teacher and three preservice teachers, as well as their perceptions of the field experiences while being mentored from one to three years at a teacher preparation Academy. To accomplish this purpose, this chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology, the study context, data collection methods, data management, and analysis procedures employed in this study.

Purpose and Rationale

Current education reform initiatives propose to prepare a quality teacher for every K-12 classroom, with the goal of maximizing the education and achievement of our nation's youth (Public Law 107-110, 2002; National Commission of Teaching and America's Future, 1996). While this initiative appears to be logically attainable, in actuality, fewer students are entering college teacher education, teacher preparation programs are struggling to recruit and retain students, and qualified teachers are leaving schools after an average of three years teaching (Odgen, 2002). These realities pose distinct challenges for higher education to reform and renew teacher preparation.

Historically, preparing quality teachers is the responsibility of colleges and universities, where, traditionally, teacher preparation curriculum involves a series of discrete stand-alone courses. Recent national reports and the U.S. Secretary's Report on Teacher Quality (2003) have instigated requirements of assessing and analyzing teacher preparation programs with the purpose of determining whether the program, the traditional approach of stand-alone courses, or newer performance-based approaches produce competent, qualified teachers for our K-12 schools. The process of conducting an internal assessment of *what* occurs in teacher preparation as well as *how* it is implemented, has spurred colleges and universities to look carefully at their programs (Education Commission of the States, 2004).

Colleges and universities are challenged to reform teacher education with newer models and approaches such as professional development schools, intensive field experiences in K-12 schools, and other more practical innovations, which result in producing quality teachers. The various reform models depicted in the literature during the past twenty years

demonstrate hopeful trends to reform teacher preparation. However, most of the reform models have been rather sporadic and lack explicability for many undergraduate teacher preparation programs. Not all colleges and universities are able to develop graduate year programs or access multiple K-12 schools for extensive field experience placements. The literature is not explicit about solution-based reform models, about approaches for developing authentic K-12 classroom field experiences, or about providing models for smaller more rural colleges and their teacher preparation programs. There is a need for other innovations and reform models applicable and appropriate to implement in undergraduate teacher preparation, and more specifically, with smaller rural colleges.

In response to the desire to improve teacher preparation, a reform model named the “Academy” based on the framework of professional development schools, was formed between a college, a local K-12 school, and regional education agency (see Appendix B). The Academy, a triadic partnership between education institutions, involves K-12 classroom experiences and mentoring from K-12 classroom teachers for three years. The experiences that occurred as a result of preservice teachers participating in the Academy, the dynamics between preservice teachers and a classroom teacher, the mentoring experiences provided by the classroom teacher, and the peer mentoring experiences, are the focus areas of this study.

This case study is designed to understand the educational experiences between the participants, the intricacies of the mentoring relationships, and the influences of the multi-level field experiences on the preservice teachers and classroom teacher. Such a study requires using a qualitative research methodology that will allow in-depth examination of the participants involved in the Academy to understand their thinking, planning, decision-making, experiences, and perspectives.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methodology is “. . . research that produces descriptive data-- people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7). This type of research has been used for many years in the social sciences as an inductive form of the scientific method to “. . . generate hypothesis and develop theory about phenomena in the world” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 51). It is an effective research process used to investigate themes and relationships of the phenomena at the case level

where the researcher intends to break down the aspect of the entire case and investigate the phenomena (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Qualitative methods are useful for program investigation while illustrating the phenomena and providing a vivid description of what we learn from interpretation (Bogdan & Taylor 1990; Guba & Lincoln 1989; Maykut & Morehouse 1996).

For the qualitative researcher, all perspectives are worthy of study (DeVault, 1995). During qualitative research, the researcher will encounter multiple perspectives—that the world is not an objective thing, but a “function of personal interaction and perceptions” (Merriam, 1988, p.17). In this particular study, an interpretive philosophical base was used as a framework from which to understand the multiple perspectives and interactions of the Academy’s participants. An interpretivist framework rests on the underlying epistemology that “our knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors . . . and that it is the interactions of the human subjects” that are used to derive meaning of their realities (Walsham, 1995, p. 376). Interpretive research focuses on making sense of the phenomena and complexities of situations (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). Additionally, interpretive assumptions view reality in terms of how they are socially constructed. In this particular study, the perspectives of the Academy’s students and the K-12 teacher mentor classroom teacher are studied to gain an understanding of the phenomena through the meanings they assigned to them. This design allowed for studying the participants during the natural process of participating in the Academy’s experiences in order to understand their perceptions and experiences. Findings from this study may influence the reform of a college teacher preparation program.

This study uses qualitative research methods to tell the story of the Academy—the dynamics between the people involved, the multiple levels of mentoring by a K-12 classroom teacher, the perceptions and beliefs of the preservice teachers while participating in the 1st grade classroom and program, and the perceptions of the mentor classroom teacher. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) describe the qualitative researcher as one who “. . . seeks to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect” (p. 24). To gain the rich descriptions behind the inner dynamics of the Academy requires sustained contact with the people in the setting. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe induction as a process where the researcher

enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, is able to get to know them, is trusted by them, and can systematically keep a record of what is learned.

This study intends to examine the following research questions of three Academy preservice students and their respective mentor, a K-12 classroom teacher:

1. What are the perceptions of the preservice teachers about the field experiences in the Academy's program?
2. What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced their teacher preparation?

Several assumptions surround the use of the qualitative research methodology to study the Academy. The following assumptions are described in Merriam (1998, p. 5) and provide a framework for examining the mentoring process and dynamics of the Academy's program while understanding qualitative research.

Qualitative research focuses on process

The study of the Academy's model requires attention to a process that transpired during the 2003-2004 school year. Through fieldwork and interviews, this study investigates the *process* of the Academy where K-12 classroom teachers and students in the Academy interacted with each other during various trainings, mentoring sessions, collaborative work, and co-teaching experiences.

Qualitative research examines and derives meaning

This study intends to examine the meaning of the mentoring process between a K-12 classroom teacher and three Academy students and the meaning of what the preservice students report as their experiences in the Academy. Merriam (1998) and Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) both discuss that the challenge of finding meaning is to determine how to "...view the phenomenon as the participants view it" (Gall et al., 1996, p. 548). Gall et al. (1996) has shown the *emic* perspective to be that from the participants and the *etic* perspective to be that of the researcher. Both perspectives are critical to the study, as they "... make conceptual and theoretical sense of the case" (Gall et al., 1996, p. 548).

Qualitative researcher as collector of data

In this study, the qualitative researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis by conducting interviews and surveys, gathering artifacts, and observing Academy participants throughout the case study. According to Merriam (1998), data findings are a mix of description and analysis that use concepts from the theoretical framework of the study (p. 11).

Qualitative research involves fieldwork

The researcher physically visits the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting. The study necessitated that the researcher conduct in-depth interviews with the participants at the Academy's site. The fieldwork included on-site observations and note taking during discussions, interviews, meetings, and trainings held with the Academy's students at the study college. Additionally, observations and field notes were conducted during large group meetings and staff-development sessions for all K-12 teachers and Academy students and used for the purposes of clarifying and providing additional insight to the dynamics and experiences of the participants.

Qualitative research is descriptive

Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures. This study's primary researcher's understandings, meanings, and interpretations are at the core of her interest to improve the preparation of teachers in her role as co-founder of the Academy. According to Merriam (1998) and Bolter, (1991) ". . . writing is a way of knowing your own mind, as you see the manifestations of your mind externalized on the page" (p. 211). By writing about the reviewing the data collected, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the process required to prepare a quality teacher.

Qualitative research is an inductive process

The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details. Based on the data collected and prior experiences as researcher, teacher, and writer, the researcher used an interpretive framework to describe and explain the study's outcomes. The inductive process enabled the researcher to arrive at understandings from the perspectives of the Academy's participants.

Case Study Design

The need to examine and understand the dynamics between a K-12 classroom teacher and three Academy students led to the use of case study methodology for this study. Gall et al., (1996) states “. . . a good case study brings a phenomena to life for readers and helps them understand its meaning” (p. 543). The contextual and complex nature of the Academy, as well as the people involved, directed the research methods that gathered descriptive data for this study.

Case study research is widely used in education for the purposes of producing detailed descriptions of phenomena (Gall et al., 1996). Detailed descriptions form a conceptualization of the Academy and the constructs to explain the process of the program, the interactions and experiences of the participants, as well as the relationships to other teacher reform initiatives in the literature.

Determining exactly which particular case or group of people to study in the Academy was difficult. The Academy involved a significant number of people (72), personal dynamics, Levels of participation, situations, and years of simultaneous renewal. This researcher was inspired by the description of case study methodology, when reading the realities and outcomes of case study by Stake (1994):

Many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot: the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing, anyone's telling. Even those inclined to tell all find strong the obligation to winnow and consolidate. A continuum runs from telling lots to telling nothing. The holistic researcher, like the single-issue researcher, must choose. (p. 240)

The Academy partnership involves descriptions of the model, the events surrounding mentoring preservice students over the course of three years, as well as rich descriptions of K-12 classroom teacher preparation experiences. The Academy's multifaceted and multi-tiered approach in teacher preparation led to selecting a specific approach described as an interpretive case, to specifically study the mentoring relationship between a K-12 mentor teacher and three Academy students.

Interpretive Case Study

An interpretive case study was used as the research strategy for the purpose of learning about and gaining a better understanding of the mentoring experiences between

Academy students and their mentor teacher as well as outcomes of the program. Interpretive case study, as described by Yin (1994) is undertaken to “. . . investigate a contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). In this study, the case group was selected to provide a more in-depth look at the field experiences, mentoring activities and relationships, as well as the phenomena or human dynamics of the Academy’s program.

To tell the story of the mentoring relationship and the Academy, it required “thick descriptions,” narratives, quotations from the participants involved, and analysis to understand the “what” and “why” and “how” of the program. “Thick descriptions” of the phenomena are “statements that re-create a situation and as much of its context as possible” (Gall et al., 1996, p. 549). These thick descriptions lend meaning to the Academy’s mentoring process and meaning to the experiences of the participants. Thick descriptions of the personal or *emic* perspectives of the participants and resulting constructs of the Academy are formed from the data collection process. The meaning and understanding derived from the participants’ data through interpretation (Walsham, 1995) are important to this study in terms of conceptualizing and explaining the mentoring relationship between the K-12 classroom teacher and three Academy students.

Study Context

The Academy model

The Academy is a collaborative partnership formed among a K-12 school, college, and regional education agency for the purpose of improving the process of preparing teachers. The model is derived from the foundational framework of a professional development school and more recent models of professional development academies at colleges. Using the beneficial structures and outcomes from the models of professional development schools, the Academy incorporated the components of extensive field experiences, authentic and realistic experiences with school students, and mentoring from a K-12 classroom teacher. The relationship among and the identified roles of the three educational institutions are depicted in Figure 3.1.

Each of the institutions plays a distinct role in the Academy's program. The study college is responsible for providing information to the teacher education students about the Academy's program. Additionally, the study college receives and processes applications for the Academy's program followed by orientation sessions for new in-coming preservice students. Finally, the study college is responsible for providing the courses aligned with the teacher education program, as well as supervising and facilitating the Academy's program with participating preservice students.

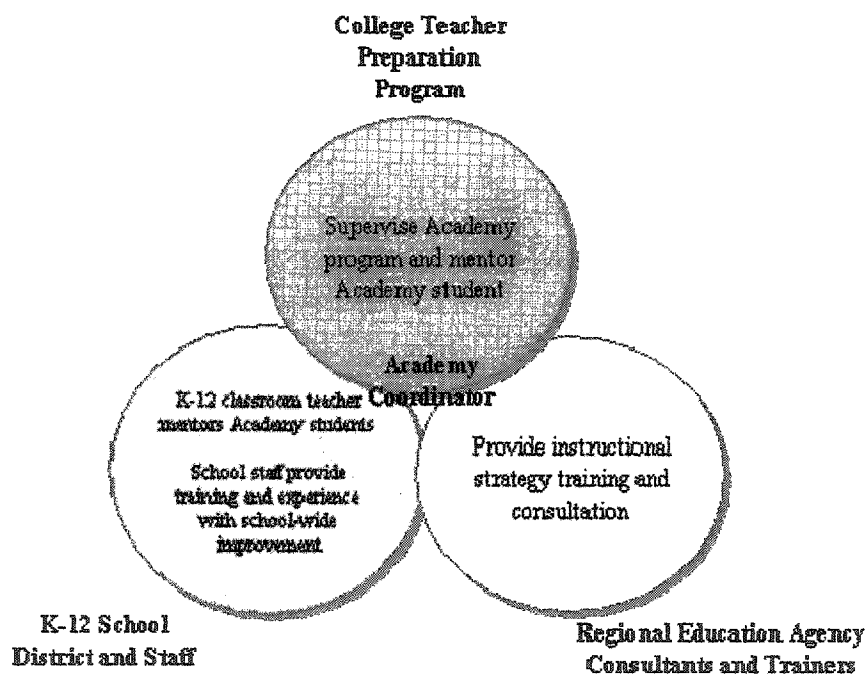


Figure 3.1 Academy partnership model.

The study school's role and participation in the Academy's program are to provide mentor teachers and K-12 classrooms for extensive field experiences. All K-12 mentor teachers participate in the Academy's meetings, discussions, and mentoring sessions. The study school's central office and superintendent supports the Academy by assigning building administrators to supervise and participate in the Academy's program. Additionally, the study school offers training and experiences in school-wide improvement for the Academy's participants and school faculty.

The regional education agency provides consultants, who conduct a variety of specialized instructional training sessions for the Academy's students. Additionally, the consultants provide direct technical assistance for the Academy's students during meetings and feedback sessions held at the study college.

The Academy

The Academy involves a number of processes, events, and people. During the 2003-2004 school year, the Academy completed a third cycle of the program. The third year of implementation involved the final cycle of the initial group of Academy students under the mentorship and guidance of K-12 classroom teachers. Fifteen Academy students, who entered the program during their sophomore year of college in 2001, were in the process of completing student-teaching and their third and final year with the same mentor classroom teacher. In addition to these third-year Academy students, two other groups of students were in the Academy. A second group of fifteen students entered the Academy in the fall of 2002 and a third group of fifteen students began fall 2003.

Description of K-12 Partner School

The K-12 study school is located in a moderate-sized rural community. Approximately 2,130 students comprise the population of their K-12 school system. From that, about 1000 are K-5th grade students who are housed in three elementary school buildings. The three elementary schools are administrated by two building principals, who manage the staff, provide instructional leadership, and participate in the development and implementation of the Academy. The study was conducted in the K-3 elementary school building that included the following—the regular education program, reading program, talented and gifted program, guidance counselor services, and a special education resource program. The staff in the study school consists of licensed elementary teachers, a licensed guidance counselor, licensed music, art, and physical education teachers, a licensed school nurse, and a school secretary. The student body is made up of children from all socioeconomic levels, from a wide range of academic abilities, and is predominantly 98% Caucasian (study school government data report, 2003). The percent of free and reduced meal rate is 15%.

After the Academy's first year, the Academy Coordinator was added as an additional part-time teacher position in the school to facilitate coordination of the Academy within the school, and between the school and college.

Description of Study College

The study college, with a student enrollment of about 1,800, is a private institution in a moderate-sized rural community, whose undergraduate population comes from predominantly rural men and women of the ages 18 – 24. Approximately 51% of the students at the college are education majors seeking a degree in teaching. The remaining students are dispersed across many other majors such as business, science, fine arts, and health sciences. The nine teaching faculty, from the college teacher preparation program, possess advanced degrees and have been practitioners in the field of education for many years.

Description of Regional Education Agency

The regional education agency is a division of a larger statewide intermediate education agency created by the 1974 state legislature to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children. Support to local schools is provided through an array of programs, services, and resources that are funded through the agency's budget. Funding comes from the legislatively controlled state-aid and property taxes, federal and state grants, and the sale of services and materials. The education agency's mission is to improve education by supporting all learners through client-focused services, partnerships, and leadership.

A particular branch of the agency serves the study school with educational services such as consulting, training, media, and special education services. Consultants work in the K-12 schools on a weekly basis to assist teachers with student learning needs and school curriculum. Specifically, they focus on technical support for school improvement goals by providing direct consultation and school-wide, on-going training. During the time of this study, the regional education agency provided three school consultants to the study school who performed a variety of services such as—specialized training, workshops and seminars, assessment of student learning, curriculum suggestions, student testing for identification of learning deficits, and technical support for school-wide improvement. These same consultants were involved in provided specialized training sessions in reading and math for

the preservice teachers in the Academy program at the study college. Additionally, they monitored the preservice teachers during their teaching experiences in K-12 classrooms.

Description of the Academy's Program and Process

The Academy offers prospective teachers an alternative approach to teacher preparation at the study college (see Figure 3.2). Participation in the Academy is an additional component to the regular teacher preparation degree program. Academy students can elect to take up to two college credits per year for participating. After completing the freshman-level education foundations courses, interested students apply for participation in the Academy's program. Students are selected by a committee of college faculty, who assess the preservice students' writing skills, performances in college courses, and grade points. Students who participate in the Academy are from the upper 25% of their class in terms of academic achievement in college. The Academy is a non-graded, new program at the study college and nearly all of the fifteen preservice teachers who apply are accepted into the program on a yearly basis. The Academy's planning committee, consisting of six stakeholder members from all three education institutions, is currently in the process of discussing approaches for accommodating larger numbers of preservice students in the Academy's program.

During the 2003-2004 academy year, the Academy's program involved seventy-two participants, including thirty-four Academy students, twenty-one mentor teachers who teach grades K-12, seven regional education agency consultants, one Academy coordinator, one college faculty representative, two additional faculty, who provided technical assistance, and six stakeholder participants. During the past two years, a few Academy student participants have elected to withdraw from the Academy program, due to personal reasons or changes in career decisions.

The Academy uses the term "Levels" to describe the process and developmental sequence of training, mentoring, and scheduling the classroom teaching experiences that college students complete. At each Level, specific goals outline expected experiences and outcomes for the participants. Table 3.1 depicts the Levels of participation and general experiences and activities of the tiered Academy program and preservice teacher participants.

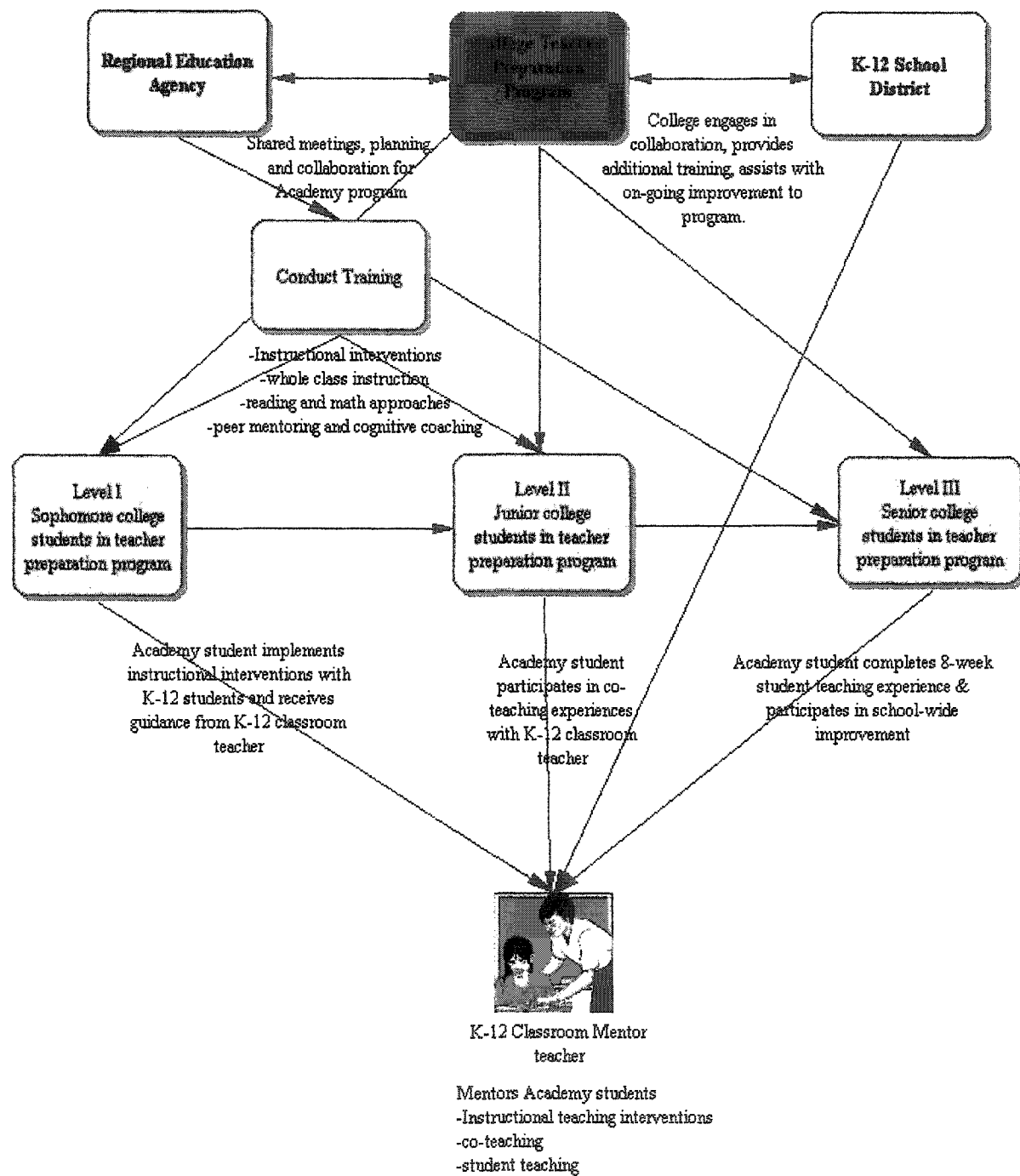


Figure 3.2 The Academy model.

Each Level is defined and described according to what the preservice teachers receive as training. The last column of the Table shows the mentoring relationships in the Academy program. A more detailed description of all Academy training and field experience expectations at each Level is included in Appendix C.

Table 3.1. Preservice teacher Levels in the Academy program and corresponding experiences, training, and role of the mentor teacher.

	Year	Field Experiences	Training provided by regional education agency in coordination with study college	Mentoring
Level I	Soph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teach 1:1 with individual school students or with small groups weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructional intervention training in reading, math, and study skills ▪ Progress monitoring ▪ Collaborative discussion ▪ Attend school district staff development training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentored by classroom teacher ▪ Mentored by Level II Academy peer
Level II	Jr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-Teach with K-12 classroom teacher 6-8 hours a month ▪ Cooperatively plan teaching lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cognitive peer coaching ▪ School-wide improvement ▪ Collaborative discussion ▪ Classroom and behavior management ▪ Attend school district staff development training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentored by classroom teacher ▪ Mentors Level I Academy peer ▪ Mentored by Level III Academy peer
Level III	Sr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student teach with K-12 classroom teacher ▪ Co-teach and lead-teach during off-semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School district professional development Training ▪ Cognitive peer coaching ▪ Collaborative discussions ▪ Strategies that work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentored by classroom teacher ▪ Mentors Level II Academy peer

Description of Level I

Outlined in the Academy's manual and developed by partnership participants, the first year in the Academy is named "Level I." The goals of the Level I experience are to understand individual K-12 student learning needs, assist with assessment approaches to determine reading or math needs, implement instructional interventions with individual or

small groups of K-12 students, conduct student progress monitoring in reading or math achievement, and participate in mentoring activities with the classroom teacher and Academy's peers. (see Appendix D)

Once preservice students are selected, they enter Level I at the start of their sophomore year. Level I students begin participation in the Academy program by attending an orientation luncheon with their mentor teachers. In addition to their regular teacher preparation courses, the Level I Academy students attend meetings and specialized training sessions to learn about student assessments, individualized instruction, and specific interventions aimed at helping K-12 students achieve academically. Specialized instructional training sessions are delivered by the regional education agency consultants and assisted by the Academy's coordinator and college faculty representative.

During the summer prior to the start of the Level I academic year, stakeholder participants from all three partner institutions met to plan and develop the topics, content, and curriculum sequence for the Academy's training sessions. Training sessions were aligned with the study school's improvement plan and developed as instructional teaching components that reinforce what K-12 teachers were doing in their classrooms. The regional education agency consultants conduct six to eight weeks of training sessions (one – two training sessions each week) and immerse Level I students with techniques for teaching individual K-12 students.

The mentor teacher, a regional education agency consultant, and the Academy's coordinator, guide the Level I student through all of these experiences. The college faculty representative and school curriculum director act as supportive resources to assist the Level I student when needed. For the past three years, this researcher has participated in the Academy's program as the faculty representative for the study college and provided assistance for the Academy's students. All faculty members in teacher education at the study college are involved in the Academy program and provide support.

Description of Level II

Level II students are juniors from the study college teacher preparation program and continue their mentoring experience with the same K-12 classroom teachers. The goals and experiences for Level II Academy students (second year) are to participate in staff-

development training with study school teachers and regional education agency consultants, attend Academy cadre meetings with other Level II participants, plan and implement weekly teaching lessons with the mentor teacher (one week each month), and mentor Level I Academy participants (see Appendix E).

As second year participants in the Academy's program, Level II students advance from teaching individual students to co-teaching the entire classroom of students with their mentor teacher. The classroom mentor teacher provides assistance and guidance with lesson planning and models effective teaching practices for the Level II Academy students. The Level II students co-teach with their mentor teacher throughout the academic year and begin learning about teaching other curricular areas as well.

A significant component of the Level II experience involves mentoring Level I students in the Academy program. Level II students receive training in peer and cognitive coaching techniques from the regional education agency consultants and practice effective listening techniques with each other. Once the Level II students complete the training and practice sessions, they engage in peer mentoring sessions with the Level I students, who are assigned to the same K-12 classroom. These mentoring sessions provide a framework for Level II Academy students to assist Level I Academy students with identified instructional intervention strategies.

Description of Level III

Level III students are seniors in the Academy program and like most teacher education students; they spend one semester completing student teaching. Two eight-week student teaching placements are required for all elementary education majors at the study college. Secondary teacher education students complete a thirteen-week student teaching experience. Student teaching for Level III Academy students typically occurs in the same classroom and with the same mentor teacher from the previous two years of the Academy program. Academy students in elementary education complete an eight-week student teaching placement at another school district and with a different teacher. Level III secondary education Academy students have the option to student teach the entire thirteen weeks with their Academy mentor teacher or for six weeks. The remaining seven weeks are spent student

teaching in another school with a different teacher. Thus, Academy students follow the same student teaching schedule as other preservice students at the study college (see Appendix F).

In addition to the goals of student teaching, the Level III Academy students serve as active members on the K-12 school improvement council to learn about and participate in school-wide change and understand the impact of interventions aimed at improving student achievement. The Level III Academy students are expected to attend the district's in-services and staff development trainings as another means of understanding school improvement initiatives.

Like the previous description of peer mentoring, the Level III student mentor Level II. Given their long term experience in the classroom, the Level III students are expected to provide assistance for the Level II students in terms of advice, strategies, and support.

In summary, the preservice teachers progress through each Level of the Academy with the goal of achieving teacher licensure in addition to completing the traditional teacher preparation program at the study college. The Academy is organized by Levels that coincide with a student's year in college—Level I describes the students' experiences during their sophomore year, Level II describes their experiences during their junior year, and Level III describes their senior year experiences. The Academy's students are mentored all three years by a K-12 classroom teacher who provides guidance, co-teaching opportunities, and independent student teaching experiences.

Mentoring Model of the Academy

The Academy involves a cyclical, tiered mentoring process with and between the K-12 classroom teacher and Levels I, II, and III Academy students. The mentoring model is cyclical in that the classroom teacher mentors all three Academy students according to their "Level" in the Academy. The model is tiered in that Academy students mentor each other according to their Level and year in the program. All groups of Academy students with their classroom teacher participate in the same mentoring framework and experiences.

For example, the case study classroom teacher, Mrs. Cooper, mentored a Level I student during the 2003-2004 school year to support the student's experiences with teaching individual or small groups of school students. This student was learning how to implement reading and math instructional interventions, and conduct progress monitoring data to

determine the level of achievement performed by 1st grade students. At the same time, Mrs. Cooper also mentored a Level II student to support her experiences, while co-teaching lessons with the entire classroom. In addition, Mrs. Cooper mentored a Level III student during her student teaching experience and the final semester of the Academy's program. During the 2003-2004 school year, the case study classroom teacher mentored three Academy students while scaffolding various trainings and experiences for the preservice teachers at each "Level."

In addition to mentoring from a classroom teacher, the Academy students mentor each other. The Level III student mentors Level II, and Level II mentors Level I. This cyclical model is structured in a hierarchical manner so the upper Level student can provide support and advice for the lower Level student during their experiences in the school classroom.

Study Participants

The preservice teachers and classroom teacher who participated in this case study volunteered as the primary study group for this study. Pseudonyms were used to identify each participant and for purposes of maintaining confidentiality. The case study group included these participants--the K-12 mentor teacher (Mrs. Cooper), a Level I student (Penni), a Level II student (Kathy), a Level III student (Colleen).

The case study group was selected from the twenty-two mentoring partnerships of K-12 classroom teachers and Academy students from Levels I, II, and III. This group volunteered to participate in this study along with several other groups of mentor teachers and Academy students. Initially, two of the groups in the Academy program agreed to participate throughout the study year. However, one of the groups reported that their Level I student would be absent for a semester due to overseas study. For this reason, Mrs. Cooper and her three Academy students were selected as the case study group because all Levels of the Academy would be represented.

The case study teacher, Mrs. Cooper, was one of the first mentor teachers who agreed to participate and contribute to the development and formation of the Academy. Not only was Mrs. Cooper part of the initial planning of the Academy program since 2001, she was one of the twenty-two classroom teachers who mentored three Academy students in her

classroom for the 2003-2004 school year. Mrs. Cooper is a 1st grade teacher at the study school and has accepted student teachers from the study college for eighteen years as a part of their traditional teacher preparation program. Mrs. Cooper is familiar with the study college, its teacher preparation program, and faculty members.

Penni was a sophomore elementary education major and math minor in the teacher preparation program at the study college. She joined the Academy program as a Level I student in the fall of 2003 and participated in Mrs. Cooper's classroom throughout the 2003-2004 academic year.

Kathy was a junior elementary education major and reading endorsement candidate in the teacher preparation program at the study college. She has participated in the Academy program during the 2002-2003 academic year as a Level I student and as a Level II student during the 2003-2004 year. Mrs. Cooper has mentored Kathy for two academic years.

Colleen was a senior elementary education major in the teacher preparation program at the study college. Colleen also completed her reading and early childhood education teaching endorsements as a component of the degree program. As an Academy member, Colleen joined with the first group who started when the program began. The 2003-2004 academic year involved student teaching in Mrs. Cooper's classroom, where Colleen has been an Academy student since the fall of 2001. Colleen also completed another eight-week session of student teaching in a different school and with another teacher. Colleen completed the college teacher preparation program in May 2004, was approved for state teaching licensure, and at the time of this study was seeking a teaching position in a K-12 school.

Data Collection

The case study consisted of collecting data over a period of one year, using the following methods—in-depth interviews, surveys, journals and logs, reflective feedback notes from teachers, field notes, and Academy documents. The data collection process with the Academy students and K-12 mentor classroom teacher occurred throughout the 2003-2004 school year. Interviews were conducted in December 2003 and throughout the months of January through June 2004. Surveys were conducted in December 2003 and again in May 2004. This schedule was intentional to provide a perspective of the dynamics and interactions between and among the participants throughout the 2003-2004 school year.

The case study data collection sources include in-depth interviews with the case study group. The case study group contributed journals and logs kept by the Academy's students, reflective feedback notes from the classroom teacher, and the Academy's documents. Additionally, they participated in on-line surveys deployed through Blackboard™, a learning management system. Field notes were collected by this researcher, which provided yet another source of data.

Interview Data

In-depth interviews were conducted with the case study group and lasted approximately one to one-half hours each. The interviews were tape recorded for review and future transcription. Each participant read and signed an "Informed Consent" document. Before the interview began, each interviewee was told the purpose of the interview, potential risk for loss of anonymity, what would happen with the interview transcription, and their opportunity to member-check the transcription for corrections or deletions. Interviewees were informed about audio-taping and note taking as a means of gathering data for this study.

The Iowa State University Committee of the Use of Human Subjects in Research reviewed this research study. A copy of the institutional review board letter is found in Appendix G.

The in-depth interviews were conducted as semi-structured communications, using descriptive questioning techniques with study participants during the 2003-2004 school year. Descriptive questioning is the process of using open-ended, descriptive questions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Prior to the interviews, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss the case study questions. A list of questions was shown to interviewees for review and suggestions (see Appendix H). Some of the questions were developed with the assistance of the Academy's participants. During various Academy activities, the researcher asked participants to generate sample questions they would like to answer about the program. From their suggestions, a broad set of descriptive questions was selected and merged with additional questions intended for use during interviews. Taylor and Bodgan (1998) explain a similar rationale for asking broad questions during interviews,

Researchers should have some general questions to ask prior to starting the interview. Yet they have to be careful not to push their own agendas too early in the interviewing. The interviewer should come across as someone who is not quite sure

which questions will be most relevant to informants' experiences and who is willing to learn from the informants (p. 102).

Surveys

Surveys were administered to the Academy's students and the mentor teacher at the beginning of the school year, end of the first semester, and again at the end of the school year. To formulate the surveys, open questions were given to all participants to generate discussion about their Academy experiences. After collecting the responses to the open-ended questions, several topics emerged as areas of interest and importance to the participants—field experiences, benefits of classroom experience, teaching strategies, importance of the training sessions, roles of participants, mentoring experiences, challenges, student achievement, parent communication, comparison to traditional program, and general experiences throughout the Levels. From these topics, survey questions were formed to further examine what the participants experienced and perceived as beneficial components of the program (see Appendix I). Surveys were administered using the study college's Blackboard™ learning management system. The response rate was 100% for all surveys administered to the case participants during this study.

Journals and Logs

Academy student journals and daily logs were used as data sources. Academy students maintained a weekly journal as they participated in training sessions, field experiences in K-12 classrooms, activities and sessions involving mentoring from their classroom teacher, or general Academy program experiences (see Appendix J). The journals served as reflective narratives for the Academy's students as well as place to ask questions and plan for future experiences. Journals were basically private for personal reflection but also used during group discussions with the Academy's peers. The journals and logs were collected at the end of the school year for data analysis.

Reflective Feedback Notes

The K-12 classroom teacher in the case study group contributed informal typed notes throughout the study year as she reflected on the particular activities and mentoring experiences with the Academy's students. Furthermore, she shared reflections and thoughts

about the Academy's program during scheduled meetings held periodically (see Appendix K).

Field Notes

Field notes were conducted during observations when the Academy's students were participating in peer mentoring sessions, training sessions held by the regional education agency consultants, and other general meetings held throughout the year (see Appendix L).

Academy Documents

The Academy program partnership between the three educational institutions involved a number of documents and articles that described and explained the Academy's program. All of the education partners contributed documents for analysis in this study. The Academy's documents included the following—handbook, policies, goals and strategies, publications, evaluations, and awards (see Appendix M).

Data Analysis

The primary data sources used for analysis were the interviews from the case study participants. Additionally, surveys, journals, and reflective feedback notes were identified in this study, using the tagged identifiers shown in Table 3.2.

Yin (1994) describes the study of case study data as one where, “. . . the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations” (p. 8). Data from participants in the Academy were gathered and transcribed throughout the 2003-2004 academic year, and then analyzed using the software program ATLAS/ti, a qualitative software program which analyzes large bodies of textual data. Data management is the process by which data are captured and entered in a format amenable for analysis (Devers & Frankel, 2000).

A qualitative analysis process was used to uncover the phenomena of the Academy. First, the interview data were transcribed on a computer word processor. Assistance from a hired secretarial typist was acquired to expedite the process. Each transcription was reviewed for accuracy and interviewees returned the textual documents with personal comments or revisions to validate meaning of the interview session.

Table 3.2. Academy data sources.

Pseudonym	Academy Participant	Interviews	Surveys	Journals	Reflective Feedback
Penni	Level I Academy student	I1, I2, I3	S11, S23	J2-J6, J11-16	
Kathy	Level II Academy student	I4, I5, I6	S5, S6, S35	J7-J25, J17-35	
Colleen	Level III Academy student	I7, I8, I9, I10	S12, S24	J21, J30-J40, J35-46	
Mrs. Cooper	1 st Grade mentor teacher	I22, I23	S13, S14, S40	J41-J43	RF13, RF 14, RF, 15

Interview transcriptions, surveys, journals, reflective feedback forms, and field notes were then electronically entered into ATLAS/ti. Each data source was assigned a primary document number by the software program as it was entered. For example, the primary case K-12 classroom teacher, Mrs. Cooper, was assigned the following document numbers—I, 23 for an interview, S, 13 for a survey, and RF, 13 for reflective feedback. As each data source was entered, the computer continued to assign primary document numbers, forming the hermeneutic unit of the Academy's study. Hermeneutic units are research "containers" within ATLAS/ti and form a searchable structure for all of the data findings, quotations, codes, memos, and structures.

After all data sources were entered in ATLAS/ti, the process of analysis began. As each document was viewed on the computer, a common theme search was conducted by highlighting words and phrases that became regularities and patterns in the text. Specific words and phrases of each document were coding categories used to interpret the meaning of the text (see Figure 3.3). Qualitative data analysis relies on a coding process to find essential meanings of the way people organize, think, and link the pieces of their experiences together (Glesne, 1999). For example, words and phrases in the data such as, "we usually talk after I teach," "she would ask me how did it go," and "I think those meetings with the teacher help so much just to get feedback," were commonly found from the Academy's students. Upon further coding and highlighting of such phrases in all data documents, the theme of *reflection*

as an outcome of mentoring [italics added] emerged. The coding process continued in this manner to interpret textual data and draw meaning from emerging themes.

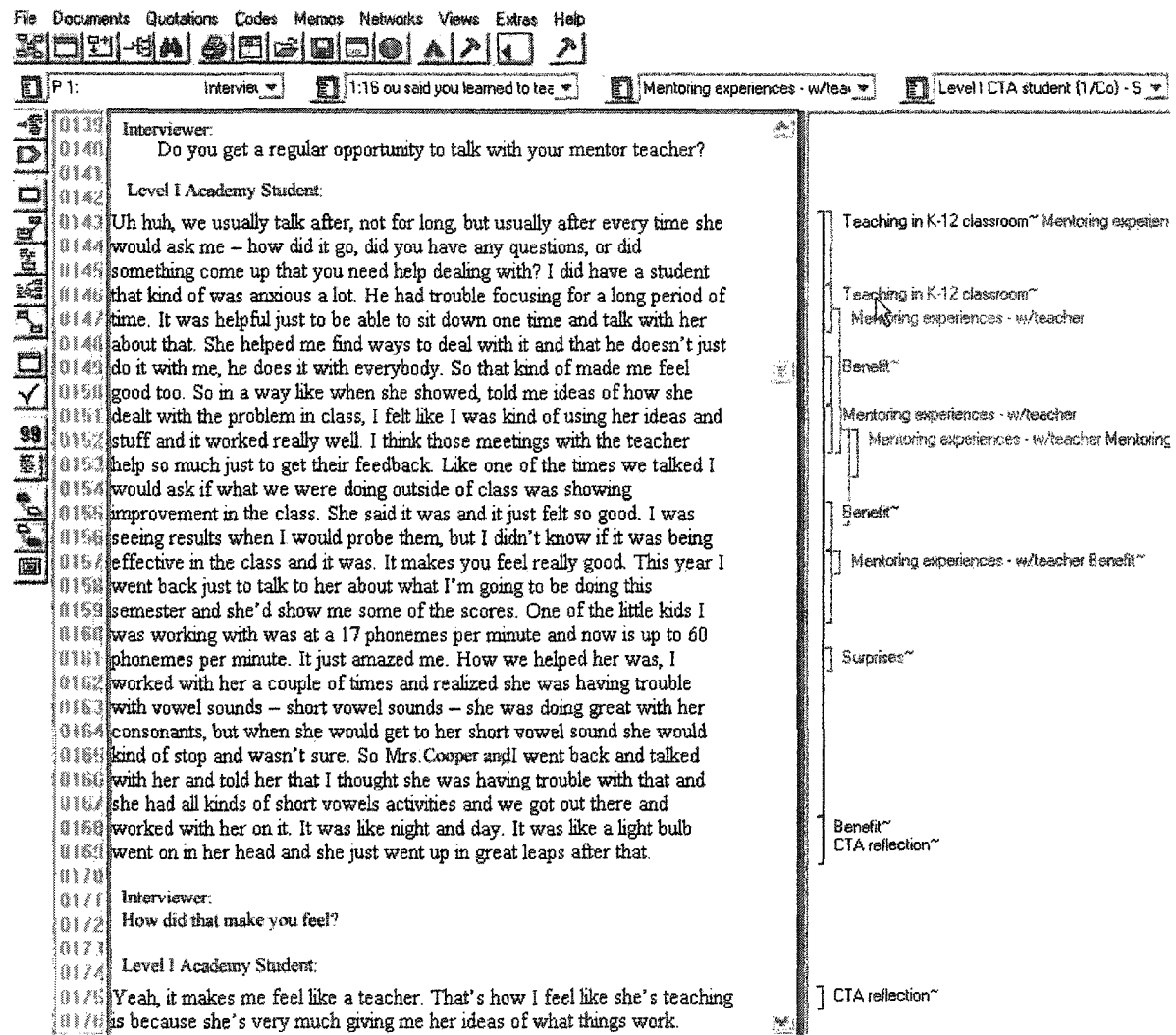


Figure 3.3. Data document shown with coded themes in ATLAS/ti.

Using the sophisticated capabilities of ATLAS/ti, extensive text searching was conducted for coding data and determining pattern matches using regular narrative expressions of data sources. For example, codes were used for textual interpretation—student differences, mentor teacher strategies, reflective thoughts, mentoring conferences, hesitations, challenges, partnership experiences, program concerns, sense of feeling comfortable, and feeling like the teacher. Once data sources were coded, the researcher began the first level of analysis.

Textual documents in ATLAS/ti were again dissected to analyze emerging themes and relevant meaning to support the particular teacher preparation events that took place during 2003-2004 between the Level III, Level II, and Level I Academy students and their K-12 classroom mentor teacher. Next, the researcher analyzed the emerging themes relevant to the mentoring aspects of the Academy's program. The process involved a continuation of coding all data sources as well as adding comments to narrative quotes, assigning themes to coded text, and visually connecting codes to more complex relations. The process of connecting themes to complex relations was pivotal for constructing categories. Early emerging themes provided the structure to develop categories in order to analyze the data and identify significant phenomena (Gall et al., 1996).

Examination of the study data formed categories that included similar or related attributes. The term "comfortable" was discussed or used sixty-three times by case study participants. After forming conceptual networks, this researcher found that students connected the response of "comfortable" to "acceptance in the classroom." Both were related by the students to the mentoring from the classroom teacher.

The next process involved reorganizing and analyzing the salient and relational characteristics of the data that formed three themes. These themes reflected the experiences and perceptions of the preservice teachers and classroom teacher in this study:

1. Field Experiences--Learning About Teaching and Learning How to Teach Through Field Experiences

The Academy's students reflected and described how the Academy's program field experiences benefited and impacted their understanding of learning about teaching and how to teach.

2. Relationships--Developing Personal and Professional Relationships with Schools, Teachers, Peers, and 1st Grade Students

The Academy's students discussed how they experienced a sense of belonging and comfort in the 1st grade classroom that contributed to teacher preparation. Moreover, the interactions with students, peers, teachers, and other school staff were critical relationships formed during the field experiences that impacted the Academy's students.

3. Mentoring--Mentoring from a Classroom Teacher that Influenced Personal and Professional Development

Case study participants reflected and discussed their developing sense of self-efficacy as a result of mentoring and formed relationships with their classroom teacher. The Academy's students found that on-going feedback and coaching from their mentor teacher impacted their skills and abilities for teaching. Additionally, the classroom teacher reflected about the relationships and distinct roles she used when mentoring the preservice teachers.

These three major themes were used to understand the experiences and perceptions from the preservice teachers. Additionally, the theme of Mentoring was used to draw deeper meaning from the perspectives about mentoring by the classroom teacher. Once the data sources with corresponding quotations, themes, and categories were organized, they were organized in a chart form and printed out on paper for a visual representation. The paper version of the coded data allowed for yet another level of interpretive analysis for reading and re-reading each document and its coded theme, emerging theme, and category to derive meaning and double-check the work completed with ATLAS/ti. Next, constant comparative methods were used to organize the data. Maykut and Morehouse (1996) describe constant comparison as “. . . developing propositions which are statements of facts inductively derived from a rigorous and systematic analysis of the data . . . staying close to the participants' feelings, thoughts and actions as they broadly relate to . . . [the] focus of the study” (p. 126). Constant comparison is a process of comparing segments of the data within and across data material, until reaching the point of theoretical saturation (Gall et al., 1996; Strauss, 1987). When no additional themes emerge, the relationships appear to be well established (Gall et al., 1996). The themes of *Field Experiences*, *Relationships* and *Mentoring* were examined and analyzed separately which resulted in the findings reported in chapters 4 and 5. It is important to note that the themes of *Relationships* and *Mentoring* involved tightly associated meanings and perspectives reported by the preservice teachers and classroom teacher, thus the findings are reported as one theme titled *Mentoring*.

Role of the Researcher

As primary investigator, co-founder, participant, and college faculty representative of the Academy, this researcher gained firsthand knowledge of the dynamics and happenings that transpired throughout the program. Stake (1988) would support this situation by describing the researcher's position as having an "... intrinsic interest in the case" (p. 253). During an intrinsic case study, "... researchers do not avoid generalization—they cannot" (Stake, 1988, p. 243). This researcher recognized that invested interests and stated generalizations are not without some bias. The researcher's intent was to encapsulate the complex interactions and dynamics of the Academy so that readers could experience these happenings. According to Altheide and Johnson (1994), validity and reliability in qualitative research is achieved after the reflexive turn where the researcher "... is part and parcel of the setting, context, and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 486).

For the duration of the study, the researcher was the primary examiner and collected all data used in this analysis. The researcher has been involved in the planning and design of the Academy's program from the inception to its current status. As a member of the planning and steering committee, the researcher participated as a faculty representative at the study college to develop the Academy program. The researcher's primary role was to oversee the Academy's program in terms of attending regularly scheduled meetings with the Academy's coordinator, students, and stakeholder members to coordinate trainings, schedules, programmatic details, and conduct some of the training sessions. As a result, the Academy's program was revised and improved each semester from the feedback and suggestions of the participants. In addition, the researcher assisted with additional training and regular discussion sessions held at the study college. Discussion sessions were held with the Academy's students to reflect on trainings, K-12 student progress monitoring outcomes, and co-teaching techniques. Training sessions were held weekly during the first eight weeks of the fall academic terms and conducted by the regional education agency.

While this researcher's position and role at the college was a positive situation for researching the Academy, it was also challenging in terms of potential influence. A college

instructor's position can influence students' perceptions in terms of teacher-student authority and subsequently diminish a student's willingness to respond in an open and candid manner. Taking this into consideration, interviews were conducted using an open and non-authoritative approach while encouraging preservice teachers to respond honestly and with frankness. In addition to establishing a non-authoritative climate with preservice teachers, none of the case study Academy participants were students in this researcher's courses during the study year 2003-2004.

Validity and Reliability

Validity, or as Maytuk and Morehouse (1994) and Taylor and Bogdan (1998) call it, "trustworthiness" or "meaningfulness" of the interviews and the documents, was used in this study. During the process of data analysis, this researcher sought assistance from two other educators to review printed textual data for themes and interpretation. One of the external reviewers was a teacher educator from a state university and the other reviewer was a professor from the study college who supervised student teachers. The intention of using these additional reviewers was to understand an external interpretation of the perceptions and views from the study participants. The interpretations provided from the external reviewers provided yet another analysis of the data. Merriam (1998) supports the notion of using peer examination because it contributes to the data analysis process by ". . . commenting on the findings as they emerge" (p. 204). Using a similar data analysis process, the additional examiners provided codes on the printed versions of the data. Next, the peer examiners made comments in the margins of the printed versions and highlighted major emerging themes. Throughout the process, discussions were held with the both peer examiners, as they examined findings and compared interpretations with this researcher's findings. The coding of themes and emerging categories were found to be comparable. Involving peer reviewers during data analysis provided yet another process to enhance the internal validity of this study.

Yin (1994) believed that the tactics used to increase the likelihood of construct validity are to "use multiple sources of evidence . . . establish a chain of evidence . . . and have the draft case study report reviewed by key informants" (pp. 34-35). As indicated earlier, interviews, surveys, journals, field notes, reflective feedback data, and the Academy's

documents were used for this research. The process called “member-checking” was also used so the participants could review the written material. Each interviewee received a copy of her transcript to establish accuracy and check meaning.

Summary

This chapter included sections on research design, the study control, the study participants, data collection sources, and data analysis procedures. This case study design was used to examine the dynamics between a K-12 classroom teacher and three Academy students involved in a collaborative teacher preparation program model. The next chapter will report the findings from this interpretative case study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The case study subjects who participated in the Academy during the 2003-2004 academic year informed the findings of this qualitative study. The following questions guided the formation of the case study, including data collection strategies and data analysis strategies.

1. What are the perceptions of the preservice teachers about the field experiences in the Academy's program?
2. What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced their teacher preparation?

The Academy experience involved three primary case study participants: a Level I preservice teacher, a Level II preservice teacher, and a Level III preservice teacher who participated in the 1st grade classroom with their mentor teacher. Case study subjects participated in the 1st grade classroom with the same mentor teacher for the duration of the three-year Academy program. However, Academy students' level of participation (program expectations and classroom field experiences) differed from year-to-year relative to their number of years in the Academy program. The Level I participant, Penni, was a sophomore and first-year Academy student. The Level II participant, Kathy, was a junior and second-year Academy student, and the Level III participant, Colleen, was a senior and third-year Academy student. Mrs. Cooper was the 1st grade teacher who mentored these three preservice teachers while they participated in her classroom during this study.

First, the story of the preservice teachers and their perceptions that involved field experiences and mentoring activities during the 2003-2004 academic year are told in this chapter. Next, the story of the classroom teacher is told from her perspective of mentoring the three preservice teachers. Specific themes emerged from the analysis of the data collected from the Academy students (preservice teachers) and their mentor teacher through personal interviews, surveys, and reflections captured in the form of feedback notes, online Blackboard© discussions, and preservice teacher journals. The stories of the preservice teachers and the mentor teacher are organized around these themes.

The data analysis findings were organized using the study questions as the guide (see Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). The parenthetical citations included with the data findings reference the electronic data tags and identify the particular data sources—interview transcripts, surveys, journal entries, reflective feedback forms, and field notes. More detailed information about the data sources, pseudonyms, and organization of data is described in Chapter 3.

Guiding Question 1: What are the perceptions of the preservice teachers about the field experiences in the Academy program?

The first question that guided this case study and examination of the data resulted in findings from the theme—*Field Experiences--Learning About Teaching and Learning How to Teach Through Field Experiences*. To understand and derive meaning about the field experiences explained by the preservice teachers, it was necessary to understand the Levels of the Academy program. During the Level I experience, the preservice teacher learned how to implement interventions for teaching 1st grade students one-on-one and how to prepare teaching materials appropriate for the grade level and subject. As the Academy students progressed through Levels II and III, they experienced more in-depth opportunities teaching K-12 students, gained additional responsibilities in the K-12 classroom, and developed relationships with the students in the classroom.

Drawing from their field experiences, the preservice teachers reported what they learned about teaching and how to teach. Systematic and in-depth analysis of the data revealed how the preservice teachers created meaning from their experiences and reported as benefits (see Table 4.1). Table 4.1 lists the themes and related findings from the perceptions of each Level Academy student. The themes and findings from the perceptions of each Level student, beginning with Penni, the Level I preservice teacher in the 1st grade classroom, will be discussed next.

Level I Academy Student: Penni

Penni, a college sophomore, was a Level I Academy student. She described two distinct themes relating to her experiences as a preservice teacher in the study college teacher preparation program. The first theme was her perception of the anticipated benefits of the field experience and the second theme was the actual benefits she derived from the field experiences, related to the hands-on opportunities in the 1st grade classroom.

Table 4.1. Themes and Findings Related to Perceptions of the Field Experiences.

Theme 1: Field Experiences		
<i>Field Experiences--Learning About Teaching and Learning How to Teach Through Field Experiences</i>		
Level I – Penni	Level II - Kathy	Level III – Colleen
Anticipating Benefits	Establishing a Positive Classroom Climate	Progressing through the Levels and Learning How to Teach
Experiencing Hands-on Opportunities in a 1 st grade Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning about managing students and the classroom ▪ Forming relationships with 1st grade students and communicating with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing the classroom and 1st grade students ▪ Planning, preparing, and delivering a lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the unique differences of 1st grade students ▪ Matching teaching strategies with individual student learning needs 		

Anticipating benefits

Penni described anticipated benefits as the primary reason for joining the Academy. She perceived the Academy program as a means to gain hands-on experience in a school classroom before beginning her student teaching (I1). She further explained, that without such hands-on experiences, “you don’t know [if you want to be a teacher] until you get there [in the classroom]” (I1, I2). Penni wondered whether the traditional teacher preparation program at the study college would provide enough field experiences before student teaching. She was interested in “getting experience in classrooms” early in her teacher preparation program at the study college. Without these experiences, the student teaching experience “would be overwhelming” (I1). Therefore, she was “. . . intrigued about the Academy” and welcomed the challenge and opportunity to “get much more experience with kids” (I1).

Penni expressed concern about entering the teaching profession without knowing “what it would be like.” According to Penni, participating in K-12 field experiences were the means to “find out what teaching is really like in school classrooms.” Prior to enrolling,

Penni attended an informational session about the program and shared the anticipated opportunities, “The Academy program requires a lot of hours in a K-12 classroom, many additional hours in training, and just a general commitment to the program” (I1). In light of these expectations, she believed the Academy was a means to “. . . find out if this is really what I want to do for the rest of my life” (I1).

Experiencing hands-on opportunities in a 1st grade classroom

The second theme “experiencing hands-on opportunities in a 1st grade classroom” summarized the actual benefits. This theme emerged from Penni’s descriptions about her experiences in the classroom, which informed her perceptions of learning about teaching. Penni’s first set of descriptions (findings related to benefits) dealt with her understanding of the unique differences of 1st grade students.

“Getting into the classroom” was important to Penni and allowed her the opportunity for “hands-on experience” in the classroom but more importantly, her experiences in the classroom helped her “understand the unique differences of K-12 students” (I2). Moreover, Penni believed, “They’re [K-12 school students] going to come to school with totally different perspectives, all different backgrounds and outlooks on life, and you have to be very conscious of that. You don’t know what each one will be like” (J1, I2). In particular, Penni was interested in knowing how teachers “. . . focus on the whole group, but at the same time know about each child.” In Penni’s view, when teachers only focused on the entire class, “they might forget to look at each child’s needs and see how you can change something for them” (I3). Penni was cognizant that K-12 students possess unique differences and that teachers are most effective when they individualize their teaching. She reflected on several new understandings about the unique differences of these students.

Understanding the unique differences of 1st grade students. Some of the 1st grade students were not progressing academically, and it was this situation that allowed Penni the opportunity to understand more about individuals and their differences. Penni expressed concerns about students who were not learning and wrote in her journal that some students seemed to be “bored with learning,” “had low scores,” “did not have confidence,” “struggled with reading,” or “were not motivated” (I1, I2, J4). She noticed that several of the 1st grade students were not learning at the same rate as other students in the class and were struggling

to keep up. Moreover, Penni noticed that some students did not perform well on a particular day because “they were just exhausted, had too much that day, or didn’t have enough sleep the night before” (I4). Penni realized that some students learned differently and because of this were behind their peers academically. Moreover, some students required individual help from the teacher. She noted how Mrs. Cooper selected some of the students for one-on-one teaching during class. “She [Mrs. Cooper] pulls them aside and they work on special ways to learn how to read or do math” (J4). Penni continued to observe how Mrs. Cooper worked with some of the at-risk students and reflected in her journal that the 1st grade students “benefited,” “improved,” and “started reading better” (J10).

During the next stage of the Level I experience, Penni was expected to teach some of the at-risk students one-on-one. During this transition, she replaced the classroom teacher and helped a few of the students learn to read. At the start of this transition, Penni recognized her own deficiencies when teaching one of the 1st grade students reading strategies. She stated, “He [1st grade student] was struggling in reading; he wasn’t able to put the sounds together to make a word, and I did not know how to help him” (I3). Shortly after these experiences with at-risk students, Penni began participating in specialized training sessions to learn how to intervene and assist this 1st grade student.

Penni participated in specialized training sessions conducted by the regional education agency consultant; however she was confused about the application of these newly learned teaching strategies with the 1st grade students. “I learned a lot in the training sessions but I felt like I didn’t know everything I was suppose to do” (I1). On the one hand, Penni could articulate the concepts she learned in the training sessions, “I was trained in how to work one-on-one with students in the classroom. I participated in reading and phonemic blending training with the regional education agency the first semester and math strategy training the second semester” (S23). On the other hand, the methods to employ these strategies with 1st grade students were somewhat disjointed for Penni. When she visited the 1st grade classroom, she met with at-risk students to provide assistance in reading. However, without previous teaching experience, she did not understand which strategies should be used to assist individual students. “It was kind of hard for me because I have never done this before” (I1).

Matching teaching strategies with individual student learning needs. Penni's second set of descriptions dealt with matching teaching strategies with students who were struggling. As a novice preservice teacher, Penni did not understand which strategies matched the learning needs of these struggling students. Having just completed the training sessions, Penni knew the techniques were effective but she was not sure which strategies worked for individual students. "I knew the trainings were going to help struggling students, but until I met with my classroom teacher, I wasn't sure what to do" (I1). To resolve her concerns, Penni met with her mentor teacher frequently to discuss individual students and specific teaching strategies. Penni wrote in her journal about how she learned to write a goal for a 1st grade student, determine an appropriate instructional plan, and implement specific activities to meet the goal. Penni reflected in her journal, "I met with Mrs. Cooper to find out which students needed help. We wrote a goal for the student I will be working with. The goal is: In eight weeks when Sue is given a nonsense word probe, she will read with 70 correct phonemes per minute. Next we decided which strategy matched this goal and would work for Sue. I will use the strategy of practicing consonant/vowel/consonant words while reading grade level books" (J16). This journal entry demonstrated that Penni learned about helping students by meeting with her teacher, discussing individual student differences, writing goals, and matching instructional strategies for individual students.

Soon after learning how to match teaching strategies with individual students, Penni began teaching these strategies with three 1st grade students. She used the terms "instructional interventions" to describe her teaching. She recalled that one of the 1st grade students "had difficulties with short vowels" and that she would use instructional strategies to help the student "say and identify the short vowels" (I3). Penni applied her newfound teaching interventions with students and was expected to track progress as well. The implications of this experience were twofold. First, Penni was offered the opportunity as a preservice teacher to receive instructional training and improve her understandings of the unique differences of school students. Second, she learned how to match teaching strategies to the individual learning needs of students. From meetings with her mentoring teacher, Penni became aware that specific learning needs could be targeted with the instructional interventions that she had been trained.

Although Penni's experiences were appropriate and valuable for a sophomore who was in the early stages of learning about K-12 students and teaching, they did not yet involve experiences in the classroom with all students. On the other hand, Kathy, a Level II Academy student, participated in teaching activities with the entire 1st grade classroom and reported how field experiences contributed to her learning about teaching and how to teach.

Level II Academy Student: Kathy

Kathy's story was an opportunity to revisit her first-year field experiences with her mentor teacher, Mrs. Cooper and the 1st grade students. During the first year as a Level I student, Kathy recalled that a positive classroom climate was one of the most important aspects of teaching. She discussed what occurred in her first year that contributed to a positive classroom climate during her second year.

Establishing a positive classroom climate

The theme "establishing a positive classroom climate" summarized what Kathy described as beneficial experiences in Mrs. Cooper's 1st grade classroom. From her perspective, spending an entire year in Mrs. Cooper's classroom allowed her to experience a classroom climate that was "fun," "a comfortable atmosphere," and "enjoyable" (I4, I6). When asked what led to an accepting rapport, Kathy explained that the "classroom teacher was the reason the climate was positive." Moreover, it was the manner in which the teacher "handled the classroom" that contributed to a climate conducive for learning and "trying new things" (I6). From what she had observed and experienced, Mrs. Cooper was calm, friendly, and "matter-of-fact" about "things that happened" (S6). The positive climate contributed to Kathy's desire to participate in this 1st grade classroom.

While Penni described hands-on experiences as most beneficial during her first-year field experiences, Kathy targeted "managing students" as another one of the critical skills needed for classroom teaching. Kathy's interest and comments about classroom management progressed into a deeper analysis while she described management of both the students and the classroom.

Learning about managing students and the classroom. During the co-teaching experiences, Kathy reported what she had observed and learned about teaching styles, classroom management techniques, and managing students. First, she reflected on teaching

style and its impact on students. Kathy believed her mentor teacher, Mrs. Cooper, had “a style” that was effective for managing students in the classroom. She stated, “Teachers make their own style,” which influences the effectiveness of their instructional methods (I5). In Kathy’s opinion, Mrs. Cooper possessed a “style” she wanted to imitate. She described Mrs. Cooper’s discipline style as “friendly,” “caring,” “positive,” and “nice” but also “firm” and “serious.” When Mrs. Cooper gave directions or asked the first- grade students to follow a request, Kathy was surprised with how well the students responded and cooperated. Kathy compared Mrs. Cooper’s style to other more abrasive discipline techniques such as “yelling” at students to follow a command. She realized that a positive style was more effective than a reactive negative style (I6).

However, Kathy found it somewhat difficult to pinpoint any single specific aspect of Mrs. Cooper’s style that explained her success with managing students. Rather, Kathy identified several factors that explained Mrs. Cooper’s success in managing students by motivating them to participate in class. First, Kathy noticed that Mrs. Cooper used a pleasant but firm approach when expecting students to stay on task (S35). She “. . . didn’t let them get away without working” (I5). Second, Mrs. Cooper used a soft voice when talking to the students and articulating expectations clearly (S35). Finally, she managed the students in a matter-of-fact manner using “common sense” practices so the 1st grade students were “happy learning in class” and did not seem to “need much discipline” (I5). Kathy reported, “I see things she does and the way she does it, and I’ll try it out. I like her style” (S29).

Not only was Kathy able to learn how a teaching style contributed to managing both individual students and the entire class but she was given the opportunity to practice developing a style of her own. When teaching groups of students, Kathy reported that when the students “were listening and gave her respect” was the first stage of developing her own classroom management style. When she taught small groups of students at centers, she associated the students’ attention and excitement for working with her as indicators that she was developing her own style. Kathy reflected on teaching a group of students, “. . . the students think of me differently now. I know in the beginning they didn’t like math minutes. Now when I come in, they are excited about doing math minutes with me and they say ‘hi’ to me” (I4.) She believed that receiving the students’ attention and gaining their respect were

prerequisites to developing her own style of teaching. She admitted that in previous semesters, “I didn’t always feel that before [I had a personal style]. I didn’t always feel like I had control” (I5). It was from these field experiences at Level II when Kathy further developed her own style of managing students and the classroom.

As a result of participating in the field experiences, Kathy discussed new ideas about using reinforcement techniques as forms of disciplining or managing student behavior. Some students in the classroom were challenging and required “other ways to handle them” (I4). For example, some students struggled with “listening in class,” while a few others “didn’t want to work” and another “just wanted to go to the bathroom all the time” (I5). These challenging situations provided learning experiences for Kathy.

Kathy described how she developed skills for working with challenging behaviors, “. . . each day I am confronted with something that I’m not used to handling. For example, there was one boy who just didn’t want to work at the center, and I really wasn’t sure what to do. He just didn’t even want to sit down” (I4). When asked how she handled this situation, Kathy explained, “I gave him a couple of choices and followed up with the choice that he made. Both choices were appropriate for him and he stopped fighting every part of the center activities” (I4). The field experiences represented opportunities for Kathy to observe challenging behaviors exhibited by 1st grade students as well as implement her own strategies. Challenging behaviors were not welcome experiences for Kathy; however, they were somewhat typical behaviors of the 1st grade students. Several of her journal pages indicated that the students acted out at times, refused to comply with requests, and required teacher intervention. These situations were opportunities for Kathy to practice reinforcement techniques and manage student behavior.

Kathy valued what she learned from Mrs. Cooper about managing student behavior. When observing her teacher in the classroom, she noticed that by observing Mrs. Cooper manage the students, this helped her understand strategies that are effective with 1st grade students. For example, she observed Mrs. Cooper using a token system to manage student behavior rather than “raising her voice” (J19). “When a few of the 1st grade students were acting out, Mrs. Cooper used a card system to manage their behavior.” A few of the students were given five cards for the day, and when an individual student misbehaved, a card was

taken away from that misbehaving student. In addition to using a token system to manage student behavior, Mrs. Cooper “used her voice in a calm way so that students would stay on task” (I4). Kathy recalled, “If she [Mrs. Cooper] said ‘one’ or said their name, the students knew they needed to change their behavior or there might be a consequence” (I4). Kathy noted how these techniques for managing students’ behavior “without needing to be mean” contributed to the development of an effective “style” (I4). Kathy believed Mrs. Cooper was “good with discipline,” especially when children were demonstrating challenging behaviors (I4). Based on these experiences, Kathy was able to observe classroom management styles implemented by her mentoring teacher and ascertain how specific techniques were effective.

Next, Kathy appreciated the opportunity to practice managing student behaviors. When she was in charge of the class, she used one of Mrs. Cooper’s techniques of modeling proper behavior. “I learned from Mrs. Cooper how to model the behavior I expect from the students before I ask them to complete the activity” (S35). She practiced using a calm, but direct voice when asking the student to complete a task, “I try not to be overpowering with the students” (I4). Additionally, Kathy was able to practice using Mrs. Cooper’s behavior management charts for individual students and found that “they work very well” (S35).

Kathy practiced grouping students and found this was another means of managing the classroom. When students were grouped by ability level and instruction was geared to specific academic levels, Kathy noticed that student behavior and learning improved. She commented on how well the students “cooperated” and were eager to “read to the group” (I4). Kathy described the division of students into groups as, “. . . you have the top readers in one group and then the next group might be the lowest readers. We work with each group differently, and they are able to learn because the kids are excited about doing the centers” (I4). Kathy experienced first-hand how students performed best when they were instructed according to their ability level, which in turn reduced the need to manage inappropriate behavior.

Kathy experienced first-hand how to manage students and found that by using a few direct techniques, students responded to her requests. During reading groups, she was given the responsibility to “be in charge” of managing the students. “I gained their attention first and then praised them for starting their work with me. After we kept going, I found that now

I can verbalize how something needs to be done if I'm teaching them [1st grade students] and they follow what I need them to do" (I5).

In sum, Kathy benefited from observing how students were managed in a classroom. Furthermore, she was able to practice some of the techniques and determine how some teaching techniques were effective. Finally, the field experiences were beneficial for her to develop a personal style of managing students in the classroom. Kathy wrote in her journal, "I have grown a lot in Mrs. Cooper's classroom from these experiences" (J18).

Forming relationships with 1st grade students and communicating with parents.

During the 1st grade classroom field experience, Kathy was provided with rich opportunities to learn about interacting with students and communicating with parents. She included a section in her journal devoted to interactions with school students. One of the passages recalled her own years of elementary school and noted that "there were teachers I really enjoyed" and "they were teachers I felt like I could really talk to or that cared about me" (J17). When asked to expand her recollections of interactions and relationships with her childhood teachers, she explained, ". . . my teachers in elementary cared about me. They didn't just care about teaching me to learn, they really wanted me to understand it [what she was learning]" (I5). These positive experiences were anchored in Kathy's view of student and teacher interactions. In addition, she described negative experiences with teachers who "just want you to learn [and] sometimes just go through the motions of teaching and not focusing on whether the student changes or develops" (I4). Kathy experienced the type of relationships with her own teacher that is supported in the literature. Teachers who interact positively with students and maintain high expectations contribute effectively to the accomplishments of their students (Gazin, 2004).

Kathy formed relationships with the 1st grade students by interacting and talking with them. These experiences were how she came to develop knowledge about teaching 1st grade students. She described "understanding students" as an important element of teaching and listed what was important to sustain interaction: 1) asking questions about topics, 2) helping students understand how to use new knowledge in learning activities, and 3) making certain students can demonstrate what they know (I6, J8). Kathy valued the opportunities to interact

and form relationships with the 1st grade students and believed this to be a critical component for quality teaching.

Through her participation in the field experience, Kathy demonstrated that she understood the importance of communicating with parents. Mrs. Cooper required Kathy to make weekly contact with parents, although she did not yet feel equipped with the skills or knowledge to communicate effectively. Her reflection about these parent-contact experiences confirmed her earlier suspicions, “Communicating with parents can be kind of nerve-wracking with home communications; you don’t know how to word things correctly” (I5). Besides written communication with parents about their children’s progress, Kathy was expected to initiate other forms of communication with parents. Due to busy schedules, she was not able to meet face-to-face with parents, so she resorted to phone conversations. “I haven’t actually met any of the parents,” Kathy explained, “but I’ve talked on the phone” (I5). After several phone conversations with parents, Kathy reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of verbal communication:

I learned to be careful with your wording, because if you say ‘they’re doing really well,’ the parents are going to be like, ‘well then why are you working with my child?’ I learned to be somewhat general, but helpful. I always wanted them to know they could contact me” (I5).

In summary, the field experiences were opportunities for Kathy to understand the importance of a positive classroom climate. She experienced managing student behavior, forming relationships with students, and communicating with parents that helped her gain insight and new skills and perspectives about teaching.

In the next extension of the Academy, Colleen, the Level III student participated in her third and final year of the program. It was from these experiences that she shared her perspectives about teaching and her abilities to instruct.

Level III Academy Student: Colleen

Progressing through the Levels and learning how to teach

Colleen, a senior Level III Academy student, described how she progressed through the Academy Levels and as a result, benefited from the opportunities in the field experiences that cultivated her skills in teaching. During her personal interviews, Colleen shared that she believed the first two years of the Academy program (Levels I and II) were pivotal in

learning *about teaching* [italics added], while the last and final year, she learned *how to teach* [italics added]. Colleen recalled her early years of the program, “I started off as a sophomore going through lots of training. Then I taught three children and helped them learn how to read fluently, read sight words, segment sentences, and all sorts of things” (I7). During the second year, she recalled learning how to teach the academic content areas with groups of students. In particular, the experiences with specific students were vivid memories, “I saw lots of growth in that [how to teach groups of students] and it was a really rewarding experience. I had one little boy who was fairly difficult to work with just because of behavior, but I learned so much from him” (I7). In Colleen’s opinion, the third and final year of the field experiences “gives you that experience to actually get out there and plan a lesson, teach kids, work with the kids, and get to know the school system” (I7).

In Colleen’s view, not only was she able to teach in the classroom, but she was viewed by the students and her mentoring teacher as one of the teachers in the classroom as well. Progressing through the Levels meant that she was gaining the skills to teach on her own. Each day of the field experience was an opportunity for her to learn how to teach without needing direct assistance from the classroom teacher. “I am in charge of the kids when I’m there, I am the teacher. She [mentoring teacher] doesn’t always have to watch over me now” (J31). The longevity of the Academy’s Level field experiences were a structure that allowed Colleen to practice managing the classroom and the 1st grade students.

Managing the classroom and 1st grade students. Similar to Kathy’s experiences, Colleen reported that managing the students and classroom were beneficial experiences during her participation in the Academy program. Because Colleen had already participated in field experiences in the 1st grade classroom for two and one-half years, she believed her teacher “. . . got me involved with the kids right away and in charge of the classroom” (I9). While Kathy learned about managing students and the classroom by observing teaching style, transitions, and grouping techniques, Colleen learned about managing a classroom by practicing the techniques on her own.

The classroom routine and schedule were methods for Colleen to manage the students. During the previous five semesters, she developed several techniques for using structure in the classroom to guide students’ behaviors. One particular structure was to

provide a schedule with visual cues so the students could follow the routine. Colleen described this technique, “Each activity for the day was posted in the room with words and pictures” (I9). She noticed that the schedule and routine “helped to keep the kids on task and moving from one teaching activity to another. The schedule made it easier for me to tell the students what to do” (I7). When students knew what was expected of them, they transitioned more quickly without behavior problems such as excessive “talking or bothering others” (I10). Moreover, the routine and schedule allowed for more effective communication between the teacher and students.

Colleen learned that organization and communication were essential tools for managing a classroom. She emulated Mrs. Cooper’s management and communication style and commented that “her [Mrs. Cooper] style improves student behavior” (I10). The terms “organization” and “communication” were used in succession as she described Mrs. Cooper’s classroom management techniques. “She has organizational skills . . . she lets them know what to do” (S35). Colleen shared her experiences of what it meant to be an effective classroom manager, “I am more organized now. I have my lesson plans all written out ahead of time. I get the materials ready, and this is easy to do when your classroom is set up like Mrs. Cooper’s” (S35). Not only was the classroom structure and organization beneficial for the 1st grade students, but Colleen believed the schedule, “is comfortable for me too . . . and I prefer it that way . . . I know what happens and I can keep the students in check” (I8).

The challenge to be flexible reinforced the reality of organization and schedules for Colleen. She experienced scheduling difficulties and behavioral changes when students were removed from the classroom for additional instruction such as special education services, reading instruction, or meeting with the at-risk coordinator. Colleen described, “. . . it is hard trying to get the schedules worked out for kids who go out to the Resource Room or with other people. There are a lot of people and meetings that kids go to. I try to keep their schedules all together so we can pick up when they get back” (I8). She added, “. . . they miss out on what we’re doing, and they are distracted when they come back” (I8). In this situation, Colleen experienced a few of the common frustrations experienced by classroom teachers when students are removed from the classroom. Learning how to be flexible so that students

could “catch up” when they return was frustrating for Colleen; none-the-less, it was “something that I need to know how to do” (S14).

Managing student’s behavior by using praise and reinforcement was another classroom management approach Colleen learned to implement during the field experience. In one particular case, Colleen recalled a student who displayed challenging behaviors in the classroom. She described the student as a child who “didn’t want to work” and resisted coaxing on the part of the teacher. Instead of complying with the teacher’s request, the student would “tell stories instead of doing his work” (I7). Rather than using consequences, Colleen approached the situation differently. She watched how Mrs. Cooper listened to what students said, used praise with other students who completed incremental parts of their work, and decided that the same approach would work with this student. Colleen capitalized on what she learned and created a plan for the student who was avoiding completion of his work. Following the lead of her classroom teacher, Colleen negotiated with the student by allowing him to tell one short story before beginning a learning task. She gave him her full attention while he told the story and then she praised him for getting started on the learning task. The plan worked well; the student was able to “get it out of his system.” Then after receiving positive reinforcement, he was able to complete his work (I7). In this instance, Colleen applied a behavior strategy with a student and was successful in motivating him to complete a learning task. Hands-on teaching experiences such as this are invaluable opportunities for preservice teachers to make connections between teaching strategies learned in college courses and real-time practice of the strategies learned in the classroom setting (Grossman, 1994).

Both Kathy and Colleen learned about classroom management and methods that guide students’ behavior and help students stay on task during classroom activities. Equally important was Colleen’s emulation of her mentoring teacher; Colleen demonstrated proactive and positive teaching approaches and an understanding of how these approaches contribute to improved student behavior. Colleen’s experiences were the cumulative result of six semesters in the same 1st grade classroom; therefore, she was able to implement classroom management approaches more independently than Kathy or Penni.

Planning, preparing, and delivering a lesson. Another benefit of the field experience discussed by Colleen entailed the process of planning, preparing, and delivering a teaching lesson. In her opinion, this “whole process” included many components (I7). One of the first components included organization. Early in the field experience, Colleen learned that organization was the key to planning and preparing lessons. She observed how Mrs. Cooper was “very organized.” Her teaching units were planned, materials were within easy reach, and additional activities such as art and crafts were prepared to “go along with the unit” (I7). Mrs. Cooper’s impeccable organization made an impact on Colleen. Colleen mentioned more than once that the “classroom is all set up” so that when she was in charge of teaching a lesson, materials and manipulatives were within reach. “I know where everything is kept, and when I know art and crafts go along with the lesson, I can find and use these because they are organized and ready to go” (I7). Familiarity with the classroom and students as well as knowledge of how to access teaching materials readily were reasons Colleen started teaching during the first week.

Colleen felt confident in her skills of planning and preparing teaching lessons. She commented that because of her previous experiences, she was able to “jump right in” and prepare teaching activities for the 1st grade classroom (I7). During the first week of student-teaching, Colleen taught the opening schedule of calendar, counting, and reading. She attributed the opportunity to teach immediately, rather than observe, to her familiarity and experiences in the classroom, “I did the calendar, the place value chart and all of those kinds of opening things. I also taught the writing time because I already knew what to do” (I8). Moreover, Colleen noted that previous field experiences, when aligned with other college courses, were usually stressful because “in most cases, you don’t know the teacher or the students” (S24). However, in this field experience, Colleen said she “was not nervous at all to start student teaching because I knew the kids and the teacher. My lessons went more smoothly, and I could walk around and help the students who needed more help” (I8).

Throughout the year, Colleen became increasingly independent as the teacher in the classroom. Her journal entries were an archive that listed teaching lesson plans, activities, and daily responsibilities. She expressed personal satisfaction in knowing that she was fully capable of “handling all of the teaching responsibilities” (J42).

The Level III field experiences were beneficial for preparing Colleen for student-teaching in the 1st grade classroom and accepting responsibilities from the start of the semester. Previous experience in this same classroom impacted her ability to teach lessons, become independent, and lead activities at the start of her student-teaching. By contrast, student teachers in the teacher education program at the study college did not experience the depth and breadth of field experiences in the same classroom prior to student-teaching. It is less likely that student-teachers, who are new to their classrooms, are able to acquire full responsibilities at the start of the semester. In most cases, student-teachers begin teaching and acquiring full responsibilities much later in the semester.

Summary for guiding question 1

The field experiences at each Academy Level were opportunities for the preservice students to: 1) gain first-hand experiences with teaching school students, 2) learn about the role of a teacher, 3) participate in a variety of classroom experiences, and 4) experience realistic teaching lessons. Each experience Level was unique in that preservice teachers participated in different classroom activities and experiences with their mentoring teacher and the 1st grade students. The reasons for different experiences at each Level are outlined in the Academy documents (see Appendix C).

These findings indicated that preservice teachers benefited from the field experiences of the Academy program. Their perceptions about what they learned materialized as a result of the contextualized experiences in the 1st grade classroom with their mentoring teacher. These experiences were opportunities for these preservice teachers to understand the demands of a school classroom, the individual differences students possess, and the importance of using individualized instruction for students struggling academically. Moreover, the experiences included opportunities for the preservice teachers to reflect upon their observations and experiences. The classroom teacher was available to the preservice teachers on a regular basis. Similar understandings and opportunities were found in other reform models that included year-long field experiences (Baer & Russomano, 1996). When preservice teachers learn alongside of classroom teachers, important learning takes place (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

In general, the preservice teachers identified key aspects about their field experiences that include: 1) unique differences between 1st grade students and matching instructional interventions that help with learning, 2) teaching styles that contribute to the climate of a classroom, 3) effective classroom management approaches, 4) the importance of communication with students and parents, and 5) the process of planning and teaching lessons. These preservice teachers were involved in authentic and contextualized experiences throughout their teacher preparation program. Experiences such as these allowed the preservice teachers to gain more knowledge about the practice of teaching as well as their own development and understanding of these practices. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) refer to these types of experiences as essential and interrelated dimensions of professional knowledge about teaching and learning gained through one's own reflection about and the critique of experiences in the field.

Guiding Question 2: What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced teacher preparation?

The second question that guided this case study and examination of data resulted in findings from the theme *Relationships—Developing Personal and Professional Relationships with Schools, Teachers, Peers, and 1st Grade Students* as well as the theme, *Mentoring—Mentoring from a Classroom Teacher that Influenced Personal and Professional Development*. The findings from *Relationships* and *Mentoring* were tightly interwoven as they were reported by the preservice teacher participants, thus, both themes were reported together.

Drawing from their field experiences, the preservice teachers reported their perceptions about what occurred as a mentee. Equally important was how they described the relationships formed with their mentor teacher. Specifically, Kathy discussed the experiences of peer mentoring with Colleen. Table 4.2 lists the themes and related findings of the perceptions from each Level Academy student. Finally, the findings from mentoring the three preservice teachers were told from the perspective of the classroom teacher, Mrs. Cooper. Table 4.3 lists the themes and findings from this mentor teacher.

Table 4.2. Themes and Findings Related to Relationships and Mentoring.

Themes 2 & 3: Relationships and Mentoring	
<i>Relationships—Developing Personal and Professional Relationships with Schools, Teachers, Peers, and 1st Grade Students</i>	
<i>Mentoring—Mentoring from a Classroom Teacher that Influenced Personal and Professional Development</i>	
Level I – Penni	Level III - Colleen
Improving self-efficacy through mentoring from a classroom teacher	Improving self-efficacy through collegial coaching
Level II – Kathy	Forming a mutual relationship through mentoring
Improving self-efficacy through mentoring from a classroom teacher	Reflecting with Mrs. Cooper as a process of improving instruction
Mentoring from an Academy peer	Becoming one of the teachers and promoting the school
	Identifying with the mentor teacher

Relationships were grounded in close personal interaction between the Academy students and mentoring teacher. All three Academy students cited the improved self-efficacy as a major strength of the mentoring experience. Findings suggest that the availability of the classroom teacher to sustain regular, ongoing, and continuous support and discussions with the Academy students was essential to building successful professional relationships. Peer relationships were also important to the preservice teachers and impacted their professional development.

Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as a perception people espouse when they believe their capabilities produce levels of performance, that exercise influence over events affecting their lives. In the Academy program, preservice teachers improved self-efficacy in their abilities to demonstrate confidence in teaching, to persevere in overcoming self-doubt, and to master the instruction and challenges in the teaching classroom.

At the time of this study, Penni was the recipient of mentoring from the classroom teacher, Mrs. Cooper, for one year. It is from this year of mentoring that Penni described her perceptions of what occurred.

Level I Academy Student: Penni

Improving self-efficacy through mentoring from a classroom teacher

As a first time mentee, Penni expressed a heightened level of confidence as a result of her relationship with her mentor teacher. The self-efficacy theme emerged in Penni's journal writings as well as in interviews conducted by this researcher. Specific experiences during her relationship with her mentoring teacher led to the development of trust, confidence, and self-motivation. These perceived capabilities were affective attributes that helped Penni participate in the classroom and implement instructional teaching interventions with 1st grade students. Moreover, Penni felt comfortable in the classroom. The sense of comfort contributed to her confidence in taking an initiative and solving problems. Penni attributed these early experiences and accomplishments in the classroom to her heightened level of confidence.

Penni described Mrs. Cooper's support and trust as important to the development of her self-confidence. Mrs. Cooper's physical presence and supportive nature helped Penni improve her confidence in her abilities to work with and teach 1st grade students. Penni explained that when Mrs. Cooper provided comments and advice about her teaching, she felt supported. More importantly, the advice originated from a trusted source, so Penni felt "comfortable" and willing to "try other things" because she was more "confident" (I3). She explained that "becoming comfortable" was important during field experiences because "preservice teachers desire feelings of being wanted and needed" so they are able to participate without fear or hesitation (I3).

Penni believed that preservice teachers are fearful of failing in K-12 classroom situations where they have not yet had an opportunity to develop a relationship with the classroom teacher. To her, the lack of a strong relationship with a teacher meant loss of control over one's fate. She shared her opinion about "being left out to dry" during short-term field experiences (I2). In her opinion, when Academy preservice teachers received comments and opinions about their teaching performance from other teachers or professors

whom they did not have a relationship, they were less likely to benefit from the evaluation. However, when evaluations were received from a committed, long-term mentor teacher, she felt supported and motivated to persevere. From one of Penni's examples, some of her other peers in teacher preparation did not have a mentor teacher and tended to self-blame and lost interest to improve their teaching skills:

A lot of other kids [peers] are going into teaching but are not really motivated to figure out what they do wrong when they're teaching. With my mentor, she tells me, and I can make changes. That makes me feel good. Without a mentor, my friends feel bad when they hear something from a teacher. They're like, "What am I doing wrong?" They automatically take the blame for it without understanding everything else. They are not as motivated to go back. But for me, I can learn from my mentor (I4).

Working collaboratively with Mrs. Cooper was the experience from mentoring that most impacted Penni. Not only did Mrs. Cooper accept Penni but she helped make her feel "comfortable" by supporting her early teaching efforts with the K-12 school students. Collaboratively, they selected several students who needed additional instructional assistance in reading for Penni to teach. Next, they developed a written plan for addressing the learning needs of these students. From this, Penni knew what Mrs. Cooper expected her to do and implement. The meetings and collaborative planning with her mentor teacher helped Penni feel comfortable in the classroom, "I might just be teaching one or two kids, but I mean I'm teaching them. I am here and feeling like I can do it. I love it" (I1, I2). When Penni knew what was expected of her, she was comfortable participating in the 1st grade classroom.

Similarly, Penni was "comfortable" when she felt "accepted, valued and more than just a college student" in the classroom (I1, I2). In her opinion, "Mrs. Cooper makes me feel like a teacher" (I1). Not only did Mrs. Cooper maintain a collaborative relationship with Penni but she portrayed a helping attitude when Penni felt deficient or inept with teaching. Penni discussed the realities of teaching in 1st grade while experiencing several challenging incidents with students. Penni did not handle every challenging situation; however, she recalled several situations that were instrumental in helping her learn how to solve issues and persevere when faced with challenges. For instance, "One particular incident occurred when a student was questioning everything I did [sic]" (I4). Penni held a discussion with Mrs. Cooper and together they determined that a "sticker chart technique" might help this student

follow directions rather than ask questions (I4). While using this technique, Penni formed some of her own methods for helping the student with classroom behavior, “I write in a notebook and tell him that I’m keeping track of the good things and bad things, and that we can show it to his Aunt Sarah” (I4). In the end, both techniques helped the 1st grade student learn how to control his behavior. These experiences were pivotal for Penni to feel “comfortable,” which equated to feelings that her teaching decisions were appropriate, accepted and needed in the classroom. She expressed satisfaction and self-appraisal for handling the problem in an effective manner, “I even told my Aunt, who is a teacher, about how I can manage kids when there are problems” (I3).

Another sense of “feeling comfortable” meant that Penni could approach Mrs. Cooper when she needed help. “Feeling comfortable” meant their relationship was strong enough so that Penni felt safe to discuss some of her weaknesses as a preservice teacher. “She [Mrs. Cooper] is always there to go over ideas and help me through any problems, even if I don’t know something” (S23). Once advice and help were provided, Penni used some of her own ideas to manage students’ behavior. “I’ve seen it work, and I’ve used this idea with a few other students” (I1). Penni viewed this and several other similar classroom experiences as “triumphs” (I3). Her sense of self-efficacy was strengthened as a result of receiving non-judgmental help and assistance while feeling accepted and needed in the classroom during problem situations. Hence, another perspective of “being comfortable” in Mrs. Cooper’s classroom was that Penni felt needed. Once she began working with several of the students on a regular basis, Penni explained that her involvement made an impact on students’ achievements. “I know I am making a difference for the students” (I1).

Penni viewed her mentor teacher as a role model and trusted this expert for advice and guidance. One of the characteristics for successful mentoring relationships involves trust (MacArthur, Pilato, Kercher, Peterson, Malouf, & Jamison, 1995). She discussed how trust builds a structure for receiving assistance from her teacher, “You learn really good things from your mentor teacher, and you trust them to come up with ways to show you. You know they are showing you things that work because you see how they do it” (S23). “They give you so many ideas and tips and sometimes I see myself kind of modeling the way she teaches” (I1).

Furthermore, mentoring was a means for Penni to receive feedback and teaching suggestions. Each time Penni participated in a reflective discussion with Mrs. Cooper, she wrote in her journal about how to solve problems with students. Penni's journal entries indicated that she was applying new ideas learned from Mrs. Cooper, evidence that she trusted her mentor teacher's judgment for application to future teaching episodes (J2-J6). It was important to note that Mrs. Cooper's mentoring strategy was responsive to Penni's problems rather than evaluative of her problems. For example, during one of the mentoring sessions, Penni realized that she was not the only one experiencing difficulties with a student's behavior. Like many preservice teachers who participate in field experiences, Penni was concerned about her teaching abilities while experiencing difficulties with a particular student. At one point, Penni expressed concern about failing, "I'm worried that my student is going to fall below the baseline that we set for him. If he does, I will think I am a bad teacher" (I4). Preservice students struggle with unaddressed concerns and fear of failure. While not uncommon, their concerns and fear can lead to stress, frustration, or doubt about teaching if left unaddressed (Whitfield, 1995). Even though Penni experienced stress and frustration in this situation, Mrs. Cooper's early responsiveness averted additional anxiety that could have led to Penni questioning her self-competence as a new teacher (Hawk, 1984; Hildago, 1987). In this situation, rather than taking ownership of the problem, Mrs. Cooper guided Penni toward identifying solutions by discussing the situation and making suggestions. Penni explained, "We came up with some ideas that I can try teaching the next few times. I will be doing progress monitoring so that we can look at the progress again" (I4). Shortly after this mentoring session, Penni stated, "I worked out what I thought would be a good way to teach it and showed it to my mentor teacher. She said that it looked good and I should try it" (I3).

Through the mentoring experience, Penni relied on asking for help from Mrs. Cooper. When preparing the one-on-one teaching lessons, Penni found that Mrs. Cooper was receptive to helping her and would respond to her questions in an open and honest manner. She stated, "What she [Mrs. Cooper] suggested was the best way [sic] to work on this problem. These techniques are going to stick with me a lot more [sic], and I'll be able to remember what works" (S23). As Penni continued to receive help, her confidence increased.

In summary, the frequency of the field experiences, coupled with on-going feedback from Mrs. Cooper, helped Penni feel comfortable in the classroom and developed a trusting relationship with her mentor teacher. Once she felt comfortable, her confidence appeared to improve. During the mentoring opportunities with Mrs. Cooper, Penni was comfortable openly sharing her preservice teaching experiences and making specific inquiries about working with students. When Penni was unsure about an instructional strategy, she talked immediately with her mentor teacher. When field experiences are supervised and guided by mentor teachers who model approaches and who build trust over time by being responsive to their mentees, the mentees are able to maximize their learning relevant to classroom teaching (Clemson, 1988; Slick, 1995).

Penni received mentoring support and encouragement while participating in her first year. The support provided offered both emotional and personal assistance. Similarly, Kathy desired and received emotional support that improved her sense of self-efficacy.

Level II Academy Student: Kathy

The maturing relationship with Mrs. Cooper supported Kathy emotionally as she overcame her fear and hesitation, and engaged in co-teaching experiences in the 1st grade class. Previously reported findings indicated that Kathy improved in her ability to take on more responsibility in the classroom as a result of the relationship she formed with Mrs. Cooper throughout the extensive field experiences. Previous findings, however, did not reflect the particular mentoring approach used by Mrs. Cooper that helped Kathy to develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, the following findings are Kathy's perceptions of the mentoring experience.

Improving self-efficacy through mentoring from a classroom teacher

When asked to take on more of an independent teaching role in the classroom, Kathy responded by shying away from this difficult task rather than taking initiative. Kathy recalled, "I wasn't sure about teaching" and "I was so worried about getting through it, surviving it" (I4). Mrs. Cooper changed the way she mentored Kathy as a result of Kathy's hesitation. Kathy recalled that Mrs. Cooper gave her "helpful hints" and tried "giving me more to do" because "she's been mentoring me for awhile and knows that I need pushed [sic]" (I4).

Mentors can take on a number of different roles during a mentoring relationship, including guide, supporter, or challenger (Daloz, 1983). Kathy described Mrs. Cooper's mentoring role as "consultant and coach," while mentoring her rather than the role of "advisor and expert" used with Penni (Clemson, 1988). To compare the two different roles, Mrs. Cooper used approaches for suggesting, advising, and inquiring with Penni, but she used more directive, assertive, and motivational approaches with Kathy. Analysis of journal documents indicated that Kathy was more hesitant than the other Academy students in terms of initiating active involvement in the classroom and needed "pushing" from her mentor teacher to develop confidence (J9, S6). Eventually, through the mentoring experiences, Kathy's confidence improved and her participation increased.

Kathy described the experiences with Mrs. Cooper that helped to strengthen her self-confidence and developed a deeper relationship with her mentor teacher. She believed the relationship between herself and Mrs. Cooper had matured during the first two years of field experiences. "I've grown in my relationship with Mrs. Cooper. We spend a lot of time together and we know each other well enough now" (I5). Equally important, Kathy perceived that her continued participation in the Academy program was due in part to Mrs. Cooper and the relationship they had developed. "If I hadn't had [sic] a teacher like her it would be frustrating. I think the success of this [field experience] depends on how well your teacher and you get along" (I6).

Kathy's confidence improved as a result of overcoming self-doubt and adversity. She reflected on progressing through surviving teaching early in the year and eventually being able to understand student learning toward the end of the year. Kathy used words such as "not ready" and "uncomfortable" when having to take on more responsibilities in the 1st grade classroom (I4). However, mentoring was a means to build Kathy's self-confidence by providing incremental steps of support, as evidenced in Kathy's following reflections:

My confidence improved; she [Mrs. Cooper] even said that at the end of last semester. I never told her that I wasn't sure about teaching in the beginning, but she could tell from the first day to the last day that I taught that I had a better handle on it. I wasn't so tense up there, and I could maybe pay attention to the students more. She [Mrs. Cooper] kept helping me with little ways I could get better. I can really seek out, are they really understanding it instead of maybe [sic] the first day I was so worried about getting through it, surviving it [Laughs] (I5).

Participating in the field experiences established a structure for Kathy to observe how Mrs. Cooper “taught the whole class” (I5). The frequency of mentoring from Mrs. Cooper helped improve Kathy’s self image as a teacher. Kathy stated, “. . . being in the classroom multiple times a week helps me to gain more confidence. I get a chance to see her [Mrs. Cooper] teach the whole class and use all the different techniques that I’ve really picked up on” (I5). Academy students were inclined to observe their mentor teachers as role models during interactions with school students and, as a result, improved their sense of self-efficacy. A role model is like a social model who “. . . raises observers’ beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable tasks” (Bandura, 1994, p. 72).

Kathy persevered through feelings of hesitation and learned to manage the class. She knew that Mrs. Cooper was effective with classroom management and maintaining the students’ attention during a teaching lesson; however, she did not feel secure enough to replicate her mentor teacher’s abilities. Rather than dismiss Kathy’s fears, Mrs. Cooper set aside time in her schedule and modeled a technique to show her “how it is done” (I5). Kathy reflected on the technique used, “I would just watch her and see how she did it. Then afterward, we would talk about it. I feel more comfortable now and I feel like I can really stand up there and have control over the class” (I5).

Kathy was receptive to have Mrs. Cooper scaffold her learning to the next level of competence and performance expected of Level II Academy students. The ability to persevere is found in the literature on self-efficacy. Preservice teachers, who have developed a strong sense of self-efficacy, will persist longer when confronted with obstacles (Bandura, 1994). The Academy field experiences provided a supportive safety net so that preservice teachers could “try and fail, and try again” (S23). Previously, Kathy talked about “surviving it,” which can be interpreted to mean that, with the support and modeling she received from her mentor teacher, Kathy persisted through adversity and self-doubt. It is not uncommon for preservice teachers to lack confidence when asked to teach on their own. Similarly, when preservice teachers observe the practices and demands of a real classroom, they are not always successful with making connections to the theories learned in their college classes (Tighe, 1991). When interviewing Kathy toward the end of the year, she not only demonstrated a stronger sense of self-efficacy, but she explained the relevance of classroom

learning in college classes with teaching in the Academy program, “I learn a lot in class and then I can apply it to the Academy program, and then there’s [sic] other times that I’m learning a lot in the Academy program that I can apply to class” (I5). As an example, Kathy described that she when she was reading about a specific teaching strategy in her college course she was then able to implement the strategy with the 1st grade students. Her mentor teacher discussed the use of the teaching strategy and praised Kathy for making an independent decision about appropriate teaching strategies. Kathy reflected afterwards by stating, “I’m not just reading about it [reading strategy], I was using it this week after I learned about it in class and I think that really helped me to understand it [theory]” (I, 5). The direct application of the teaching theory was a means for Kathy to internalize and understand the theoretical underpinnings of the reading strategy.

Mentoring from an Academy peer

In addition to the influences from Mrs. Cooper, Kathy valued mentoring from another Academy peer. Colleen, the Level III student teacher in Mrs. Cooper’s classroom, was another mentor and role model for Kathy. Kathy recalled that while watching Colleen student teach, she “. . . learned a lot more. I think that it’s been cool to see her in front of the classroom and learn more about her personally and just her different teaching techniques” (I5).

When Colleen began student teaching, Kathy commented, “She’s the Level III person; she’s in charge now and Mrs. Cooper is kind of taking a back seat” (I4). In particular, Kathy commented on how Colleen managed the students in the class, “Her classroom management skills—she’s really good at that I think” (I4). Kathy was not able to practice general classroom management skills, while Colleen was student teaching; however, she transitioned into teaching reading groups by learning from Colleen. Kathy explained how she interacted with Colleen in the classroom:

I do reading time at the beginning of the day, and that’s what Colleen has been doing [student teaching]. That’s been really good to see her do it so then I have an idea of what it should look like and ways I can alter it (I4).

According to Kathy, Colleen performed a mentoring role similar to Mrs. Cooper’s mentoring. Colleen demonstrated how to teach particular curricular activities and when

Kathy was ready, she “handed over” the task. In fact, Colleen mentored Kathy by preparing her for taking part of the lesson:

Well, she’ll [Colleen] say like – we’re working on long ‘a’ and ‘e’ words this week, so make a game for that and then I’ll have you [Kathy] read a story. Mine [sic] is to make the game and then I listen to the students read a story (I4).

Once Kathy participated in part of the teaching activity and received an informal evaluation from Colleen, she had gained enough confidence to teach lessons herself. Teaching with and observing Colleen at reading time raised Kathy’s beliefs that she possessed the capability to master the teaching activity.

Kathy believed Colleen, as a peer mentor, possessed a unique “insider” perspective about the nature of college students, the demands on their time, and the challenges of balancing their schedules. As the student teacher in Mrs. Cooper’s classroom and person in charge, Colleen directed Kathy to prepare center activities for teaching 1st grade students. When Kathy’s regular college schedule became quite busy, Colleen identified with this situation and adjusted her expectations for Kathy by allowing her more time to prepare a teaching activity.. Kathy appreciated the understanding and adjustments in expectations,

Like last weekend she [Colleen] called me and said – I need you to create an activity for one of the centers – I listened to her, but I was also having a lot of other things going on. So I had to call her back and ask her some questions and she was more than willing to fill me in on what I needed to do. She gave me some ideas and let me have more time to get it done (I4).

Colleen’s “insider” perspective about Kathy’s college schedule contributed to the development of an extraordinary mentoring relationship. Typically, mentors in education are K-12 classroom teachers who possess the content and pedagogical expertise to demonstrate, coach, and guide the learning and skills of novice teachers (Daloiz, 1983). Although Colleen was not an expert in content and pedagogical knowledge, she was, however, an insightful peer mentor who understood how to guide Kathy in making adjustments in schedules and teaching preparation.

As the student teacher in the classroom, Kathy believed Colleen played a unique mentoring role. During Colleen’s student teaching experience, not only did Colleen answer questions for Kathy, but she was in charge of what Kathy was to teach. Kathy recalled a specific situation:

I've been primarily talking to Colleen rather than Mrs. Cooper, since she's starting to take over [student teach] more of the classroom. She tells me what different centers she wants me to do. She'll usually have me create one center and then she'll have me work with a different center. I've enjoyed working with her. I think she's done a really good job of being there if I've ever had any questions, too (I4).

According to Kathy, mentoring from Colleen just "happened naturally" (I4). Because Colleen was mentored by Mrs. Cooper, it was natural that mentoring transfer from one person to another. In other words, Colleen's mentoring approaches emerged through her interactions with Mrs. Cooper and Kathy. Colleen used a similar method of mentoring as demonstrated by Mrs. Cooper. The classroom teacher acted as a positive role model and turned over teaching to her mentee once she was capable (Schein, 1978). Mrs. Cooper's mentoring built confidence in both Colleen and Kathy.

In summary, mentoring provided predominantly by Mrs. Cooper and secondarily by Colleen, contributed to strengthening Kathy's sense of self-efficacy. When Kathy was able to first observe Mrs. Cooper teach and later be given the opportunity to teach in smaller time increments, she persevered through feelings of self-doubt. Moreover, mentoring received from Colleen was a unique opportunity for Kathy to observe the process of student teaching as well as teach under the supervision of a peer. Kathy matured in the relationships she formed with her mentor teacher, Mrs. Cooper, and with the school students. Relationships between student teachers and classroom teachers have been found to be one of the most important aspects of teacher preparation (Whitney et al., 2002). The dimensions of the partnership that developed between Kathy and Mrs. Cooper were similar to Buber's (1970) findings--comfort level, communication, encouragement, and support.

As preservice teachers continued in the program, the final Level of the mentoring experience occurred during the senior year of teacher preparation. Colleen was one of the seniors who had received mentoring from a classroom teacher throughout the three years.

Level III Academy Student: Colleen

As a third year student, Colleen had some of the same reactions about mentoring, but the quality and quantity of her experiences were unique. One of the most significant aspects of Colleen's Level III Academy experience was the long-term mentoring relationship and extended support she received from her classroom teacher, Mrs. Cooper. She expressed a

heightened sense of self-efficacy as well as personal identification with her mentor teacher. Moreover, she identified the benefits of the Academy program as a pre-cursor for student teaching. Finally, Colleen viewed herself as an ambassador of the school and shared her predictions about how the Academy program might influence her future experiences in education.

Improving self-efficacy through collegial coaching

Mentoring for an extended period of time was a confidence-builder for Colleen. Additionally, she described mentoring as a partnership or collegial process. Similar to the experiences of the other Academy students, Colleen developed a positive sense of self-efficacy in terms of her ability to master greater challenges in the classroom. Colleen used phrases like, “I was able to grow from what she said and then apply it” when describing how her mentor teacher coached her (I7). She described mentoring as almost “invisible,” whereas Mrs. Cooper provided subtle suggestions throughout their team-teaching experiences,

right at the beginning of my lesson she [Mrs. Cooper] would jump in and maybe have me try something different or maybe change it a little bit how I said something or explained something. So I learned throughout the lesson, rather than doing it and then having her come and tell me, ‘Oh, well, we should have done these things.’ It was included right in the lesson. So I thought that was good. I am teaching better now (I7).

The partnership formed with Mrs. Cooper was a mechanism to enhance Colleen’s confidence to engage in peer-like mentoring. Unlike Penni or Kathy’s situations, Colleen described that Mrs. Cooper mentored her by providing suggestions and modeling during the early stages of teaching a lesson. At times, mentoring from Mrs. Cooper was described as “teaching together where neither was in charge,” but both were leading, modeling, and taking turns with the responsibility for delivering the lesson (S12). This particular approach is defined in the literature as peer or collegial coaching (Weasmer & Woods, 1999). Mentoring from Mrs. Cooper occurred during “real-time teaching” rather than during removed discussions. Peer coaching has typically functioned as a process of observation and feedback (Ackland, 1991; Showers & Joyce, 1996). However, in this case, mentoring was an interactive process to refine practices (Ackland, 1991).

Colleen valued the collegial relationship that developed with Mrs. Cooper over time and realized that to achieve this, trust was necessary. Colleen shared thoughts about her role

in the classroom, “I’m the teacher; I feel like that now” (I10). As she was given responsibility for the entire class, Colleen’s self-belief was strengthened. She recalled a time when Mrs. Cooper left the room and put her in charge, “. . . she left and did something else, and then it was just my classroom” (I10). Colleen discussed particular reasons why it was important to be trusted,

It was nice to just be able to be like, ‘Alright, I’m in charge of the kids’ and not having someone there to watch over me. I think it also builds respect between the students and myself [sic]—they understand that I am there in a teacher role. I think your confidence goes up. You are thinking, ‘I can do this.’ And it gives you the chance to apply what you’ve learned (I10).

In Colleen’s opinion, when she was responsible for the classroom, she knew that Mrs. Cooper was more apt to allow her to work through the “rocky parts” of teaching and less likely to step in and take over. Mentoring approaches such as this require a great deal of trust and open communication (Gehrke, 1988).

Colleen acknowledged that she had reached a level of confidence that allowed her to “take over the classroom” when she was in the 1st grade classroom or times when Mrs. Cooper requested that she be in charge (I10). She discussed a desire to “take over” teaching the 1st grade class rather than transition to student teaching. Unlike Penni or Kathy, Colleen did not feel the need to assimilate the culture of the school, transition into teaching, or react to responsibilities. Colleen stated several times that “I have experienced two-and-a-half years in the classroom with the same mentor teacher and Mrs. Cooper knows that I can handle it” (I7).

Forming a mutual relationship through mentoring

Colleen sensed the development of a relationship that became mutual. Another key to successful mentoring is mutual participation and, therefore, the mentor in the relationship is not the only member taking action (Kay, 1990). Mutual participation involves reciprocity, where, at times, the mentee takes on roles of the mentor by sharing her unique talents or knowledge (Gehrke, 1988). Colleen received mentoring assistance from Mrs. Cooper, but she also put forth an effort to share her unique teaching ideas learned in college courses or Academy trainings. She discussed how sharing of teaching ideas transpired,

... we share ideas. I love taking her ideas and using them, but at the same time I see her using a couple of things that I used when I taught too. So I think that shows respect both ways doing that (I9).

Reflecting with Mrs. Cooper as a process of improving instruction

Colleen determined that reflective discussions with her teacher were an effective way to learn how to plan, prepare, and deliver teaching lessons. The reflective discussions were opportunities for Colleen to determine appropriate revisions of the lesson plan and to share ideas with her mentor teacher. Colleen's journal pages represented a thorough archive of teaching lessons implemented in the 1st grade classroom. Her journal pages included information about teaching small groups of students during the first semester (the semester before student teaching) and an outline used to structure a teaching lesson in Mrs. Cooper's classroom. Colleen's outline included: 1) the learning objective, 2) instructional procedures, 3) techniques implemented, 4) evaluation, 5) what worked, 6) what did not work, and 7) a plan for the next lesson. A sample lesson plan from Colleen's journal depicted the process of planning the lesson, teaching the lesson and engaging in a reflective discussion with Mrs. Cooper.

Mrs. Cooper and I talked about the guided reading approach and whether it was at the proper level for this group of kids. I will do a reading probe next time to make sure. We decided to keep using the tickets for good behavior (J34).

While this particular lesson plan outlined a learning objective, it was not clear if the 1st grade students achieved the desired goal in the teaching lesson. It may be that small group instruction involved assessment by observation rather than other more specific assessment measurement. Nonetheless, these experiences were opportunities for Colleen to reflect on how lessons were taught. Often, preservice students plan and prepare lesson plans but do not have the opportunity to implement or reflect on their plans (Wright, 1996). Colleen found reflective discussions with Mrs. Cooper to be highly satisfying: "She [Mrs. Cooper] was open to telling me my strengths and weaknesses, and really preparing me" (S12). Mrs. Cooper agreed, "We talk and share throughout the day" (I22). Even though Colleen did not write a great deal of personal thoughts in her journal, she shared her final perspectives about her mentor teacher following her graduation from the study college:

We have shared many ideas/strategies with each other. She showed me how important monitoring behavior is and what a true passion for teaching is. I have learned so much from Mrs. Cooper that I will take with me into the future and my own classroom. I think this program has been a wonderful experience, providing me with many great opportunities. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor teacher. It has been great now to share our trainings and experiences with possible future employers. They are always impressed with the program and what we have experienced. I am very thankful for the program and what it has given me. I have seen it grow so much since the first year, and I can only see it getting better in the future (S12).

Reflective discussions were valued by Colleen and it was clear that the final phase of mentoring by Mrs. Cooper had left a lasting impression. As Colleen entered the final weeks of this experience, she reached a high level of self-awareness about her role in the school.

Becoming one of the teachers and promoting the school

Colleen considered herself one of the teachers and an ambassador for the school. She attended the same staff meetings, professional development activities, and parent-teacher conferences as did other teachers in the school. She found that, by demonstrating a commitment and invested interest in the school; she formed relationships with many other teaching faculty.

Colleen was proud that she became friends with the other teachers in the building and felt like a “professional” when attending meetings. Her ideas and opinions were sought and accepted by the school staff, and Colleen stated that she had “made it” as a teacher in the school (S12). As a result of these experiences, Colleen not only considered herself one of the teachers, but a child advocate and agent for social change. While participating in college courses, attending college seminars, or discussing her student-teaching experience, Colleen used expressions such as “standing up for my children,” “not just a teacher,” “meeting the standards,” and “lobbying with the school board for better resources” (FN3). Moreover, she talked about the school, teachers, and students when attending other education activities at the study college and throughout the community as if she were part of the school mission. During her college courses, Colleen offered personal opinions about teaching strategies and supported her beliefs by using examples of her experiences in the 1st grade classroom and school.

Identifying with the mentor teacher

Colleen described a personal and positive identification with her mentor teacher. She described their personalities and styles “matched each other well” and these factors were opportunities for personal and professional open discussions about theories of teaching. She mentioned several times how she and Mrs. Cooper were alike or possessed similar personalities (I9). She used the following expressions: “we’re alike,” “we believe in the same things,” “we have similar personalities,” “I am like her,” “we’re both concrete-sequential” and “I couldn’t have asked for a teacher more like me” (I7, I9, S12). Colleen discussed similar beliefs about teaching that she and Mrs. Cooper maintained and that “. . . we both teach in the same way” (S24).

In summary, the third year of the Academy program was climatic for Colleen as she experienced and assimilated the process and purpose of teaching. Through collegial coaching from her mentor teacher, she developed a positive sense of her own teaching abilities and took charge of teaching the 1st grade class. Colleen viewed her role in the classroom as a teacher rather than a student-teacher and became an ambassador for the students.

Colleen perceived her meetings and discussions with Mrs. Cooper as instrumental for gaining knowledge, reflecting about teaching, and critiquing her own teaching practices. She identified with her mentor teacher and believed that teaching together was more of a partnership in which ideas could be openly exchanged and advice could be given without hesitation.

Finally, as a member of the first group of Academy participants who completed three years of extensive field experience with a mentor teacher, Colleen believed she was one of the “pioneers.” She reflected about events that established the foundation of the Academy program and structured the mentoring relationships with K-12 teachers for others to follow. She viewed her experience as an opportunity to build her teaching skills to the highest level possible. Colleen reflected on her experiences:

It’s nice that as we [Level III Academy students] finish as the first group to go through the Academy program., As the first group, we learned a lot about responsibilities towards mentoring for the Academy students at levels below us. We understand the training and can help them with how to implement it. We have had an opportunity to develop our teaching skills at a quality level (I9).

Summary for guiding question 2: perspectives from preservice teachers

All three of the preservice teachers believed that mentoring from Mrs. Cooper improved their sense of self-efficacy. In particular, Penni felt more comfortable and valued in the 1st grade classroom. After her mentor teacher modeled instructional and behavioral techniques for Penni, she began taking the initiative to teach and work with a few of the 1st grade students. Similarly, Kathy reported that Mrs. Cooper supported her emotionally which helped to build her confidence and sense of self-efficacy. Kathy overcame feelings of self-doubt as a preservice teacher and was able to co-teach alongside of her mentor. Moreover, Kathy gained in her understandings of teaching by receiving mentoring from Colleen, her Level III peer. Colleen reflected on three years of mentoring from her mentor teacher and several findings were evident. In addition to the improved self efficacy reported by all three preservice teachers, Colleen reported on her sense of collegiality with Mrs. Cooper and her acceptance as one of the teachers in the building. Taken together, all of the themes identified for Colleen commented on her developing image of herself as a professional classroom teacher. Colleen believed that she had progressed from a college student to a professional teacher. The extended experiences in the 1st grade classroom allowed her to form a heightened sense of self-confidence. Mrs. Cooper was instrumental in helping Colleen develop confidence for teaching and promote the mission of the school. The perceptions from Mrs. Cooper about mentoring the three preservice teachers are reported next.

Mentor Teacher: Mrs. Cooper

The mentoring Academy students received from a classroom teacher was a cornerstone of the Academy's multi-tiered program. The case study mentor teacher, Mrs. Cooper, was responsible for mentoring all three of the Academy's preservice teachers in this study. Data from Mrs. Cooper indicate that her views of the Academy experience developed over time. Initially, she explained that her reason for participating as an Academy mentor teacher was so the students in her 1st grade classroom would receive “. . . extra help and reinforcement when the preservice teachers work one-on-one in order to meet the school's benchmarks” (S13). After several months of serving as a mentor teacher, Mrs. Cooper's initial reason for participating in the study evolved from an internal focus to include an external focus as well. Mrs. Cooper began to realize that she could significantly impact the

preparation of preservice teachers. Hence, she began thinking more globally about her participation in the Academy's program.

Mrs. Cooper's perceptions, explanations, and descriptions of mentoring preservice teachers in the Academy's program significantly extended this study's findings. Her voice offered a different perspective on the second question guiding the study, "What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced teacher preparation?" Data gathered during interviews, surveys, and feedback notes from Mrs. Cooper revealed she: 1) recognized the key components for effective mentoring and 2) matched mentoring techniques with the needs of preservice teachers (see Table 4.3). Findings related to the mentoring experience, provide further insight into what influenced or impacted the preservice teachers while they were mentored by the classroom teacher.

Table 4.3. *Theme and Findings Related to Mentoring from the Classroom Teacher.*

Theme 3: Mentoring	
<i>Mentoring—Mentoring from a Classroom Teacher that Influenced Personal and Professional Development</i>	
Recognizing key components for effective mentoring	Matching mentoring techniques with the needs of preservice teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forming personal and professional relationships with preservice teachers ▪ Changing dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentoring as a teacher and advisor ▪ Mentoring as a role-model and coach ▪ Mentoring as a colleague

Mrs. Cooper described a few key components for successful mentoring experiences in surveys, interviews, and reflective feedback notes collected during the Academy study. Two of the key components that were mentioned repeatedly included forming personal and professional relationships with preservice teachers and changing dynamics she experienced while spending a significant amount of time with each. Next, she described how she matched her mentoring techniques with the needs of the preservice teachers. As she mentored the preservice teachers, she found that different techniques and roles were needed.

Recognizing key components for effective mentoring

Mrs. Cooper explained that developing personal and professional relationships with the preservice teachers was a key component for a successful mentoring experience. The Academy program was instrumental, in her opinion, for providing the long-term structure for establishing relationships with the preservice teachers. The Academy's program enabled her to develop relationships that extended beyond what normally occurred in traditional field experiences or other student-teaching programs she had previously encountered (FN13). At each level of the program (Level I, Level II, and Level III), Academy students spent an entire year in her classroom learning how to teach while developing a well-rounded understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

Forming personal and professional relationships with preservice teachers. Mrs. Cooper cited that she began with a personal relationship with the students and then developed a more professional relationship that fostered a sense of security for the preservice teachers. Her conversations with the preservice teachers were focused on maintaining an awareness of their personal well being as well as their professional development. Forming personal relationships was "really as simple as talking with them everyday," explained Mrs. Cooper. She stayed in touch with how "things were going" with each of the Academy's students (S13). Mrs. Cooper invested her time talking with the Academy's students about teaching and school activities. She also spent time listening to each of the preservice teachers talk about "what was on their minds." Most of the time, the preservice teachers wanted to talk about more personal topics such as becoming a teacher, details about their college courses, or questions about the profession of teaching. Mrs. Cooper discovered that these conversations were valuable for developing a relationship beyond the regular work of teaching. She stated, "We developed real friendships" (I22). Occasionally, she described additional friendship activities such as impromptu discussions about college activities, taking time to enjoy breaks together, exchanging phone calls, and helping each other with teaching duties. Having established genuine personal interactions, Mrs. Cooper began developing the professional side of her relationships with the preservice teachers. Because she first laid the foundation of personal relationships, Mrs. Cooper was more "comfortable" being candid with the Academy's students when providing feedback on their teaching" (I22).

The development of her professional relationships with the Academy students involved implementing small segments of guidance, support, and encouragement with each of the preservice teachers. Once the Academy's students exhibited both comfort with these forms of mentoring and trusted in her judgment, Mrs. Cooper began to "be more directive by giving them suggestions and ideas to try" in the classroom with the 1st grade students (I22). The preservice teachers learned about their own teaching when they received, ". . . the good news with the bad." Because Mrs. Cooper provided valuable feedback that was specific to the types of improvement each preservice teacher required, her suggestions for improvement were not received as ". . . a crushing blow" (RF13). In fact, she stated that the mentees accepted her suggestions and often joked about their experiences that did not go as anticipated. As her mentoring experience progressed, Mrs. Cooper provided more feedback, suggestions, critique, and evaluation for the preservice teachers.

Changing dynamics. Given the multi-tiered levels of the Academy's program, Mrs. Cooper described that the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship changed over time. The longer the preservice teachers were in her classroom, the more time they spent focusing on teaching, testing out new teaching strategies, and discussing what worked and what did not work. The preservice teachers were "no longer visitors like other college students" but were perceived as important "protégés" and sometimes considered colleagues (I22). Therefore, Mrs. Cooper was both flexible and creative while customizing her role in mentoring each preservice teacher to meet her unique needs and achieve the objectives of each level in the Academy.

Matching mentoring techniques with needs of preservice teachers

To achieve the distinct objectives of each Academy level (Level I, Level II, and Level III), Mrs. Cooper described her main technique for mentoring was customized for each Academy student according to her experiences, year in college, Level in the program, and her individual needs (S13). She explained that, each preservice teacher "came to me with different understandings and skills about teaching" (S12). For each mentoring relationship, she used an approach to help the student gain the most from the experience.

Mentoring as a teacher and advisor. When mentoring Penni, a Level I student, Mrs. Cooper described that she adopted the roles of both teacher and advisor. Mrs. Cooper used

the role of a teacher when she introduced new teaching ideas with Penni, helping her “break down the concepts” so that she could engage in practice with several of the 1st grade students (I22). She adopted the advisor role when it was apparent that Penni needed practical advice, while working with the students (FN18).

Each of the preservice teachers met frequently with Mrs. Cooper to learn about the developmental learning stages of 1st grade students during their first year of participation in the Academy program. With knowledge about developmental learning stages in place, Mrs. Cooper engaged the preservice teachers in discussions about teaching strategies and appropriate interventions for struggling students. Penni’s first assignment was to work one-on-one with a few 1st grade students. Mrs. Cooper explained her mentoring approach, “I talked with her [Penni] daily after she worked with her students. We also meet each week to go over her instructional intervention plans and assessments” (S13). To help Penni learn what individual instructional interventions would be most effective, Mrs. Cooper presented some of her classroom teaching materials to Penni and advised her on the application of the materials with her 1st grade students. Mrs. Cooper noted, “I ask her to tell me what she did, and then I help her understand the next thing” (S13). In addition, they met to discuss the progress monitoring charts and Mrs. Cooper helped Penni learn to interpret the charts’ data. Penni was confused by the information related to instructional strategies, intervention for struggling students, and progress chart data until she received individualized mentoring from Mrs. Cooper.

Mentoring as a role-model and coach. Instead of mentoring by using teaching and advising as she did with Penni, Mrs. Cooper used modeling to mentor Kathy. First, she modeled how to complete the instructional planning process, “I plan with my Level II student [Kathy] once a week for teaching the following week” (S13). Then, Mrs. Cooper modeled teaching techniques for Kathy during class time and engaged in discussions about the experience. Mrs. Cooper stated “we talk over the teaching strategies in detail” where they determined not only the instructional strategies, but the ways that Kathy would manage students’ behaviors (S13). Shortly after the modeling of a lesson, Kathy joined Mrs. Cooper in the teaching lesson by helping small groups of students. Due to Kathy’s hesitation about teaching on her own, Mrs. Cooper continued using this approach for several weeks, while

providing incremental coaching sessions (FN18). By coaching Kathy during the co-teaching experiences, she was able to take on more responsibilities and needed less assistance from Mrs. Cooper. When Kathy was proficient in the co-teaching experiences, Mrs. Cooper removed herself, allowing Kathy to teach the lesson on her own. Throughout the early part of the year, Mrs. Cooper had to devote an intense amount of time and effort in mentoring Kathy. However, the intensity eventually decreased as Kathy became a more independent practicing teacher. Toward the end of the semester, Mrs. Cooper stated that she had completely faded out of teaching side-by-side with Kathy because she was able to do it on her own.

Findings previously described indicated that Kathy was hesitant to teach in front of the class and felt most comfortable when Mrs. Cooper coached her. However, during interviews and surveys, Mrs. Cooper did not indicate that she perceived Kathy as hesitant or fearful. Interestingly, Mrs. Cooper intuitively used a mentoring role that involved coaching and encouragement that boosted Kathy's self-esteem and eventually helped her develop the skills she required in order to teach independently.

Mentoring as a colleague. Mrs. Cooper described that her role for mentoring Colleen changed from the Level II year to the Level III year. During Level II, she described her mentoring role as "role model and advisor," but during Level III she was more of a "colleague" and "teammate" when she mentored Colleen (I22, FN18). Previously, Colleen necessitated more active and intense roles such as what was described with Kathy and Penni; however, Mrs. Cooper explained that her final year with Colleen was like having "another teacher in the classroom" (S12). Mrs. Cooper reported that mentoring Colleen during the Level III experience was "not formally needed" during the 2003-2004 school year (FN5).

During Colleen's student teaching semester, Mrs. Cooper did provide mentoring, but she described it more as "sharing ideas and talking over teaching" rather than directly providing evaluative guidance or comments (S22). During her final semester, Mrs. Cooper reported that Colleen participated in the 1st grade classroom on a weekly basis, and her experiences were less structured than they were in her first two years of the Academy. She wasn't expected to plan weekly teaching experiences, but instead "jumped in" to help teach when needed. In Mrs. Cooper's opinion, Colleen was more relaxed in the classroom and that

gave her an advantage over other traditional student-teachers because she was already knowledgeable about the 1st grade curriculum and could “take over the teaching anytime” (I22). In fact, Mrs. Cooper stated that she didn’t remember when she “. . . had a college student-teacher who was as prepared as Colleen for just getting started and taking over the classroom” (I22).

Summary for guiding question 2: Perspectives from the mentor teacher

The mentor teacher identified key components needed for mentoring and matched specific mentoring techniques with the needs of each preservice teacher. When Mrs. Cooper first developed personal relationships with the preservice teachers, they were more receptive and responsive to her professional critique and advice. The personal and professional relationships established with each of the preservice teachers formed the foundation for Mrs. Cooper to use different mentoring techniques appropriate to each Academy student’s situation. Even though her commitment was extremely time consuming, Mrs. Cooper believed that the Academy mentoring experience was far more effective for preparing preservice teachers than the traditional teacher education program at the study college (I22).

Summary of Findings

Three themes, field experiences, relationships, and mentoring were identified and reflected the experiences and perceptions of the preservice teachers and mentor teacher in this study. The preservice teachers reported that the field experiences impacted their learning about teaching and their development of skills in learning to teach. The relationship that developed between the students and the mentor teacher during the field experiences were another significant finding. Preservice teachers also developed a positive sense of self-efficacy about themselves as teachers.

Each level of preservice teacher reported her perceptions related to what she experienced and what she believed to be instrumental in her teacher preparation program. The Level I participant, Penni, found that hands-on experiences were opportunities to understand the unique differences between students. As her awareness of 1st grade student abilities increased, Penni realized one of the challenges in teaching is matching instruction to students’ learning needs.

Kathy, the Level II student, perceived the classroom climate as a critical factor in teaching. She observed and experienced some of the challenges of teaching related to classroom management. By observing her mentor teacher as she guided student behavior with specific techniques, Kathy found her own understandings and repertoire of teaching skills were expanded and strengthened. Furthermore, Kathy reported how relationships and interactions with students, teachers, peers, and parents are important to the overall success of students. In fact, she gained much from the peer mentoring relationship she had with Colleen.

The Level III student, Colleen, found that by sustaining herself through several semesters of the Academy program, she improved both her ability to manage the classroom and her skills at planning and teaching lessons. She identified with her mentor teacher and felt well-prepared to take over the 1st grade classroom during student teaching.

Mentoring was identified as a beneficial process in the Academy program and impacted all three preservice teachers in varying ways, specific to their Academy program level. For Penni, mentoring from the classroom teacher helped her develop a positive sense of self-efficacy. Mrs. Cooper demonstrated a helpful attitude and commitment to discussing Penni's progress with her on a regular basis, which positively affected Penni's confidence in working with students.

In terms of advancing teaching skills to the next level, Kathy found that her mentor teacher was instrumental in helping guide, support, and challenge her beyond what she was previously capable of doing. Mrs. Cooper used a scaffolding approach as a process for moving Kathy toward accepting more teaching responsibilities. Additionally, Kathy received mentoring from Colleen, the Level III Academy student, and found that observing a student teaching and helping the student teacher implement learning centers were valuable opportunities for gaining insight about future experiences.

Through her Level III experience, Colleen was able to observe in real-time as her mentor teacher succeeded, failed, and persevered for three years. By observing and participating in a myriad of teaching experiences with her mentor teacher, Colleen's beliefs about her own self-efficacy were positively influenced. By the end of the Academy program, Colleen no longer viewed her mentor as the only expert in the classroom, nor did Mrs.

Cooper view Colleen as merely a student. Both women formed a collegial mentoring relationship that contributed to mutual participation in the classroom.

Another theme that emerged from the findings of this study was related to the developing relationships with schools, teachers, and K-12 students. As she formed a relationship with her mentoring teacher and accepted more responsibilities, Penni felt like she belonged in the 1st grade classroom. When she sensed feelings of acceptance and belonging, Penni felt comfortable taking risks and trying new things. Kathy, on the other hand, developed more involved relationships with the school's students as a result of teaching large groups of students on a regular basis. She believed the field experiences helped her mature as a preservice teacher. The findings indicated that Kathy's relationship with her mentor teacher propelled her to overcome feelings of fear and hesitation about teaching. Colleen formed professional relationships in the school and found that she used these contextual classroom experiences as real-life examples with other college courses and activities.

In the next chapter, the results of this study are discussed and recommendations for future research are shared.

CHAPTER FIVE

The purpose of chapter 5 is to provide a summary and discussion of the research findings reported in chapter 4. To achieve this purpose, this chapter begins with a summary of the findings, followed by a discussion of these results, and concludes with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

All of the Academy students perceived substantial benefits from the field experiences in the 1st grade classroom. The students gained real-time knowledge about the teaching profession, gained insights about 1st grade students, developed and sharpened their teaching skills, and learned how to teach through a wide variety of authentic, hands-on interactions with their mentor teacher and students. As a result of intensive mentoring from their classroom teacher, these three preservice teachers learned to differentiate between specific teaching approaches effective for one-on-one instruction, small group, or whole class instruction.

The mentor teacher played a significant role in the developing professionalism of these three preservice teachers. Mrs. Cooper served as a mentor, advisor, role model, coach, and colleague for the preservice teachers. By developing personal and professional relationships with the preservice teachers, she customized and personalized the mentoring approach to meet the needs of each preservice teacher according to her abilities. The findings indicate that the mentor teacher was influential in helping the preservice teachers improve their teaching skills and self-efficacy, overcome fear and hesitation, and reciprocate ideas and strategies about teaching.

The Level I preservice teacher, Penni, developed a more in-depth understanding of the unique differences between 1st grade students. While working one-on-one with students, she learned how to match appropriate teaching strategies with 1st grade students who needed academic assistance. Penni's self-efficacy improved as she realized that she was capable of implementing instructional interventions with 1st grade students. The Level II student, Kathy, discovered the importance of establishing a classroom climate that was conducive to learning. She learned that a pleasant, positive, consistent, and organized manner of teaching

was an effective style that contributed to the development of student behaviors conducive to learning, and minimized behaviors that detracted from learning. Kathy experienced first-hand how to group students by ability level in order to improve student performance and why grouping strategies lessen behavior problems. As a result of a long-term, trusted relationship with her mentor teacher, Kathy's self-efficacy increased, allowing her to overcome her hesitation and fears of teaching in front of the class.

Colleen experienced three years in the 1st grade classroom with Mrs. Cooper as her mentor teacher. The longevity of her participation, coupled with extensive mentoring, enabled her to develop a heightened sense of self-efficacy and personal identification with her mentor teacher. Colleen believed that her ability to manage individual students and the whole class were the most beneficial outcomes of her extensive involvement in the 1st grade classroom. While teaching alongside her mentor teacher during the first two years, both reported they developed a relationship based on mutual respect. Colleen learned how to communicate with students and how to use positive reinforcement techniques to motivate students. Finally, the third year was an opportunity for Colleen to plan independently and prepare lessons for teaching 1st grade.

Discussion

The major findings from the preservice teachers in this study reflect components of social constructivist theory. The three preservice teachers all reflected on the value of the extended and expanded field experience, which situated them within the sociocultural context of schooling. The field experience by itself, however, was only one of the three major themes identified by the three preservice teachers. The second theme, the relationships established between Academy participants, suggests the importance of having the opportunity to socially create and connect knowledge about the context of school and its relationship to the teacher education classes they experience. The third theme of mentoring, was the support and scaffolding provided by the mentor teacher help the preservice teachers develop their teaching skills.

The discussion is organized around the two questions that guided this study.

Guiding Question 1: What are the perceptions of the preservice teachers about the field experiences in the Academy's program?

The preservice teachers placed a high value on the Academy's field experiences and described them as being more extensive than the traditional teacher education program at the study college. The context and environment of the Academy's field experiences presented them with opportunities to connect theory with application. The Academy's students applied what they learned in college classes through direct hands-on experiences with 1st grade students. Education course lectures, readings, and discussions have greater meaning when linked to actual practice (Whitney et al., 2002).

As the Academy's students participated in the extensive field experiences of the multi-tiered program, they began to construct their own knowledge base about teaching. Preservice teachers construct their own knowledge, skills, and insights when immersed in an environment that allows involvement with content (Cox et al, 1998; Kroll & LaBoskey, 1996). This knowledge construction process is consistent with social constructivist principles (Richardson, 1997). Furthermore, the crucial tenets of social constructivist theory indicate that learning takes place within the context of a socio-cultural setting. Within this context, the learner participates in a "community of practice" in which social actions and social interactions happen while collaborating with others (Kroll & LaBoskey, 1996). Specifically, the preservice teachers' participation began in the Academy's program with their observations of their mentor teacher. Their knowledge of the teaching profession progressed as they formed their own teaching constructs, while being supported and guided by their mentor teacher. Their participation reached a pinnacle as each preservice teacher demonstrated her knowledge, skills, and abilities in the classroom.

The Academy's structure provided a constant and secure environment for the three preservice teachers to learn about teaching in a classroom environment. Preservice students typically enter field experiences with concern and hesitation about whether they will be able to perform in the classroom and uphold the expectations of their classroom teachers (Ross, 2002). They are concerned about being accepted as a teacher and developing a relationship with the classroom teacher and the students. Preservice teachers move through stages of perceiving themselves as student to that of teacher. This "... paradigm shift [is] essential for

the novice to assimilate the culture of teaching” (Whitfield, 1995, p. 34). However, the shift is not always an easy one for preservice teachers to make. Field experiences can be misguided, without purpose, or a waste of valuable time if not well planned and coordinated. Moreover, preservice teachers can experience a lack of support, less-than-positive relationships, and feelings of abandonment if the field experience does not provide effective support or direction from the K-12 classroom teacher (Whitfield, 1995). Despite these typical teacher preparation occurrences, the Academy’s field experiences provided the preservice teachers with opportunities to develop relationships with classroom teachers, which helped them overcome many of these debilitating occurrences.

Most early field experiences in teacher preparation include classroom observations as a means of developing a sense of the overall teacher experience rather than simply reading about teaching and learning (Heller, 2004). However, with the Academy’s multi-leveled approach to field experiences, classroom observations quickly turned into hands-on interactions with K-12 students and the classroom teacher. Such field experiences are significantly different from some teacher education field experiences that can be inadequate and unfocused in nature (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990).

Typically, preservice teachers are given few opportunities to practice in the actual classroom setting what they have learned through college coursework (Sandholtz & Dadlez, 2000; Taylor & Sobel, 2003). This lack of practice hinders the preservice teachers’ abilities to grasp difficult concepts and bridge theory with application (Grossman, 1994). Moreover, the preservice teachers in some teacher preparation programs are not empowered to experience early on the full effect of implementing instructional strategies with students in the actual classroom setting.

Unlike the traditional teacher preparation program at the study college, the Academy’s intensive process presented the preservice teachers with ample opportunities to practice what they learned from their college professors, training consultants, and mentor teachers. Academy students were expected to teach and work in a K-12 classroom on a weekly basis throughout their college years. The extra demand on their already full academic schedules was a challenge for the preservice teachers, but they perceived the benefits of the enhanced field experience were well worth their investment of time. The extra time spent

working alongside their mentor teacher and implementing instructional strategies with students in the classroom setting enabled them to test theories, expand their understanding of the conditions that make specific methods effective, and develop their teaching skills.

While these findings about field experiences and improved teaching skills are positive and were significant in terms of perceived improved teaching skills for these preservice teachers, this qualitative study does not show conclusive data about the specific requirements or ingredients for preparing quality teachers. The Academy model and its processes are not prescriptive and have evolved as a result of continuous improvement from all three educational institutions. The Academy process and model does however, provide insight to the types of experiences and dynamics that could be beneficial for preparing preservice teachers. From the findings and in-depth examination of the Academy model and processes, a proposition could be made that intensive and extensive field experiences that include authentic teaching experiences with K-12 school students and long-term mentoring from a classroom teacher is a beneficial component for preparing quality teachers. The process and model has received attention across several public venues and written documents about its beneficial approach for preparing teachers have been published (see Appendix N). As discussed previously, the preparation of quality teachers is a national initiative tailored to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Programs and models such as the Academy indicate promising reform initiatives toward meeting this goal.

Guiding Question 2: What are the mentoring experiences and relationships that occurred between the classroom teacher, Level I, Level II, and Level III preservice teachers that impacted or influenced teacher preparation?

During the Academy's program, the preservice participants identified the role of the mentor teacher as the person who most influenced and impacted their preparation as a teacher. Results from this study indicated that the classroom teacher, as a mentor for preservice teachers, played a significant role in influencing students' behaviors and successes. This finding was also a significant factor for graduate students who participated in professional development schools and were mentored by classroom teachers (Taylor & Sobel, 2003).

In the Academy's program, this classroom teacher mentored preservice teachers for three consecutive years. This multi-year approach is a relatively new teacher preparation practice based on existing efforts in the schools to match first year teachers with classroom mentors. Research indicates that effective mentoring of new teachers is a valuable mechanism for assisting the beginning teacher (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000) and has the potential to improve schools through the renewal of the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Schultz, 1995). Therefore, it can be argued that mentoring preservice teachers is a viable option for improving teacher preparation and ultimately, the teaching profession.

Several findings from this study shed light on why a mentor teacher was important to the preparation of these three preservice teachers. The mentor teacher was experienced, had a deep understanding of the specific content area, and could demonstrate the pedagogical application of the curriculum. In the college classroom, the preservice teachers were able to learn about teaching practices; however, they lacked opportunities to observe and experience teaching theory in action. The preservice teachers observed their mentor teacher demonstrate teaching practices and the preservice teachers were afforded real-time learning in the follow-up discussions about theory and practice with their mentor.

The classroom teacher not only considered mentoring a professional responsibility, but treated her mentees with personal interest. She perceived the successes and failures of her mentees as reflections of her own mentoring skills. The mentor teacher's long-term commitment was critical for developing trusting relationships between her and the preservice teachers. She was willing to provide reflective feedback to the preservice teachers and customized that feedback for each student.

The mentor teacher in this study was instrumental in providing reflective feedback to the Academy's students that included discussion of their teaching with 1st grade students. The Academy's program provided several levels of formative evaluation, including verbal and written reflective feedback from their mentor teacher so they could self-evaluate their teaching and increase their awareness of their performances. All of the Academy's preservice teachers found that reflective feedback sessions were critically important for discussing what they were doing in the classroom, their teaching activities and lessons, how to determine

what was effective or ineffective, and reasons for making future teaching plans. The study participants appreciated the written notes, reflective feedback, and evaluations they received from their mentor teacher. These students welcomed the professional development strategies that enabled them to evaluate their own teaching. The literature indicated that support for self-evaluation and critique promotes professional growth and can begin during the teacher preparation stage (Stronge, 2002).

Each of the Academy students participated in the teacher's classroom for an extended length of time and this structure allowed for developing relationships. The teacher came to know each preservice teacher and developed relationships that were conducive for mentoring. The relationships between the mentor teacher and the preservice teachers were complex, evolving into a collegial relationship that extended beyond the parameters of the Academy's program. The preservice teachers felt comfortable, respected, and achieved a strong sense of belonging in the school community. Similar outcomes were found in a professional development schools where relationships between mentors and preservice teachers resulted in successful experiences (Duling, 2003). As the teacher came to know each preservice teacher, she gained more in-depth knowledge about her mentoring and used different techniques that matched the needs of the preservice teachers. Their relationships reached levels that are usually uncommon in some teacher education field experiences. However, in this case, the time commitment laid the foundation for preservice teachers to succeed, persevere, and excel in teacher preparation.

Mentoring during and across several years was the reason the classroom teacher formed a vested interest in the preservice teachers. When the preservice teachers attended the classroom, they participated at various levels and performed teaching lessons that impacted the 1st grade students. Because of their level of participation and impact on students, the teacher viewed the preservice teachers as important contributors of the class. When the preservice teachers performed new skills and strategies with the students, their successes and failures were a direct reflection on the mentoring capabilities of the teacher. Therefore, she encouraged each preservice teacher to work to the best of her abilities.

In many ways, the mentoring approaches used by Mrs. Cooper were characteristic of a social constructivist framework. Not only did the Academy preservice teachers benefit

from interacting in a positive social environment, but they benefited from being mentored by a teacher who provided assistance according to their needs and abilities. Mrs. Cooper mentored each Academy student using specific approaches while providing scaffolding to support the development of more complex teaching skills. These approaches can be described as the conceptions from Vygotsky's social constructivist theories of "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1997). Operating from this theoretical framework, Mrs. Cooper demonstrated knowledge and understanding of what the preservice teachers need to be successful. In the context of the classroom, including the social climate and interactions with the 1st grade students, she specifically paid close attention to the preservice teachers' needs and matched her mentoring to prepare them for more complex activities. As mentoring continued in this way, each preservice teacher became more responsible, independent, and capable to determine effective teaching approaches. These approaches employed by the mentor teacher are based on the parameters of social constructivism (Oldfather & Thomas, 1998).

Because of the strong relationships they developed with their mentor teacher, the Academy's preservice teachers developed personally and professionally. They felt comfortable openly discussing their own ideas about teaching and felt supported enough to take risks in the classroom. Moreover, they accepted their mentor's help, advice, and guidance throughout their classroom field experiences. Preservice teachers are more apt to trust the help and support from a classroom mentor teacher when they understand the role the mentor is performing (Steele, 2001). Additionally, when trust is developed, mentees feel comfortable confiding in and making mistakes in front of their mentor (Clemson, 1988). If the mentor teacher is viewed only as an evaluator, the mentoring relationship can be severed and hinder the preservice teacher's pre-professional growth (Henry, 1995). When the mentoring situation is evaluative or high-stakes in nature, the mentee is less likely to expand her teaching skills. Instead, she is more likely to perform cautiously with just enough effort to meet the minimal standards of expectation. While evaluation is a critical element of the mentoring process, it is not, however, the most effective approach for mentoring preservice teachers (Cole, 1993).

The Academy's multiple tiers offered preservice teachers a broad range of opportunities to reflect about their teaching experiences and lessons learned from their mentor teacher and peers. Peer mentoring was another key factor that contributed to the success of the Academy program. The upper-level preservice teachers mentored the lower-level preservice teachers, providing valuable guidance and assistance while responding to specific questions. In this case study, the Level II student, Kathy, perceived peer mentoring as a beneficial component of the field experiences as well as the opportunity to participate in the same classroom as Colleen. The other two Academy students discussed peer mentoring but did not emphasize its importance or influence as much as Kathy did. In general, the Academy's students found their peer mentors to be more understanding about issues related to program requirements, performance expectations, and real-time advice for interacting with the 1st grade students than were school or college faculty members. The extra time required to engage in peer mentoring did not, however, detract from time spent in field experiences. The preservice teachers managed to meet with one another on their own time and determined their own peer mentoring schedules. As such, they extended opportunities to hone their teaching skills by learning from their predecessor through one-on-one interaction.

Nonfindings that Became Findings

There are two major gaps in the findings from this study. First, the students report virtually no negative perceptions of the Academy experience and second, the students make very little reference to the impact or involvement of the college course aspect of their teacher preparation program. Both of these "non-findings" are important to the accurate interpretation of the study findings.

Data from the students were almost uniformly positive and this fact is of some concern. There are several possible reasons for this result. Probably the most important possible reason is that the students knew that the researcher was involved with the Academy program and the researcher did have some power over these students. Although this researcher attempted to eliminate this possible bias, it probably did influence the results. A second possible explanation for the lack of negative findings is that the students were more willing to share their successes than their failures.

The reader will also notice that there is little mention of the role and involvement of the study college by the students. References to the study college were not substantial; however, one of the preservice teachers acknowledged the importance of field experiences provided by the study college that were aligned with her preparation courses. She also believed the Academy field experiences were a means to gain more extensive experiences in school classrooms. Another preservice teacher reflected about the possibility to apply the teaching theories learned in one of her college courses to her teaching practices in the 1st grade classroom. One explanation for the lack of mention about the study college and its teacher preparation program is that most of the data were collected around the study research questions and thus focused on the experiences in the field. Each of the students indicated however, that the field experiences/mentoring helped them make sense of their college experiences. The lack of mention of the college program from the preservice teachers should not detract from the importance of fostering collaborative partnerships between colleges/university work and field experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results from this study indicate the need for further research that examines mentoring preservice teachers, induction programs in teacher preparation, and reform initiatives in teacher preparation at this study college. First, additional case study research is needed about the mentoring of K-12 teachers with preservice teachers. Research about mentoring can help inform teacher preparation in the areas of identifying effective mentoring structures, factors about classroom dynamics and interactions, and frameworks for mentoring preservice teachers that scaffolds their skills and abilities.

Secondly, research about possible induction programs that continue mentoring efforts with graduates help inform teacher education programs. In the case of the Academy's program, a comparative study might be conducted to examine graduates with graduates from the regular teacher education program during their first year of teaching. These findings would provide insight about the particular aspects of the Academy's program that contribute to the preparation of quality teachers.

Finally, research is needed about other hybrid models that provide the structure for field experiences in teacher preparation. Research studies that examine the beneficial

constructs of field experiences are needed to compare with the Levels of the Academy's field experiences. Studies that provide insight to the effective components of field experiences can provide insight to revise, renew, and reform regular teacher education programs for colleges and universities that prepare teachers.

In summary, the findings of this study uncover the perceptions of the preservice teachers as they were mentored by a classroom teacher throughout the Academy's extensive field experiences. The study's findings point to the strong benefits of extended and extensive field experiences in K-12 classrooms for these three preservice teachers. Taken together, the findings emphasize the improved self-efficacy in all three of the preservice teachers. The differences in the perceptions of the Level I, II and III teachers pointed toward the developmental nature of their experiences and suggested a growing sense of professionalism in the three students. Data from this study suggest avenues for rethinking teacher education reform. Purposeful and individual mentoring from a classroom teacher and extended field experiences facilitated the learning and development of the preservice teachers in this study.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY

History of the Academy

As a past elementary principal, consultant, and teacher, this researcher was interested in exploring professional development opportunities for preservice teachers. In some ways, the opportunities for preparing and educating preservice teachers lacked experiences, relationships, and long-term coaching experiences provided for other professionals in education. Therefore, to build capacity and sustain teachers in K-12 classrooms, reform efforts were investigated for preparing new teachers.

While teaching college courses in teacher preparation, this researcher searched for opportunities so that preservice teachers could “try out” new teaching strategies, approaches, and concepts learned in the college classroom. This search was focused on bridging the gap between the theories and concepts learned in college courses so that preservice teachers could practice what they learned in K-12 classrooms. The following investigative questions surfaced throughout this investigation: What are the methods that connect theory learned from traditional college courses with practical applications in K-12 classrooms? How could preservice teachers gain a deeper understanding of teaching that would sustain them in the profession? How could the same ingredients used by a school administrator to mentor and help teachers improve, benefit college students in teacher preparation programs? Could peer mentoring help sustain preservice teachers through their teacher preparation program?

These original questions formed the first stage of inquiry with preservice teachers and K-12 classroom teachers that eventually led to the formation of the Academy program. After several weeks of informal inquiry, preservice teachers expressed a greater interest in field experiences. First, the preservice teachers desired opportunities to form genuine relationships with classroom teachers so they would be able to try out new “things” and not fear failure. Secondly, they described themselves as unskilled with managing K-12 students in a classroom. Last, they reported dissatisfaction with learning how to focus their teaching on helping students who were academically challenged or at-risk. As another component of informal inquiry, this researcher began collecting questionnaires from student teachers focused on the preservice teacher’s interests and comments.

The comments and evaluations written by student teachers after their culminating student teaching semester indicated the need for a more in-depth mentoring process. The student teaching experience was not extensive or long enough to allow for the type of mentoring relationship with the classroom teacher. It was from these concerns and observations that this researcher began pursuing alternatives that would provide more extensive practicum and applied teaching experiences in our college's undergraduate teacher education program.

The opportunity for experimenting with practicum and field experiences began shortly after this researcher's first year at the college. While instructing math methods courses in our teacher preparation program, this researcher began exploring with hybrid models of field experiences. For example, during the math methods course, an extended field experience concepts was introduced to a nearby school. After visiting the school, explaining the goals of an extended field experience, and gaining the commitment from administrators and classroom teachers, the preservice teacher would be allowed to conduct short practice teaching sessions in school classrooms. Once a week, rather than attending the traditional college math methods course, the preservice teachers conducted mini teaching sessions in the K-6 school classrooms with modeling and guidance from classroom teachers. The "trying out" of new practices with systematic support from K-12 classroom teachers made it easier for college students to try and fail, and try again. This eight-week initiative was a positive outcome and the preservice teachers reported that they gained much in terms of understanding how math is taught. They reported improved understanding of linking teaching theory to practice. For example, when learning about a teaching method such as math approaches, using math materials or manipulatives; the students were able to make sense of what they had learned from their textbook and in the college classroom. Having real subjects such as school children, an authentic environment, and the opportunity to try something more than once, allowed the preservice students the chance to draw relevance to the theory and application.

While holding discussions in class, preservice teachers were discussing their experiences in the K-12 school classrooms, drawing references to the terms and methods learned in their textbook, and improving on exam scores as a result of the extensive field

experience. Moreover, this researcher found that K-12 classroom teachers provided the much needed feedback after a teaching episode; something not replicable in a traditional college classroom. Preservice teachers were able to discuss their results of teaching immediately after having experienced it. At times, the classroom would be humming with excitement and encouragement.

After many informal discussions with the teachers involved in the practicum experiment, these informal findings warranted further study. First, the continuity of the eight-week math practicum led to multiple successful teaching experiences for the college students. Teaching several mini-math lessons during an eight-week session allowed for scaffolding of new skills rather than the development of “splinter skills” often found with short field study visits to school classrooms. Practicum students were able to develop several soundly mastered teaching skills as a result of the long term experience. Secondly, practicum students developed the confidence to teach large groups of students after successive visits to the same classroom and with the same teacher. Conversation between the practicum student and classroom teacher developed beyond the typical “good job” or “that went well”. The short, but beneficial incidental conversations between the practicum student and classroom teacher centered on effective teaching practices, remediation techniques, and individual student achievement.

The third finding from an extensive field experience, relates to relationship building. The practicum students usually were hesitant in the beginning, but after several visits to the classroom, they developed a relationship with the teacher who was then committed to helping the preservice teacher improve their teaching. When a preservice teacher was able to build trust with a mentor teacher, it was easier to experiment and take risks. The preservice teachers were much more relaxed after several weeks with the same teacher and more apt to take risks with implementing new math approaches.

Several semesters passed while implementing weekly field-study experiences of math teaching in K-12 classrooms. These experiences were the first models for developing a professional development structure for undergraduate students in teacher preparation. The concept of mentoring for eight weeks in a K-12 classroom would be further explored. If relationship-building between was important to the overall process of learning to teach, then

it seemed logical for preservice students to receive mentoring by classroom teachers for more than one semester. Many questions needed answered, many challenges needed explored. The concept of a teacher preparation Academy surfaced from these questions and challenges.

The Beginning Stages of Planning the Academy

The local area school curriculum director and this researcher began conversations on the topics of practicum experiences, extended field study experiences, and the traditional student teaching experience. While other institutions in the state were initiating reform movements such as university-school field study experiences, lab schools, or other grant-related endeavors, we were discussing the concept of a mentorship program between classroom teachers and sophomore-level college students. Early mentoring could prove to be instrumental in terms of overall development of students in teacher preparation. Our goal was to explore the concept of a long-term mentorship between classroom teacher and practicum students in the early stages of teacher preparation.

Knowing that time, budget, and personnel were luxuries we couldn't afford to alter, we began discussions with the regional area education agency to help us look at options for pooling our resources. During the time period of exploring mentoring concepts, we received a minor grant to fund a new math training program jointly between the college and the public school. Having experienced a positive outcome as a result of the joint training, further discussions and brainstorming sessions were held to invent a partnership and mentoring project between the college and the school. We approached the topic of a partnership in teacher preparation with both optimism and caution. We were optimistic because we felt the time was ripe for the formation of a school-college partnership and because we knew from past practicum experiences, the realities of improved teaching and learning for both the classroom teacher and college student were likely. We were cautious because we also knew that educators have many other commitments. Too often, more is placed on the "plate" of the classroom teacher than removed. We knew the concept of a long-term partnership was a reform movement in the right direction, but yet needed to gather the input and insight from the college students, teachers, and administrators who would be the active participants. The result was a "grass roots" development of the Teacher Academy (the Academy).

During the summer of 1999, focus study sessions were held with groups of teachers, college professors, administrators, and regional area education agency staff. Unlike the school reform movements of the 1980s where typically improvement plans were initiated, monitored, and assessed from the top down (Lieberman & Miller, 1986), rather, the formation of the Academy developed from the “ground up”. The focus group met over the course of several months, discussed topics such as “improving teaching skills”, “teacher preparation partnerships”, “additional help for school students”, and “mentoring activities”.

In contrast to this process, other school reform movements directed various types of authoritarian approaches between schools and colleges where the focus was on certification and licensure of teachers, as well as management practices which invite participants to a new project or initiative. Unlike these reform initiatives, the development of the Academy grew from the democratic and collaborative planning of many teachers, principals, and college faculty. As found in the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) Yearbook, teachers in the project were not seen as an object but rather as an engaged subject who collaborates and become deeply ingrained in the profession. The summer focus study sessions centered on partnership approaches rather than solutions for one group or the other. The group centered on several ideas and processes to improve teacher preparation as well as the overall achievement of K-12 students. The “grass roots” approach allowed for building a foundation of consensus, a model developed by all who participated, and the framework for simultaneous interaction and joint-learning.

The college was interested in strengthening the practicum experiences for their students in teacher preparation and the school district was interested in the achievement of their students. Collaboratively, the focus study team saw the partnership as a “win-win” situation. The college preservice preparation program would “win” by strengthening the depth and breadth of their practicum experiences for their students, the school would “win” in terms of teachers collaborating and mentoring with college students and professors, and K-12 students would “win” as recipients of the interaction and additional instruction from college students.

At this stage of planning, the regional area education agency expressed their interest in joining the partnership. The state’s regional education agency provided teaching materials,

training, consultation, and special education monitoring services for the local school district. Their role mirrored many of the same goals of the Academy. The local regional education agency was able to bring cutting-edge professional development training and staff development to the local area school as well as many other curricular services. The concept of a partnership would expand three ways to include the expertise and training of the regional area education consultants and professionals. The regional education agency would strengthen the project and provide on-site training to students in teacher preparation and teachers alike. The concept of a triadic partnership was formed and now identified the initiatives of the Academy.

APPENDIX B: THE ACADEMY

(Original document created at the inception of the program that depicts the goals, expectations, and planned implementation of the Academy)

The Academy....a partnership among all three institutions.

Our goal is:

- The development of a multi-tiered model between research and practice that improves teacher preparation and performance and impacts student achievement.

We accomplish this by:

- Defining how the performance standards connect with the school district comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP).
- Identifying the teacher performance indicators that align with the standards and CSIP
- Establishing professional development training structures that are based on research and best practices for the school district CSI reform efforts
- Creating organizational structures to develop teacher capacity to inquire into the qualities of teaching and learning; inquire into the nature of learning and the effects of teaching
- Designing leadership training for all educators

The Academy is:

- Organized teams for investigation and inquiry facilitated by the regional education agency, school district, and college.
- Intensive in-service training for preservice and in-service teachers
- Preservice, novice, and veteran teachers working and teaching together
- Based upon action research – enables course of study tied to practice
- Structured opportunities to observe and analyze teaching through mentoring
- For ongoing teacher support for learning subject matter and new forms of pedagogy
- Provide classroom teachers and preservice teachers with more resource partners
- Increasing the ability of teachers and preservice teachers to analyze and interpret data in order to make informed decisions.

Our results:

- This framework and model develops a cohesive organizational system among partners to a common set of professional development activities that result in a tremendous growth in teacher and teacher preparation performance.

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF THE ACADEMY

The Academy students experience and participate in the following Levels:

Sophomore Year – Level I

- Making decisions based on student data
- Progress-monitoring strategies for tracking student achievement
- Training in specific teaching practices from the Heartland Area Education Agency
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
 - Reading fluency and comprehension techniques: vocabulary strategies, note taking guides, Read Naturally, Guided Reading
 - Study skills
 - Test taking skills
 - Running records
 - Math strategies: fluency and accuracy of basic facts, computation, problem solving
- Designing student intervention plans
- Perform interventions relevant to training sessions - 3 hours a week with individual students from mentor teacher's classroom
- Regular home communication including phone calls, notes home to parents, and one-on-one conferences
- On-going consultation from consultants, mentor teacher, and Academy coordinator

Junior Year – Level II

- Peer coaching and mentoring a sophomore Academy student
- Attendance at the Community School staff development sessions
- Training in specific teaching practices from the regional education agency
 - Motivational strategies
 - Classroom management
 - Language Tool Kit
 - Visual Phonics
 - Reflective conferencing strategies
- Cooperatively planning instruction with mentor teacher
- Collaborative teaching in small and large groups 6-8 hours per month with mentor teacher
- Reflection and analysis of lesson completed by Academy student and mentor

Senior Year – Level III

- Student teaching with mentor teacher
- Mentor sophomore and junior Academy students
- Coordinated and implemented additional training for junior Academy students
- Participate in school-wide continuous improvement activities with teaching staff
- Continuous involvement with mentor teacher after student teaching

APPENDIX D: LEVEL I GOALS, EXPECTATIONS, PARTICIPATION

Level I Academy Student Goals, Participation

Level One: Sophomore level Academy preservice student participating in grades K-5 classrooms

Academy Student Goals and Expectations:

- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills in instructional intervention strategies.
- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills in diagnosis and assessment, and teaching/learning styles.
- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills in using instructional intervention strategies.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to diagnosis and assessment, and teaching/learning styles.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student assesses, plans, and implements instructional interventions strategies.
- The Academy student demonstrates accountability by completing:
 - Semester logs, journals, and reflections
 - Two-three hour meetings with teacher and other mentors per month to reflect and assess progress
 - Reflection sessions and presentations at the end of each semester

The Academy student:

- Attends appropriate training sessions and cadre meetings
- Implement and perform interventions from training sessions with school students three hours a week
- Produces reports of student progress which includes progress monitoring data
- Maintains log of activities and lesson reflection
- Communicates regularly with mentor, peer coach, and school students' parents/guardians
- Participates in parent teacher conferences when appropriate
- Allows observation by Program Coordinator or designee

Mentor Teacher Expectations:

- Communication with Academy student
- Offering strategy advice to Academy student
- Assist in selection of elementary students to be involved in program

- Cooperate in making decisions about when school students should enter and exit the program
- Evaluation of mentee performance each semester
- Attend mentor-mentee meetings

Academy Level I Mentee Curriculum and Training

Level 1 Primary

Grade Level	Training	# of Sessions	Facilitators
K-1 (2)	Phonemic Awareness	8 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
K-1 (2)	Motivational Strategies	1 x 2 hr.	Regional Education Agency
K-1 (2)	Math Strategies	6 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
K-1 (2)	Progress Monitoring	2 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency

Level 1 Upper Elementary

Grade Level	Training	# of Sessions	Facilitators
(2) 3-5	Reading fluency and comprehension	8 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
(2) 3-5	Motivational Strategies	1 x 2 hr.	Regional Education Agency
(2) 3-5	Study Skills	1 x 2 hr.	Regional Education Agency
(2) 3-5	Math Strategies	6 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
(2) 3-5	Progress Monitoring	2 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency

Level One: Sophomore level Academy preservice students in grades 6-12 classrooms

Academy Student Expectations:

- Attend appropriate training sessions and cadre meetings
- Implement interventions from training sessions
- Engage in three contact hours weekly with classroom students that include opportunities for classroom, individual, and small group interventions
- Attend collaborative discussion groups with mentors

- Monitor student progress
- Maintain log of activities and lesson reflection
- Regular communication with mentor, peer coach, and school district students' parents/guardians
- Participate in parent teacher conferences when appropriate
- Attend content specific staff development sessions
- Observed by Program Coordinator or designee

Classroom Teacher Expectations:

- Communication with Academy student
- Offering strategy advice to Academy student
- Actively engage Academy students in classroom
- Selection of secondary students to be involved in program
- Evaluation of mentee performance each semester
- Attend collaborative discussion groups with mentee
- Attend mentor-mentee meetings

Level I Secondary Academy Mentee Curriculum

Grade Level	Training	# of Sessions	Facilitators
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Introduction, Academy guidelines	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Motivational Strategies	1 x 2 hr.	Regional Education Agency
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Student Management	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Study Skills	1 x 2 hr.	Regional Education Agency
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Student Motivation	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Study Skills	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Summarizing and note taking	2 x 1 hr.	Study College
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Content Based Questions	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Collaborative Discussion Groups Wrap Up	1 x 1 hr.	Mentors/ Mentees
6-12	Content Specific Staff Development	TBA	School District

APPENDIX E: LEVEL II GOALS, EXPECTATIONS, PARTICIPATION

Level II Academy Student Participation

Level Two: Junior level Academy preservice students in grades K-5 classrooms

Academy Student Goals and Expectations:

- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills in teaching approaches and strategies.
- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills in teaching strategies and approaches.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to diagnosis and assessment, and teaching/learning styles.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student plans and implements teaching lessons with classroom teacher.
- The Academy student demonstrates accountability by completing:
 - Semester logs, journals, and reflections
 - Two-three hour meetings with teacher and other mentors per month to reflect and assess progress
 - Reflection sessions and presentations at the end of each semester
- Attend appropriate training sessions and cadre meetings
- Cooperatively plan with mentor
- Collaboratively teach 6-8 hours per month
- Contact with level one Academy student(s) as a peer coach
- Periodically assist level one student(s) with interventions
- Maintain log of activities and lesson reflection
- Attend staff development sessions
- Observed by Program Coordinator or designee

Academy Teacher Expectations:

- Cooperatively plan with Academy student for weekly experience
- Teach collaboratively with Academy student
- Assist in mentee's lesson reflection
- Provide mentoring advice on teaching effectiveness
- Communicate student progress to Academy student on district assessment
- Evaluation of mentee performance each semester
- Attend mentor-mentee meetings

Level II: Junior level Academy preservice students in grades 6-12 classrooms**Academy Student Expectations:**

- Attend appropriate training sessions
- Attend cadre meetings
- Cooperatively plan with mentor
- Collaboratively teach 6-8 hours a month
- Peer coach Academy student
- Maintain log of activities and lesson reflection
- Attend content specific staff development sessions
- Observed by Program Coordinator or designee

Mentor Teacher Expectations:

- Cooperatively plan with Academy student for weekly experience
- Teach collaboratively with Academy student one hour a week
- Provide mentoring advice on teaching effectiveness
- Assist mentees with lesson reflection
- Communicate student progress to Academy student on district assessment
- Quarterly evaluation of mentee performance
- Attend mentor-mentee meetings

Level II Experience

- Academy students will experience planning of a collaborative lesson
- Academy students will deliver mid to large group instruction
- Academy students will experience reflection and analysis of lesson

Grades K-12 Level II and Grades K-12 Level III (Off Semester Student Teaching)

Grade Level	Training	# of Sessions	Facilitators
K-12	Behavioral and Motivational Strategies	2 x 1 hr.	Mentor Teachers
K-12	Quality Communication	2 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
K-12	Similarities & Differences	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Reinforcing Effort & Providing Feedback	1 hr	Director of Instruction
K-12	Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback	1 hr	Director of Instruction
K-12	Cooperative Learning	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Nonlinguistic Representation	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Content Specific Staff Development	TBA	School District

APPENDIX F: LEVEL III GOALS, EXPECTATIONS, PARTICIPATION

Level III Academy Student Participation

Level III: Senior level Academy preservice students in grades K-12 classrooms

Academy Student Goals and Expectations:

- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills in teaching approaches and strategies.
- The Academy student will acquire knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills in teaching strategies and approaches.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to diagnosis and assessment, and teaching/learning styles.
- The Academy student will demonstrate knowledge and skills related to collaboration with teachers, students, and parents.
- The Academy student plans and implements teaching lessons with classroom teacher.
- The Academy student demonstrates knowledge, skills, and performance in teaching.
- The Academy student demonstrates accountability by completing:
 - Semester logs, journals, and reflections
 - Two-three hour meetings with teacher and other mentors per month to reflect and assess progress
 - Reflection sessions and presentations at the end of each semester

Off Semester Student Teaching

- Attend cadre meetings
- Attend staff development session
- Attend *Strategies That Work* training sessions
- Offer advice at Level II training sessions
- Attend curriculum, building, grade level and department meetings
- Maintain a log of activities and lesson reflection
- Maintain contact with the mentor for teaching opportunities in the off semester from student teaching
- Participate in parent teacher conferences when appropriate

Mentor Teacher Expectations:

- Host a student teacher
- Provide teaching opportunities in the off student teaching semester

Academy Mentee Curriculum

Grades K-12 Level II and Grades K-12 Level III (Off Semester Student Teaching)

Grade Level	Training	# of Sessions	Facilitators
K-12	Behavioral and Motivational Strategies	2 x 1 hr.	Mentor Teachers
K-12	Quality Communication	2 x 1 hr.	Regional Education Agency
K-12	Similarities & Differences	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Reinforcing Effort & Providing Feedback	1 hr	Director of Instruction
K-12	Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback	1 hr	Director of Instruction
K-12	Cooperative Learning	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Nonlinguistic Representation	1 hr.	Director of Instruction
K-12	Content Specific Staff Development	TBA	School District

APPENDIX G: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Compliance
Vice Provost for Research and
Advanced Studies
2810 Beardshear Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2036
515 294-4500
FAX 515 294-7288

October 29, 2004


Pamela Ewell
160 Delft Drive
Pella, IA 50219

Dear Ms. Ewell:

In reviewing the study you submitted to the Institutional Review Board titled *"Preparing New Teachers for the Classroom – A Collaborative, Mentoring Program for Pre-Service Teachers through School-University-Agency Partnerships"*, it is determined the study is considered Program Evaluation and does not fall within the Federal guidelines of human subject research, 45 CFR 46.102(d), (f).

In the event any information is changed from the original submission, please resubmit for re-review of the study.

Sincerely,



Ginny Eason
IRB Administrator

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS USED WITH STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Interview Questions for study participants

Academy students interview questions:

1. Describe your experience in the Academy program.
2. What particular aspects of the Academy experience have influenced you and why?
3. What have been your experiences in the Academy program?
4. How has this program helped you to learn to teach?
5. What have been your experiences with mentoring from a K-12 teacher?
6. How has this program helped you to be a “good” teacher?
7. When does someone know they “are the teacher”
8. What advice would you give other college students in teacher preparation?
9. How did you learn about this program? Would you do it again?
10. Do you perceive any differences in what you’ve experienced in this program to that of your peers in the traditional program?
11. What skills do you believe you’ve gained from participating in this program and how will this help you in the future?
12. In what ways have you helped your peer mentees? What do they ask of you?
13. What are negative aspects or challenges of the program?
14. How has your teacher mentored you to improve?
15. What has been a positive experience with your mentor teacher?
16. What other aspects of the Academy experience would you like to share?

Mentor Teachers interview questions:

1. What have been your experiences in the Academy program?
2. What is particularly interesting about the Academy program?
3. What are the Academy students doing in your classroom? How are they doing this?
4. How is this program unique compared to traditional forms of teacher preparation?
5. How are you mentoring the preservice teachers?
6. What have been your experiences with mentoring? Challenges? Triumphs?
7. How do you compare your preservice teachers’ performance during student teaching compared to other student teachers?
8. What are the challenging aspects of the Academy program
9. In what ways should the Academy program change? Revised? Improved?
10. What do you see as particular commonalities or differences of students who have been in the Academy program compared to other field experience students?
11. What advice would you give other college students entering teacher preparation at the college? Should they join the Academy? Why or why not?
12. What other aspects of the Academy program would you like to share?

APPENDIX I: PRESERVICE STUDENT AND MENTOR TEACHER SURVEYS

Date of Survey: May 9, 2004

Name:

Grade teaching or grade as Academy participant:

1. Reflect on and describe your experience in the Academy program this year:
2. What specific training sessions or workshops did you experience/participate?
3. How were the trainings/workshops helpful? If they were not helpful, please discuss.
4. How has the Academy program helped you?
5. How were you involved in mentoring this year?
6. How did mentoring benefit you? (your classroom teacher mentoring you)
7. How did mentoring from another Academy student benefit you?
8. What changes would you like to see next year in the Academy program?
9. How has the Academy program involved you in collaboration (conferencing, discussions, meeting with other professionals, etc...?)
10. How has the Academy coordinator assisted you during this program?
11. What other assistance would you like?
12. Do you think an Academy program, (such as what we've developed), be replicated with another school and college? And...if so, what do you suggest or advise?
13. What is a "good" teacher? What does it take to prepare a good teacher?
14. What are the rewards of the Academy program? (if any)
15. Other comments:
16. If you have participated in the full 3-year cycle of the Academy program, please reflect on your experiences and observations:

Mentor Teacher Survey

Mentor teacher name _____ Grade/subject _____

Academy student(s) Level I _____ Level II _____ Level III _____

- Mentoring Academy student(s)
- Observing and training Level I Academy student to conduct interventions for individual students/small groups
- Co-teaching and mentoring Level II Academy student
- Mentoring and supervising Level III Academy student
- Attending various meetings, workshops, and discussion sessions

Please respond to the following

1. Discuss an overall perception/summary of the Academy program this year.
2. How would you evaluate your Academy student(s)? Strengths? Weaknesses?
3. What would you like to see for an evaluation tool (to provide on-going evaluation for your Academy student)? On-line? Hard copy? Rubric? Narrative? Other?
4. In what ways did you mentor your Academy student?
5. What did you find was most successful?
6. What changes would you suggest to the Academy program?
7. Comments/suggestions/ideas

APPENDIX J: EXAMPLES OF ACADEMY STUDENT JOURNAL AND LOG

Academy Student Journal

Name: Kathy

Grade Level: 1st

Mentor Teacher: Mrs. Cooper

School:

Academy Level: Level II

Semester/Year: 2003-04

Please enter a brief description of your activities for the week. Include dates and times for teaching, planning, peer coaching, and other time spent with students, teachers, parents, and any training sessions you attend.

Date and Time	Activity / Teaching Intervention
9/4/03 3:30-4:00	Mrs. Cooper and I discussed teaching for the school year. We talked about when I would be teaching, what subject I would be teaching and when I would begin teaching the whole class. We also talked about the class and anything I needed to know about individual students.
9/9/03 12:30-1:30	Today, I walked around the room while Mrs. Cooper guided the students who had questions or had answered a problem incorrectly. Afterwards the students went to P.E.
9/11/03 12:30-1:30	Today, I walked around the room while Mrs. Cooper guided the students through a Math Minute worksheet. I walked around the room helping students who had questions or had answered a problem incorrectly. Afterwards the students went to P.E.
9/16/0 12:30-1:30	Today, I walked around the room while Mrs. Cooper guided the students through a Math Minute worksheet I walked around helping students who had questions about the worksheet or students that I noticed had answered a problem incorrectly. I watched closely as Mrs. Cooper went through the worksheet so I would know how to go through the worksheet by myself. Afterwards the students went to P.E. and Mrs. Cooper and I discussed how I would teach the class on Thursday.
9/18/03 12:30-1:30	Today, was my first day to teach the entire class by myself. I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 12. I read each problem to the class, demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet the students handed them in and went to P.E. Then Mrs. Cooper and I discussed teaching on Tuesday.
9/23/03 12:30-1:30	Today, I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 15. I read each problem to the class, demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet

- the students handed them in and went to P.E. I checked all of the worksheets and gave them to Mrs. Cooper. Then Mrs. Cooper and I discussed teaching for the next couple of days. We also made copies of the worksheets needed for the rest of the week.
- 9/25/03
12:30-1:30 Today, I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 16. I read each problem to the class and demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet the students handed them in and I checked them and gave the students another math worksheet to work on. I walked around the room assisting students who needed help.
- 9/30/03
12:30-1:30 Today, I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 19. I read each problem to the class and demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet the students handed them in and went to P.E. I checked all of the worksheets and gave them to Mrs. Cooper. Then Mrs. Cooper and I discussed teaching for the next couple of days. We also made copies of the worksheets needed for the rest of the week.
- 10/2/03
12:30-1:30 Today, I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 21. I read each problem to the class and demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet they handed them in and I checked them and gave them to Mrs. Cooper. Then Mrs. Cooper gave the students another math worksheet to work on. I walked around the room assisting students who needed help. Then I worked with 1-2 children at a time on math flash cards.
- 10-5-03
Peer Communication
Penni and I talked over the phone about her Academy experience. I asked her questions and listened to how she feels the Academy is going for her.
- 10/7/03
12:30-1:30 I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 24. I read each problem to the class and demonstrated and asked questions where they were needed. After we were finished with the worksheet the students handed them in to me and went to P.E. I checked all of the worksheets and gave them to Mrs. Cooper. Then Mrs. Cooper and I discussed the next three days of teaching. We made copies of the worksheets needed for the rest of the week.
- 10/9/03
8:15-8:30 Peer communication
Tonight Penni and I met in Maytag and talked. I looked at her charts and intervention plans. We also talked about her 1st official day with her CTA students and some concerns she has. We also talked about home communication.
- 10/9/03
I guided the students through Math Minute worksheet # 26. I read each problem to the class and asked the students to help answer the questions. I had the students do # 5, 6, 9, and 10 by themselves without doing it as a class.

ACADEMY STUDENT LOG

Attending Building: Elementary School

Intervention Plan for Sam – 1st grade

Date: October 6, 2003

Person Responsible for Problem Analysis: Penni

What is the target behavior? Phonemic Awareness – nonsense words (blending)

What about the behavior is problematic? Trouble with blending and decoding

What is expected? 50 phonemes / minute by January

What standard was utilized? Dibels normative data

Level of Performance Before Intervention (Baseline): nonsense words – 48 phonemes / minute

Discrepancy:

Goal: (include time frame, conditions, behavior, and criteria) In 10 weeks, when given a nonsense word fluency probe he will reach 60 phonemes / minute

Summary of Parental Participation: October 5, 2003 I will contact the parents monthly.

Procedures: Instructional Strategies

Use nonsense word flashcards to help Sam learn how to blend words better. I will also use cold/hot reading to improve blending, and use the cold reading for my weekly probe. Use game boards / games on the days that I don't do cold/hot reading.

Arrangements: Where/Frequency/Length of Time/Materials

In the hallway, outside of 1st grade classroom 8:45-9:00 a.m. Mondays, Fridays. Use weekly site words and instructional materials Mrs. Cooper gives me.

Person(s) Responsible:

Teacher Academy student: Penni

Measurement Strategy: Who's responsible for doing the actual data collection, method of data collection, measurement conditions, monitoring schedule

Use blending probe that will be administered once a week by myself during instructional block with Sam.

Decision-Making Plan: Frequency of data collection, strategies to be used to summarize data for evaluation, number of data points of length of time before data analysis, decision rule.

Based on the baseline and determined goal, the goal line will be used as a progress guide. If 4 consecutive data points fall below the goal line, the intervention team will reflect.

***Attach graph or other visual representation.**

Follow-up date(s): December 4, 2003

Level of Performance After Intervention: Sam started out reading 48 phonemes / minute and by the end he was reading an avg. of 70 phonemes / minute. That is a 29 phoneme / min. gain. Sam met his goal of 50 phoneme / min. He is expected to be reading at 50 phoneme / min. by January.

APPENDIX K: REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK NOTES FROM MENTOR TEACHER

1. Mentor Teacher Reflection and Feedback Notes:

This is my third year for being involved in the Academy program. I began with a Level 1 student in the year 2001-2002. In 2002-2003 school year, I had a Level 1 and Level 2 student. This year I have all three Levels. My Level 3 student is presently student teaching with me. My level 2 student works with me in my classroom. First semester, she taught daily math, Math Minutes, to the whole class. Second semester, she is preparing and guiding a reading center, and she will soon get the experience of presenting our new reading story every Monday to the whole class. My Level 1 student is working with 2 of my students. She takes them out of the classroom so she can work on her intervention plan that the regional education agency helped her write. She does weekly assessments/progress monitoring.

Penni, Kathy, and Colleen have all been excellent students to work with! They have been very responsible and enthusiastic. It is amazing how the Academy students are exposed to so many teaching strategies. They are “flooded” with really good information. Their experience in and around the classroom is a big advantage for them, too. Level 2 students have the opportunity to “teach” in front of the whole class. This experience may help them in their Block teaching experiences. My Level 3 student was able to begin her student teaching experience on a much more relaxed note, again an advantage to the Academy students. Working with individuals, as well as with the whole class before student teaching, is truly an advantage. Having the experience will look great on resumes. These Academy students are fortunate to have all these opportunities!

With Level 1 Academy students, my children are able to receive one-on-one tutoring/help in areas they are weak in. A skill is chosen, interventions are written, and their progress is closely monitored.

I like the relationship I can develop with the Academy students. Working with the same student 2 years prior to student teaching is an opportunity for us to develop a real friendship. It is much easier to communicate. Not only do the Academy students feel more comfortable, so do I.

APPENDIX L: EXAMPLE OF FIELD NOTES

Field Notes

Mentoring and key experiences: May 24, 2004

The whole concept of the mentors looping with one another, I could see that from both sides of the fence and two different perspectives when I was upfront doing the training. I could see the confidence in the preservice students who would come back as mentors. They had a renewed sense of what worked in classrooms and were proud to share with their mentees. Their abilities and skill level had improved as well. I was so surprised at the level of their conversations when they met here at the college to discuss what they were doing in their classrooms. Their conversations centered on individual students in their classroom, how certain interventions worked for the student, specific teaching approaches they used, and they even gave each other advice about what to try in the classroom. I have to say in my teaching years, I haven't ever heard college level students discuss teaching and learning at this depth of understanding before.

I could just see the benefits of mentoring for both sides. Those that were new are just gaining experience now and benefit from the advice and collegueship from their mentor at the next Level. Those that are at the upper Levels are responsive to their mentees needs.

I see their confidence building.....the Level II mentors tell the Level I not to worry, that they are here to help, and they open their portfolios and show their mentees ideas that they've used. They have learned so much from the field experiences.

There are so many things that you learn the first time out that its not that you don't want to have to go through those experiences but you can move on to new experiences if someone else would just tell you right up front, you know, don't worry about this or.. do it this way, so that was one advantage to seeing that and the other is that the mentors then the best way to learn something is to teach it for them to go back then and them to be able to kind of teach and mentor those newcomers um I think was beneficial to them too, and it just built up that much more confidence.

I like our mentoring looping concept and maybe we need to create maybe even a visual or something that shows mentoring between the preservice teachers and the classroom teachers with the preservice teachers.

At the end of the year we had our banquet again... It is absolutely phenomenal to listen to each group of mentors and mentees reflect on their year experiences in the classroom. Their confidence was so clear, I stood there looking at them thinking I could have never done that when I was in college stood up there and reflected on my own teaching experiences.

At the Academy banquet, Trent was in this room full of girls too... you know and he got up there and just spoke with such confidence and eloquence about his experiences and how he bonded with his young man who has some attendance problems I think this year and there is just so many benefits that came out of this and when I saw those kids do that I mean, I was just so proud of them and I could just tell that this was a huge impression on their lives a huge impression.. and saw a couple of them come back in the schools even after that banquet night and the way they return themselves in buildings you know with that confidence and that's just big that a big hurdle they've jumped.

APPENDIX M: EXAMPLES OF ACADEMY DOCUMENTS

The following documents are examples from the Academy Handbook.

1. Journal and Log sheet used by Academy students to reflect and log their field experiences.

Academy

Log & Journal Sheet

All Levels

Students: Use this log sheet for all meetings, teaching sessions, trainings, interventions, mentoring sessions, parent contact, etc....that you participate in or experience during the Academy program.

Reflect and respond to the questions that pertain to what you experienced. Not all questions can be answered...it will depend on the activity or experience. Select those questions that DO make sense with what you did or experienced.

Your name _____ Grade Level _____ Mentor _____
 Teacher _____
 CTA Level 2004-05 _____ Semester _____
 School _____

Activity/ Experience/Teaching

Reflection

What techniques were implemented? What was discussed? ·Why did you decide to do this? ·What did you do? ·What did you teach? ·What was your meeting/session/activity/training?	·What did you learn? ·What did you discuss? ·How was this useful? ·What didn't work/make sense/or was confusing? · What would have helped? ·How will you resolve this? ·Was the lesson understood by the school students? ·If you taught this again, what would you adjust in instruction? ·What are you planning for the next lesson/intervention? ·Determine with your mentor
<div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Date & Time</div>	

2. Academy preservice teacher evaluation used by mentor teachers.

Teacher Academy Level I Student Evaluation

Date: Academy student name Mentor Teacher

Grade level/ School Other Evaluator

Evaluation Scale:

Proficient (meets expectations)

The CTA student meets expectations and is demonstrating competence at a satisfactory level.

Needs Improvement (does not consistently meet expectations)

The CTA student has some potential but will need to improve and show growth to demonstrate minimal competence.

NA - Not applicable or appropriate at this time

Communication

	Proficient	Needs Improvement	NA
Models effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates sensitivity to individual differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates communication with mentor teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to conduct communication with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides mentor teacher with various documents that demonstrate completion of various communication activities (logs, charts, Intervention plans, home comm.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflects and discusses teaching approaches and other critical learning experiences as a result of Academy program with mentor teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engages in regular mentoring sessions with teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates new learning as a result of mentoring and reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments related to communication:			

Teaching, Interventions, Lesson Planning

Uses knowledge of student development to make learning experiences meaningful and accessible for every student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designs and delivers instruction incorporating modifications and accommodations for individual differences in learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates effective planning and preparation skills (comes prepared, plans ahead)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses appropriate resources, methods, and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connects students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in delivering instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates effective presentation of lessons or interventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehends suggestions from mentor teacher and applies new approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments related to teaching: interventions, lesson planning			

Evaluation and Assessment

Effectively analyzes, assesses, and records student progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides constructive and timely feedback to students and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments related to evaluation and assessment:			

Learning Environment

Demonstrates ability to motivate student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops positive relationship with students through use of productive and meaningful teaching approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses instructional time effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Collaboration

Establishes respectful and productive relations with:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Students			
-Teacher			
-Other school staff/faculty/AEA/college faculty			
Comments related to relations with others:			

Professionalism and Commitment to the Academy Program

Prompt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates responsibility and commitment to the profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains a positive attitude toward suggestions and criticism - open to constructive criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates commitment to the Academy program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates energy and enthusiasm in teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practices reflection and self-assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains a professional appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refrains from inappropriate behavior such as chewing gum, use of slang, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attends expected school meetings, staff development trainings, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments related to professionalism, commitment....			

Overall Rating

Comparison with other known students in teacher preparation programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General Comments:			

Please describe any additional performance of the Academy student and any other appropriate observations regarding the general qualifications and skills of this individual related to the field of teaching....using the next blank page.
Please return this form by email or US Postal mail:

Education Department
Faculty Representative – The Academy
or send as an email attachment:

Thank you for providing this valuable experience for future teachers.

Observations / Comments/ General impressions (if appropriate)

APPENDIX N: ACADEMY PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

1. *The Teacher Academy* – article published in *Said in Red*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 2003
2. **FINE** (*First in the Nation in Education, Iowa's Educational Research Foundation*) award and publication, Winter 2004
3. *Raising the Grade* – article published in *The Bulletin*, Fall 2001
4. *Students get early classroom experience; kids get one-on-one help: The teaching Academy gives education majors more teaching time*, by Sara Faiwell, *The Des Moines Register*, April 29, 2004

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