

SUMMER PRACTICUM: EXTENDING THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TO A LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators and their students (pre-service teachers) are not always able to be involved in partnerships with local high schools and their students. This paper describes such a partnership with a local high school in which pre-service teachers from a university's college of education completed their practicum hours over the summer in advance for their fall classes. My dual role in this partnership as a professor in the college of education and as the director of the summer partnership is discussed. This study also examined the impact of this summer practicum partnership on the pre-service teachers. My participation in the program increased my belief in local school summer partnerships and the benefits of experiential learning for the pre-service teachers as we worked through the scholarship of application (Boyer, 1997). The pre-service teachers cited their benefits in the areas of more real-life teaching experience, collaboration with their mentor-teachers, and a welcoming feeling from the local high school.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is very complex work, yet some pre-service teachers (students studying to be teachers) presume it to be easy (Grossman et al., 2009). In fact, many pre-service teachers believe that teaching is mostly common sense and professional study is not needed (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Kennedy, 1999; Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001). The challenge for teacher educators is to provide pre-service teachers opportunities to develop habits of continued professional learning (Chassels & Melville, 2009; Ganesh & Matteson, 2010; Hiebert, Morris, Berk, & Jansen, 2007) that includes critical reflective thinking during practicum experiences (McDonald & Kahn, 2014). Therefore, providing opportunities to learn by doing with careful coaching by experts in low-risk settings is critical to begin learning their practice (Schön, 1987). Exposure to multiple learning experiences and a considerable amount of practice with support from mentors and their peers can serve a great value for pre-service teachers (Bowman & McCormick, 2000; Chassels & Melville, 2009; Morris, Hiebert, & Spitzer, 2009;

Tobin, Roth & Zimmerman, 2001). Teacher education programs need to be designed to help pre-service teachers develop the ability to learn from teaching that will enable them to grow beyond their university experience (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005).

This study examines the implementation of a practicum (field-experience) for pre-service teachers during summer school at a local high school. The college of education and I had already established a partnership with this local high school over three years as they had hosted pre-service teachers during the fall and spring semesters. However, this was the first time this partnership extended to summer school. I am an associate professor in the college of education at a private Christian university in the southwestern United States. The college of education I teach at has over 1,000 undergraduate pre-service teachers on campus. I teach secondary methods courses (classes on the methodology of teaching for future high school teachers) and classroom engagement and management courses. The local high school

is part of a large inner-city district located very near the university. The high school has over 2,00 students: 77% Hispanic, 7% Black, and 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% White, and 2% American Indian. Eighty-three percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch ("Great Schools").

In this article, I will describe a qualitative investigation of 11 undergraduate pre-service teachers who participated in this summer practicum partnership that I directed with this local high school. The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, I examined the perceived impact this summer practicum partnership had on the pre-service teachers. These pre-service teachers were working in advance on their fall practicum hours during this summer partnership. Second, I reflected on the impact that directing this summer practicum partnership had on me as a teacher-educator as this is vital to successful teaching (Myers, 2012). The immediate significance of this article is to inform other colleges of education about the benefits for pre-service teachers in implementing a summer practicum partnership with a local high school. The broader impact will be found in the possibility of informing teacher educators and colleges of education about this summer practicum model as well as encourage further research into similar summer practicum partnerships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Current research points to the many positive impacts that result from teacher education programs that implement a practice-based background. This allows future teachers to have partnerships set up as essentially practice sites to enhance their experiences (Gravett, Petersen, & Ramsaroop, 2019). For teacher education programs to "flourish," partnerships between the local schools and university are essential (Freeman, 2009-2010, p. 15). Hardman (2009) advocated for a direct link between university courses and practicums or field experiences. Some research indicates that developing stronger relationships with schools is a distinguishing factor of exemplary teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006), and having well-planned practicums should not only benefit the pre-service teacher but also the practicum school's classroom teacher and students (Freeman, 2009-2010). One key aspect of school and university partnerships is the amount of collaboration focused

on aligned goals (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Butcher, Bezzina, & Moran, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2006) added that pre-service teachers that are taking coursework alongside practicums will begin to "see and understand both the theory and practice differently" (p. 307).

For years in academia there has been discussion of the divide that often exists between colleges of education and local high schools (Wilks & Ross, 2014). Some research implores pre-service teachers to imagine "a professional place where the divide does not exist" and where colleges of education and schools share common goals in "their search for knowledge about teaching and learning" (Hall, 2005, p. 199-200). Separating theory from practice creates an incorrect view of teaching because teaching is a profession where the theory is embedded in the practice (Schön, 2003). Mulcahy's (2005) research built upon Shulman's (1987) work on bridging the gap between having content knowledge and teaching such knowledge to students. Knowledge that is generated by the work situation (practicum or field experience) is referred to as having a "working knowledge" of the profession, and pre-service teachers need to go from professional knowledge to a working knowledge of teaching (Mulcahy, 2005, p. 318). Much of the knowledge needed to teach effectively "is situated in practice, [and] it must be learned in practice" (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 3).

Some argue that school partnerships could be a viable means to connect the theory and practice for pre-service teachers. Orland-Barak (2017) points out that teacher education needs to focus on using diverse environments to allow future teachers to be equipped for the complexity of the changing world and school system. Those environments should be multi-faceted that allows for a wide knowledge base (McNamara, Jones, & Murray, 2014). How those partnerships are implemented has been the focus of extensive research. School partnerships are much more effective with mutual respect and trust that has a focused purpose for both parties (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012; Breault & Breault, 2010; Butcher et al., 2011). There is evidence that effective partnerships call for school personnel to be empowered to create their own vision of reform that aligns to their school goals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Butcher et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Douglas 2012). Creating

successful school partnerships involves sitting “side-by-side in the construction of partnership goals and objectives” (Amrein-Beardsley & Barnett, 2012, p. 107). Teacher education programs should strive to “venture out further and further from the university and engage ever more closely with schools in a mutual transformation agenda” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 302). Partnerships with local schools allow colleges of education to meet the needs of local schools and improve communication for meeting school goals (Freeman, 2009-2010).

It is evident that a practice-based teacher education program is the best way to prepare future teachers (Gravett et. al., 2019). However, learning solely from teacher routines and activities can lead to teachers who merely mimic the good and bad of their mentors (Korthagen, 2016). The design of the partnership might be what is lacking as pointed out by Zeichner and Bier (2015). The literature also raises concerns about using practicum as the only link between theory and practice (Allsop, De Marie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006; Korthagen, 2007; Vick, 2006). Despite this issue, there is evidence that urges even stronger and sustained partnerships between teacher education programs and local schools as one viable solution to improving the gap between the university classroom and real teaching experience (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Louden & Rohl, 2006). School partnerships have a possibility of bridging some of the theory-practice gap, and at the same time, they allow teacher education programs and local schools to share common knowledge (Stephens & Boldt, 2004). However, some contend that sustaining partnerships with consistent collaboration can be a struggle due to the lack of understanding the different cultures or expectations between teacher educators and the local schools (Allen & Turner, 2012; Sachs, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

Boyer (1990) argued that there are four forms of scholarship that should be recognized as legitimate by the academic system. Those four are discovery, integration, application, and teaching (see Figure 1 below). The theoretical framework for this study incorporated the scholarship of application from Boyer’s model as it involves the use of knowledge to solve problems. As Boyer stated, the scholarship

of application is “the scholarship of engagement; seeking to close the gap between values in the academy and the needs of the larger world” (Boyer, 1997, p. 2). Knowledge is typically applied to the solution of societal needs in the scholarship of application (McGrath, 2006).

In this study, the gap was two-fold. The local high school was seeking more assistance to their teachers and high school students to continue to improve their achievement. Therefore, they sought out assistance from the college of education for the pre-service teachers to help fill this gap during their summer school. For the college of education, the opportunity for the pre-service teachers to earn practicum hours in the summer, gain real-life experience, and help a local high school in the community were the major motivations. McGrath (2006) stated that when the scholarship of application is practiced in a setting outside of the university, it is called “outreach” (p. 4). The scholarship of application involves education and service for the public good (Bull, 1998). This summer school partnership was intended not only to enhance both the local high school and the pre-service teachers, but also to provide a service to the local community as part of the university mission. Judging the scholarship of application is often based on the outcomes and impact made by this service (Bull, 1998).

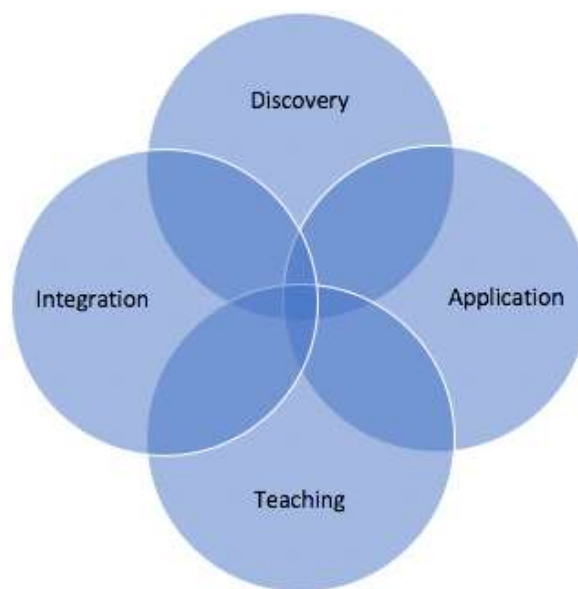


Figure 1. Boyer's model of scholarship, showing the four proposed forms of scholarship.

The pre-service teachers in this study were exposed to experiential learning, which Kolb (1984) described as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). Kolb’s experiential learning theory is represented by a four-stage learning cycle (see Figure 2 below). Effective learning is based on progressing through these four stages. Learning can be defined as a process and not a product that students construct in the sociocultural context (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Kolb’s experiential learning theory provides for interactive learning experiences that support the transformation through his four stages (Bolan, 2003, Kolb, 1984). For the pre-service teachers in this study, the four stages applied to this summer practicum partnership. In stage one, their concrete experience was participating in the summer school partnership. Stage two for the pre-service teachers consisted of writing their daily reflections while they observed and participated in working with students and teaching lessons. The pre-service teachers moved to stage three by making assumptions about their learning at the conclusion of this summer partnership as they filled out the final survey identifying the benefits this summer partnership had on their education as future teachers and any changes that might need to be made for the future to enhance this even more. The move to stage four for the pre-service teachers would hopefully be evident in their future classes and student teaching as they apply what they learned in the summer partnership.

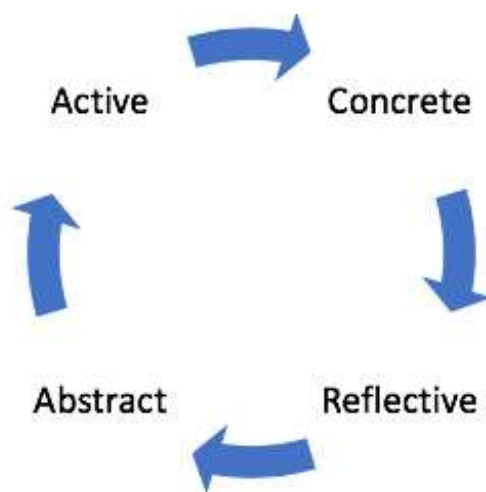


Figure 2. Image of Kolb's learning cycle, adapted from Kolb (1984).

Partnership Background

Practicums help pre-service teachers to develop the “understanding of the why, what, and how of teaching and learning” (Hughes, 2006). The college of education chose to partner with this local high school for various reasons. First, they are very close to our campus (less than a mile). Second, this high school is part of our local community, thus a good way for the pre-service teachers to learn to serve their local community. Third, their administration welcomed our pre-service teachers on their campus and encouraged us to continue to grow the partnership. Fourth, this local high school is a Title I campus with many families from a low socioeconomic demographic as well as a high refugee population. This provided the pre-service teachers the opportunity to complete their practicums in a highly diverse setting.

This partnership has expanded over the past few semesters to approximately 70 pre-service teachers of all subject areas doing their practicum at this high school each semester with approximately 40 different teachers from this high school hosting them. There have also been up to 10 student-teachers in a semester who have chosen this school for their student-teaching. This could be attributed directly to the partnership created with them over the past three years. The pre-service teachers have become familiar with the campus, teachers, and administration by completing their practicum hours there. The administration at this local high school is very supportive of this partnership and has encouraged the college of education to continue using their school for practicums for the pre-service teachers. Further, the high school teachers also have become familiar with the pre-service teachers as some of them have hosted practicum students for the past few years. There are currently five former practicum students who student taught and were hired by this local high school, and many others who are teaching in the same district.

Summer School Practicum

Due to the success of the fall and spring practicum partnerships, this high school approached the college of education about the possibility of the pre-service teachers assisting at their yearly summer school in June. Each summer this high school has an extensive summer school program with approximately 1,000 students attending various

classes for remediation, class advancement, and various courses for the incoming freshman that will attend this high school. The college of education had not previously provided summer school practicum in such a formal manner. Some research indicates that preparing future teachers for the realities of the classroom is a very complex task, therefore, different approaches will be needed (Hughes, 2006). The plan for the college of education was to offer the pre-service teachers the opportunity to earn practicum hours in advance for their fall courses. Practicum hours in the college of education are based on specific courses. Therefore, certain courses that the pre-service teachers take require practicum hours (typically ranging from 15 to 30 hours for each course). Depending on the schedule of the pre-service teachers, it could be possible to have over 100 hours of practicum required for a certain semester for a pre-service teacher depending on their schedule.

The process for pre-service teachers to participate in this initial summer practicum partnership began with multiple meetings between me and the administration at this high school. They outlined their vision for summer school practicum and how the pre-service teachers would fit into what they were already doing. The vision included the pre-service teachers helping at various levels from observing, tutoring individual and small groups of students, as well as planning and teaching entire lessons. The high school administration decided that their teachers would make the decision as to what level of involvement to give to the pre-service teachers in their classrooms. The college of education decided to match the pre-service teachers to classes in summer school that aligned with the practicum requirements for their fall courses and their major.

The leadership at the high school allowed the pre-service teachers to set their own schedule for summer as long as they were consistent and followed it. Therefore, the pre-service teachers could choose to be there every day, or set a schedule to work around their jobs or summer classes. Pre-service teachers from sophomores to seniors were able to attend as long as the fall classes they had on their schedule were on the list of potential courses that practicum fit for this summer school partnership. The schedule for summer school at the high school ran for 19 days and included a morning session and an afternoon session.

As the director of the summer partnership, my

responsibilities included the following: recruiting the pre-service teachers to participate in the partnership, creating the systems for the partnership, communicating directly with the local high school administration, and being at the high school for all 19 days during summer school to follow through with all the administrative tasks needed as well as monitoring the pre-service teachers and their practicum hours. I communicated daily with the assistant principal at the local high school to ensure this initial summer partnership would be successful.

My daily role started with a sign-in sheet for each practicum student. I talked with them and their practicum teachers almost daily to check on their progress. I kept track of their hours and consulted with the assistant principal of the high school daily about the progress of the practicum students in their classrooms. When issues arose such as practicum students missing on a scheduled day, I would meet with them to discuss being more professional and follow-up with their practicum teacher. Overall, my role was to make sure our practicum students were being responsible and making a positive impact at this school.

METHODS

Prior to the summer school partnership, IRB approval was obtained in order to study the impact of this extended summer partnership. The pre-service teachers all signed consent forms allowing them to be surveyed and their names and opinions were to be kept confidential. I, as the researcher, had no conflict of interest in this study. I received consent from my college and university, along with the administration from the partner high school. I received site authorization for this study.

There were 34 pre-service teachers participating in the summer school practicum with 29 high school teachers hosting them. The pre-service teachers completed 1,752 total practicum hours. Those hours varied from 15 at the minimum to 168 hours as the maximum. The 34 pre-service teachers who participated in this summer school partnership completed 53 classes of their practicum hours in advance for their fall classes during this summer partnership. Those pre-service teachers had fulfilled their fall practicum hours during this summer partnership.

As the last week of summer school approached, I emailed out a survey to all 34 pre-service teachers

to gain feedback on this summer school partnership (see Table 1 below). Interviews were not practical due to time constraints. This survey was created for feedback from the pre-service teachers to evaluate the first attempt at a summer practicum partnership. The results of this survey were for evaluating the partnership and its impact on our pre-service students. There were 11 pre-service students who responded to the survey within the one week time-frame that I gave them.

Table 1. Summer School Practicum Survey

- How many hours/days did you spend at the high school this summer?
- What were you able to do during this time (i.e., observe, teach, grade, plan lessons....)?
- What were the main benefits of this partnership? Explain.
- What were some areas for improvement for the summer partnership? Explain.
- Any comments?

Note: This is a list of questions included on the survey to practicum students. Responses were open-ended.

Table 2 below summarizes the demographic data for the pre-service teachers who completed the survey. The pre-service teachers are listed in random order. There were 10 females (91%) and 1 male (9%). The ethnicity of the pre-service teachers consisted of the following: 7 out of 11 or 64% were Caucasian; 4 out of 11 or 36% were Hispanic. There were 6 out of 11 or 55% seniors, 4 out of 11 or 36% were juniors, 1 out of 11 or 9% sophomores.

ANALYSIS

I used a grounded theory approach to analyze

the qualitative data from this study. Grounded theory is an approach for developing theory that is systematically grounded in the data and analyzed. It can be used effectively with such a small amount of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Data were analyzed using the process of open coding the raw data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I started by breaking apart the data into categories based on their dimensions. Then I used axial coding to relate the concepts together. Open coding and axial coding go “hand in hand” according to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 198). The open coding came first as I examined the raw data with an open mind to find the underlying meaning from the text (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is where I, as the researcher, tried to clarify what characteristics defined each category and which allowed for new categories or sub-categories to be formed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I followed this process of axial coding and relating the categories to the sub-categories to eventually develop themes based on the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Saturation of the data came after multiple attempts of defining and redefining the categories through constant comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Eventually three themes emerged for the pre-service teachers based on selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The themes, theme-related components, and assertions presented in each analysis were organized into tables. Pseudonyms were used to keep the survey results confidential. The units of data were numbered for each theme to show the strength of each theme

Table 2. A Summary of the Demographic Data for the Pre-service Teachers

Pre-Service Teachers	Gender	Ethnicity	Major	Year in College
Student #1	Female	Caucasian	Secondary English	Senior
Student #2	Female	Caucasian	Secondary English	Junior
Student #3	Female	Caucasian	Secondary Math	Sophomore
Student #4	Female	Hispanic	Secondary English	Senior
Student #5	Male	Hispanic	Secondary Math	Senior
Student #6	Female	Caucasian	Secondary English	Senior
Student #7	Female	Caucasian	Secondary Biology	Senior
Student #8	Female	Caucasian	Secondary English	Junior
Student #9	Female	Hispanic	Elementary	Junior
Student #10	Female	Hispanic	Secondary English	Junior
Student #11	Female	Caucasian	Secondary English	Senior

based on the pre-service teacher's surveys. Another professor also analyzed the data before I created my final themes.

RESULTS

The first theme that emerged from the final survey was that the pre-service teachers gained *Real Teaching Experience* from planning, teaching, and relating to students from this summer practicum (see Table 3 below). This was by far the strongest theme as it was evident in 63% of the comments by the pre-service teachers. When it came to planning lessons, one pre-service teacher pointed out how her mentor teacher dealt with her and one of her peers, saying, "We were given a curriculum from the mentor teacher who was in the classroom, but it was up to us to lead the lessons and do most of the planning" (Maria, final survey, 6-31-15). When asked in the survey about the main benefits of this partnership, another pre-service teacher noted, "The main benefits of this partnership were the experience of teaching in real life, and working with students from various backgrounds" (Joey, final survey, 6-31-15). Another pre-service teacher noted the impact of being able to practice her classroom management skills with a mentor there for support. She wrote,

The teacher allowed me to be part of her classroom. This allowed me to practice teaching and classroom management. I was able to go up to students and correct behavior. On top of this, I even took away phones when students used them in class. (Dani, final survey, 7-3-15)

Another pre-service teacher shared her real teaching experience this way:

I observed, interacted with students, taught three lessons, led literature circles, planned lessons, graded papers, took attendance, entered grades, etc. The teacher allowed us to pretty much have full control over the classroom. (Emily, final survey 7-2-15)

The first theme of *Real Teaching Experience* due to actual planning, teaching, and using classroom management skills will definitely benefit the pre-service teachers as they move closer to their student teaching.

The second theme was that the pre-service

teachers were able to participate in multiple *Observations/Collaboration with Mentors* at the high school during this summer partnership. This theme showed up in 22% of the total comments, so it positively impacted the pre-service teachers. One pre-service teacher wrote about her first day of summer school when she stated, "Another good thing about summer school was observing procedures. I observed two different teachers and the one that established procedures had few problems controlling the class" (Dani, final survey, 7-3-15). Another pre-service teacher added, "I was able to learn a lot of great teaching strategies by observing my mentor teacher" (Marla, final survey, 7-1-15). A pre-service teacher pointed out the following: "I got a true taste of what teaching is like with the benefit of a mentor teacher to help guide me and give their input to me based on their own experience" (Lynn, final survey, 7-1-15). Another pre-service teacher stated her learning through observation this way: "I was able to observe the learning style of my mentor teachers. My main benefit was not only working with the actual high school teachers, but also with other practicum students" (Hilary, final survey, 6-30-15).

The third theme was the *Positive Culture* that was established at the local high school during this partnership. This theme was noted in 16% of the overall comments by the pre-service teachers. This evidence is supported in the comments from the pre-service teachers as one mentioned a benefit of this partnership, "I love this high school and I hope this may become the first place I begin my teaching career" (Joey, final survey, 6-31-15). Another pre-service teacher when noting the many benefits of this partnership stated the following:

I like being able to work with these students because it helps to get the hours done somewhere close to campus. Also, it is at a school that has so much diversity, and where we are welcomed and seen as helpful and a positive rather than just in the way. (Terri, final survey, 6-31-15)

Another pre-service teacher summarized her major benefits of the partnership this way: "The mentor teachers were very supportive and allowed me to feel comfortable to experiment with the type of teaching style I like best" (Irene, final survey, 7-1-15). Based on these results, the environment

established by the administration, teachers, and entire staff at this high school positively impacted the pre-service teachers.

Overall, the themes of more *Real Teaching Experience*, *Observations/Collaboration with Mentors*, and a *Positive Culture* demonstrated that this summer practicum partnership was a strong success in the initial year of implementation. One pre-service teacher summarized the entire experience this way:

I feel the main benefit was that I got a true taste of what teaching is like with the benefit of a mentor teacher to help guide me and give their input to me based on their own experience. Of the four teachers I worked with, three of them were extremely open to helping me in any way I needed. I actually got a chance to plan and teach and work with students in a way I have never been able to. This experience has given me confidence and assurance that this is really what I want to do and that I do have the capability to do it. (Lindsay, final survey, 6-29-15).

REFLECTIVE CRITIQUE

The data suggest that this summer school practicum experience was very positive for the pre-service teachers in the college of education. They were not only able to earn many hours of practicum in advance of their fall courses, but they also gained valuable real-life teaching experience. Pre-service teachers must understand the relationship between the ideas they are taught in classes and applying

those ideas in a real setting, which this summer school partnership attempted to do (Hughes, 2006). It was an arranged application to enhance the development of their knowledge to the teaching profession. It provided the pre-service teachers the opportunity to learn experientially during a time when they are usually on vacation (Kolb, 1984). Gaining real teaching experience is crucial to the success of the pre-service teachers in the college of education. The scholarship of application, as previously mentioned, seeks to close the gap between the university and real life (Boyer, 1997). I believe that this summer practicum partnership did that to some degree for the pre-service teachers based on their feedback.

The level of involvement of the pre-service teachers in the summer school classes varied based on the amount of practicum hours they logged and the comfort level of their mentor teacher from the high school. It seemed as though the pre-service teachers that spent more hours/days of practicum in this high school gained the trust and respect of the practicum teachers and were allowed to be more involved in their classrooms (to plan and teach lessons as opposed to just observing or working with individual students). This learning-in-context provided the pre-service teachers the opportunity to question and re-analyze after the actual experience (Brookfield, 1995). The impact of spending more hours in practicum and being involved more in the actual teaching is something that will need to be examined more closely in future studies. The pre-service teachers that were involved in this summer partnership and became students of mine the

Table 3. Survey Themes

Theme	Theme Related Components	Assertions	Units/ Chunks of Data Collected	% of Units per Theme
Real Teaching Experience	Planning/teaching lessons; Practice with classroom management	Pre-service teachers gained real experience from planning, teaching, and practicing classroom management.	20	63%
Observations/Collaboration with Mentors	Observation of multiple teachers/teaching styles; Mentoring after teaching	Pre-service teachers gained experience from observing and collaborating with mentor teachers.	7	22%
Positive Culture	Positive comments from school administration and teachers; School wanted the pre-service teachers	Pre-service teachers felt welcomed during this partnership due to the administration and teachers at the partner school.	5	16%

following fall seemed more confident in class. They had experienced planning and teaching lessons during the summer, and this showed with their confidence in my methods classroom. I will analyze the impact of this partnership on their efficacy in the second year of this summer partnership.

The conversations between the pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers were mentioned as a benefit of this partnership. This, again, is not something that can be accomplished in the university classroom. Therefore, this partnership provided a means to improve collaboration about teaching between the pre-service teachers and veteran high school teachers. The positive culture provided from the leadership and teachers at this high school positively influenced the pre-service teachers based on the data. This is also evident in the number of pre-service teachers who returned to this high school in future semesters and by the increased number who student taught at this high school.

There are definitely some improvements needed as the college of education ventures into the second year of this summer partnership with this same high school. Improved communication between the local high school, college of education, and the pre-service teachers will be a focus area for the second year of this partnership. The communication was excellent for the first year, but we would like to improve more in defining the role the practicum students and teachers. Some practicum teachers allowed the pre-service teachers to do much more than others. Improving in the area of what is expected from both sides will enhance this partnership.

The college of education and high school are also working on improving the first day structure by having the pre-service teachers meet their practicum teacher the Friday before summer school begins while the practicum teachers outline the role for the pre-service teachers. As some research points out, mere placement into schools for practicum does not automatically result in a valuable experience for the pre-service teachers (Zeichner & Liston, 1990). The key is the quality of experience (Dewey, 1938) and how the pre-service teachers respond to these instructional opportunities (Askell-Williams, Lawson, & Murray-Harvey, 2007). More research will need to be done to ascertain the level of quality of these summer practicum experiences, but based on the data from the initial year it seems to have

made a positive impact for the pre-service teachers.

As a teacher-educator, I am excited whenever my pre-service teachers are able to experience real-life teaching experience at local high schools. The teaching of theory in the classroom should be linked to its application (Brunner, 1977). The gap that naturally exists from lessons or practice-teaching in front of their peers in the classroom is still not as valuable as real-life experience in a high school, in my opinion. I can attest to how this practical experience at a local high school has improved my pre-service teachers' confidence and skill level and the classroom conversations we have about teaching. However, I am not at the high school on a daily basis to observe and discuss with my students like I was able to do during this summer partnership. This summer I was able to walk around to classrooms and discuss daily with many different pre-service teachers (some of who I had in class previously and some who I had in class the following fall). I really enjoyed being right there on campus to discuss with the pre-service teachers about what they observed or taught that day.

My own involvement with these pre-service teachers on a daily basis, along with my interactions with the local high school, could have influenced the conclusions from the data. I kept the surveys confidential and analyzed the data before looking at the actual names of the pre-service teachers to help ensure trustworthy results. I had another professor also examine the data to help maintain reliable results from our qualitative analysis.

Further, the opportunity to connect and work so closely with this high school and their leadership and teachers was a major benefit to me personally and as an education professor at the local university. The success of this summer practicum partnership could be attributed to "sustained and open communication" (Allen & Turner, 2012, p. 6). The administrative team from this local high school truly does want the pre-service teachers to be involved in their school, and this was clearly evident in the data from the pre-service teachers. I was able to meet many teachers from this high school in person during this summer partnership. Many of them have received emails from me in the past, but just getting to meet them personally has enhanced my ability to contact them regarding future pre-service teachers during the fall and spring semesters. One study pointed out that

university coordinators are critical to school and university partnerships because they serve as the key communicator between the school and college (Allen & Turner, 2012). By directing this summer practicum partnership, it has enhanced my ability to be seen as a valuable liaison between the college of education and this local high school. This partnership is definitely mutually beneficial to the college of education and their high school.

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